





INVESTIGATING INTENTIONS TO VISIT SARAJEVO CITY: EXPANDING THE THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOR

Abstract

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Purpose – Attracting visitors to urban cities, especially capital cities, requires further investigations on the drivers of international tourists' behavior. In this context, this paper aims to predict the intention of Algerian tourists to visit Sarajevo City.

Methodology/Design/Approach – The study integrates destination image, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), and perceived risk into the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). Data was collected through a self-administered questionnaire from a convenient sample of 245 Algerian tourists. We used hierarchical multiple regression to test our hypotheses.

Findings – The study found that Algerian tourists hold positive attitudes and view Sarajevo City favorably. The intention to visit Sarajevo is strongly influenced by perceived behavioral control (PBC), the city's image, attitudes, positive eWOM, and subjective norms. Interestingly, perceived risk does not significantly impact the intention to visit.

Originality of the research – This paper offers valuable insights for stakeholders including tourism agencies in Algeria and Bosnia. Moreover, it is the first study from Africa to explore tourists' intentions towards Sarajevo City by expanding the TPB framework.

Keywords Destination image, Electronic word of mouth, Marketing cities, Perceived risk, Urban tourism

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INTRODUCTION

International tourism has become a major economic force for many countries, including Algeria, which is poised for substantial growth due to its varied attractions (Statista, 2024). In 2022, tourism contributed 5.7% to Algeria's GDP and provided jobs for approximately 612,000 people (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2023). That year, Algeria attracted 1.39 million tourists, while 2.86 million Algerians traveled abroad, with top destinations being Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, France, and Turkey (Algerian Ministry of Tourism, 2024). Looking ahead, international departures are projected to surge to 9.58 million by 2029, marking a 52.55% increase (Statista, 2024), driven by improved purchasing power among Algerian citizens. On the other hand, in recent years urban tourism in the Balkan region has drawn millions of international visitors, with Bosnia and Herzegovina emerging as a top destination. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the Center of Excellence (CoE) reported that Bosnia and Herzegovina welcomed 196,000 foreign tourists in 2020, down from 1.198 million in 2019. This placed the country sixth among Western Balkan nations, following Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia, Albania, and Montenegro (CoE, 2022). Most visitors came from Europe (including Croatia, Turkey, and Serbia) and Asia-Pacific (such as Saudi Arabia), while arrivals from Africa, particularly North Africa, were minimal. Croatia (16.1%), Serbia (14.2%), Turkey (7.7%), and Slovenia (7.0%) are the leading travel export markets for Bosnia and Herzegovina (Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2023). Therefore, to diversify its tourist base, it would be beneficial for Sarajevo to expand its efforts to attract visitors from Africa and the Arab world.

Additionally, Sarajevo is a major attraction in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the broader Balkan region, drawing over 667,981 foreign visitors in 2023 (Institute for Informatics and Statistics of the Canton of Sarajevo, 2024), thanks to its rich history, vibrant art scene, culinary offerings, and competitive prices. Despite the potential for many capitals to attract tourists, there is limited research on what specifically drives visitors to these cities. Understanding the factors that attract tourists to a city can help predict and influence their behavior. For instance, Guskiewicz and Nessel (2017) found that Chinese tourists are drawn to Poland by its traditions, culture, and affordability, while Podovac (2022) identified business, education, and sightseeing as key reasons for visiting Serbia. Historically, Sarajevo's image was shaped by recent war and political instability; however, this negative perception has been changing as the number of tourists visiting the city has been increasing (Čaušević et al., 2019).

Recent research has investigated various factors influencing international tourists' intentions and behaviors towards visiting different types of cities, such as those hosting sporting events (e.g., PyeongChang; Park et al., 2020), urban centers (e.g., Verona; Cassia et al., 2018), coastal and marine destinations (e.g., Acapulco; Carvache-Franco et al., 2023), capital cities (e.g., Lima;

Carvache-Franco et al., 2023), and religious cities (e.g., Mecca; Hassan et al., 2022). Findings indicate that predictors vary based on the purpose/motives of the visit and the cultural background of the visitors. This body of knowledge has been instrumental for destination managers in segmenting tourism markets, understanding demand, and enhancing service provision (Carvache-Franco et al., 2023). In a similar vein, our study zeroes in on urban tourism in Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with a focus on Algerian tourists. The authors selected Sarajevo for their study based on semi-structured interviews with 40 Algerian tourists who had previous international travel experience. Respondents were asked to choose their top three preferred cities from a list of nine Balkan capitals, including Skopje, Tirana, and Belgrade. Sarajevo emerged as the top choice, receiving 22.50%, followed by Bucharest (17.50%) and Zagreb (15%). Participants cited several reasons for favoring Sarajevo: lower prices compared to other European capitals, a positive image, and a desire to explore the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Additionally, respondents described Sarajevo as a city characterized by safety, cleanliness, friendliness, and hospitality.

On the other hand, the “theory of planned behavior” (TPB), posits that intention, which drives human behavior, is influenced by three factors: attitude, subjective norms, and “perceived behavioral control” (PBC) (Ajzen, 1991). Mouloudj and Bouarar (2023) described intention as the degree to which an individual is willingness to engage in a particular behavior. In tourism research, the TPB has been widely applied to examine tourists’ intentions (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012; Wang et al., 2022). Scholars have frequently extended the TPB to enhance its predictive accuracy (Liu et al., 2021; Pahrudin et al., 2021; Sudarsono et al., 2021; Sujood et al., 2022). For instance, Park et al. (2017) expanded the TPB by including destination image and travel constraints, explaining 43.8% of the variation in travel intentions among Chinese students. Similarly, Hsieh et al. (2016) integrated perceived risk and past visit experience into the TPB to predict Taiwanese youth’s travel intentions to Japan, finding that while the TPB constructs were effective predictors, perceived risk was not. In addition, factors such as destination image (Ahmad et al., 2021; Doosti et al., 2016; Jalilvand & Heidari, 2017; Jiang et al., 2022; Kusumah et al., 2022) and past visitation (Liu et al., 2021) significantly influence international travel intentions, while perceived risk often negatively impacts them (Jiang et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2021; Luo and Lam, 2020; Saidmamatov et al., 2021; Sujood et al., 2022). Moreover, electronic word of mouth (eWOM) has been positively associated with travel intention (Doosti et al., 2016; Jalilvand & Heidari, 2017; Saidani et al., 2023; Setiawan et al., 2021). Thus, understanding tourists’ attitudes and intentions is crucial for attracting international visitors (Guszkiewicz & Nessel, 2017). In the same way, our investigation will integrate destination image, eWOM, and perceived risk into the TPB model to further investigate these dynamics.

In this regard, although there is a lot of literature on tourists’ intentions to visit various destinations, there is a notable research gap concerning urban tourism, particularly in capital cities of tourist destinations, due to the diverse preferences, cultural, and economic backgrounds of tourists, as well as varying destination characteristics. For instance, limited research has been conducted on the intention of Arab tourists, particularly Algerians, to visit Balkan countries. Additionally, there is a scarcity of studies on the intention to visit geographically distant destinations, despite their significance. On this basis, understanding the factors that influence Algerian tourists’ intentions to visit Sarajevo is crucial for both theoretical advancement and practical applications. By extending the TPB model, this study aims to identify the key drivers of travel intentions, providing valuable insights for tourism agencies and policymakers in Algeria and Bosnia and Herzegovina. These insights can inform targeted marketing strategies and enhance tourist engagement. Consequently, this investigation aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on factors driving intentions to visit capital cities as urban destinations, offering valuable insights for future research in this field. It also addresses calls from Abbasi et al. (2021) and Le et al. (2023) to extend the TPB by incorporating additional variables such as word of mouth and perceived risk. Consequently, this paper seeks to enrich current knowledge on urban tourism and suggest the inclusion of three constructs to TPB model to enhance our understanding of urban tourists’ behavior. Accordingly, the objectives of this study are: (1) to develop and test an extended TPB model; (2) to identify the key factors influencing Algerian tourists’ intentions to visit Sarajevo; and (3) to provide actionable insights for travel and tourism professionals in Algeria and Bosnia and Herzegovina to better understand Algerian tourist behavior. Specifically, this study aims to address the following research questions (RQs): RQ1. What are the key factors influencing Algerian tourists’ intentions to visit Sarajevo? RQ2. Does the expanded model enhance the explanatory power of predicting travel intentions relative to the original TPB model? The findings are expected to offer practical implications for stakeholders, particularly tourism agencies in the Balkans and North Africa, helping them attract more international tourists.

1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES

1.1. Theory of Planned Behavior in Tourism

The TPB, developed by Ajzen (1991), has become a prominent framework for predicting tourists’ intentions and behaviors in recent studies (Abbasi et al., 2021; Le et al., 2023; Liao et al., 2023; Pahrudin et al., 2021). TPB asserts that behavior is primarily driven by behavioral intentions, which are, in turn, influenced by three core components: attitudes towards the behavior, subjective norms, and PBC. Attitude reflects tourists’ overall evaluation of visiting a city, encompassing both positive and negative perceptions, which significantly influences their travel intentions. Subjective norms capture the influence of social pressures and expectations from friends, family, and peers, shaping tourists’ decisions to visit a particular urban destination. PBC represents the perceived ease or difficulty of traveling to the city, accounting for factors such as travel logistics, cost, and personal resources. Ajzen (2020) elaborates that “a favorable attitude and a supportive subjective norm provide the motivation to engage in the behavior but a concrete intention to do so is formed only when perceived control over the behavior is sufficiently strong” (p. 315).

Despite its broad application, the TPB has faced scrutiny regarding its efficacy in predicting travel-related intentions. Ulker-Demirel and Ciftci (2022) reviewed the use of TPB in tourism and affirmed its utility across various contexts, highlighting its widespread validation in tourism research. However, Yuzhanin and Fisher (2016) questioned the TPB's adequacy in predicting travelers' destination choices, pointing out limitations in its ability to account for complex, context-specific factors influencing travel decisions (Liao et al., 2023). To address these limitations, our study aims to enhance the TPB model by integrating three additional variables: destination image, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), and perceived risk. While previous research has incorporated various constructs into the TPB, our study is the first to combine these three specific constructs with the TPB, providing a more comprehensive perspective on factors influencing urban travel intentions. This novel integration seeks to address identified gaps and improve the model's predictive capability concerning tourists' intentions to visit Sarajevo. By combining destination image, eWOM, and perceived risk with the TPB, our approach offers a deeper understanding of how these factors interact and influence tourist behavior, extending the traditional TPB framework in the context of urban tourism.

1.2. Hypotheses Development

1.2.1. Attitudes towards a tourist destination

The first construct in the TPB model is attitude, which Davis (1989, p. 984) defines as “the degree of a person's positive or negative feelings about performing a target behavior.” In city tourism, attitude refers to a tourist's perception of a city's destination as either favorable or unfavorable, attractive or unattractive, pleasant or unpleasant. Attitudes can be influenced by factors such as perceived service quality and subjective norms (Hasan et al., 2020), perceived value (Koh et al., 2024), face-to-face WOM (Jalilvand & Heidari, 2017), eWOM (Doosti et al., 2016; Jalilvand & Heidari, 2017; Wang, 2015), knowledge and religiosity (Sudarsono et al., 2021), and perceived risk (Le et al., 2023). As evidenced by the results of several studies, tourists' attitudes significantly impact their travel intentions (Doosti et al., 2016; Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012; Liu et al., 2021; Pahrudin et al., 2021; Sudarsono et al., 2021; Sujood et al., 2022; Wang, 2015), destination decision behavior (Le et al., 2023), and intention to revisit (Hasan et al., 2020). However, Leung and Jiang (2018) found that attitudes towards the destination did not significantly affect visitors' intentions. Accordingly, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H1. Attitude has a positive and significant effect on tourists' intentions to visit Sarajevo city.

1.2.2. Subjective norms

Subjective norm is defined as “the perceived social pressure to perform or not to perform the behavior” (Ajzen, 1991, p. 188). In the context of tourism, tourists often seek the opinions of their reference groups, such as peers and colleagues, when planning international travel. Le et al. (2023) demonstrated that subjective norms significantly influence destination decision behavior. Similarly, Liu et al. (2021) found that subjective norms positively predict intentions to travel abroad. Liao et al. (2023) found that subjective norms positively influence the intention to engage in low-carbon travel. Hasan et al. (2020) confirmed that subjective norms affect intentions to revisit a destination. However, Sujood et al. (2022) reported that subjective norms are not a significant predictor of travelers' intentions in the context of COVID-19, a finding also observed by Pahrudin et al. (2021). Based on these findings, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H2. Subjective norms have a positive and significant effect on tourists' intentions to visit Sarajevo city.

1.2.3. Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC)

According to Ajzen (1991, p. 183), PBC refers to “people's perception of the ease or difficulty of performing the behavior of interest.” In international tourism, tourists may encounter challenges such as high travel costs or difficulties in obtaining visas, which could lead them to exclude certain destinations from their consideration. Čaušević (2023) observed a negative correlation between travel constraints and travel intentions. In recent research conducted in Taiwan, Wang (2022) identified PBC as the most significant predictor of travel intentions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Previous studies have also highlighted PBC as a critical antecedent with a substantial impact on travel intentions (Liao et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2021; Pahrudin et al., 2021; Sudarsono et al., 2021; Sujood et al., 2022), destination decision behavior (Le et al., 2023), and revisit intentions (Abbasi et al., 2021). Based on these findings, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H3. PBC has a positive and significant effect on tourists' intentions to visit Sarajevo city.

1.2.4. Destination city image

Destination image is defined as “an interactive system of thoughts, opinions, feelings, visualizations, and intentions toward a destination” (Tasci et al., 2007, p. 200), while city image is described as “the sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions people hold regarding a city” (Cassia et al., 2018, p. 476). In the context of our research, the city image refers to the comprehensive view of a city and its attributes, which impacts tourists' choices and travel decisions. Thus, city image is a multidimensional construct encompassing various elements. The destination image comprises “beliefs, feelings, perceptions, and knowledge

about a destination, along with direct and indirect information acquired during travel” (Jebbouri et al., 2022, p. 2). Media portrayals, such as television series and films, can significantly shape the destination image, as noted by Hudson et al. (2011), who highlighted the impact of films on destination image and travel readiness. Several factors contribute to the formation of destination image, including eWOM (Doosti et al., 2016; Setiawan et al., 2021), reputation and perceived quality (Bui, 2023), familiarity (Stylidis et al., 2020), perceptions of tourism safety (Ding & Wu, 2022; Paliska et al., 2020), and perceptions of motivations, constraints, and risks (Khan et al., 2017). Jebbouri et al. (2022) demonstrated that destination image affects travelers’ satisfaction and trust, while Khan et al. (2017) found it significantly influences visit intentions among Malaysian women. Setiawan et al. (2021) concluded that eWOM impacts visit intentions through the mediation of destination image. Additionally, the city’s image can substantially affect perceived value (Kim et al., 2013), visit intentions (Baber & Baber, 2023; Doosti et al., 2016; Kusumawati et al., 2022), revisit intentions (Abbasi et al., 2021), and destination loyalty (Stylidis et al., 2020). Based on these findings, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H4. Sarajevo city image has a positive and significant effect on tourists’ intentions to visit Sarajevo city.

1.2.5. Electronic word of mouth (eWOM)

eWOM is defined as “any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company which is made available to a multitude of the people and institutes via the Internet” (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004, p. 39). In our research, eWOM refers to the impact of online reviews and recommendations on tourists’ perceptions and travel intentions. Recent advancements in digital technology have revolutionized communication, resulting in a significant increase in eWOM (Akdin, 2021). eWOM covers all informal interactions with consumers via Internet-based platforms about the use or attributes of specific products, services, or their providers (Litvin et al., 2008). In the tourism industry, eWOM has been shown to play a significant role in shaping customer behavior (Cantalops & Salvi, 2014). Many tourists rely on the Internet to gather information for their travel planning, and they often consider online peer reviews to be more reliable than other information sources (Oliveira et al., 2020). Research has explored various factors influencing eWOM and its impact on behavioral intentions. For example, eWOM has been affected by attitudes (Koh et al., 2024), travel experiences (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012), hotel choices (Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009), hotel room bookings (Ye et al., 2009), hotel booking intentions (Sparks & Browning, 2011), and overall hotel performance, including reputation and booking intentions (Akdin, 2021; Cantalops & Salvi, 2014; Yang et al., 2018). Furthermore, eWOM has been found to positively influence destination trust (Abubakar et al., 2016), destination image (Setiawan et al., 2021), attitudes toward the destination (Wang, 2015), and travel intentions (Abubakar et al., 2016; Chaieb & Chaieb, 2023; Jalilvand & Heidari, 2017; Setiawan et al., 2021; Song et al., 2021; Wang, 2015). However, Jalilvand and Samiei (2012) identified a negative effect of eWOM on intentions to visit Iran. Therefore, the following hypothesis was postulated:

H5. Positive eWOM has a positive and significant effect on tourists’ intentions to visit Sarajevo city.

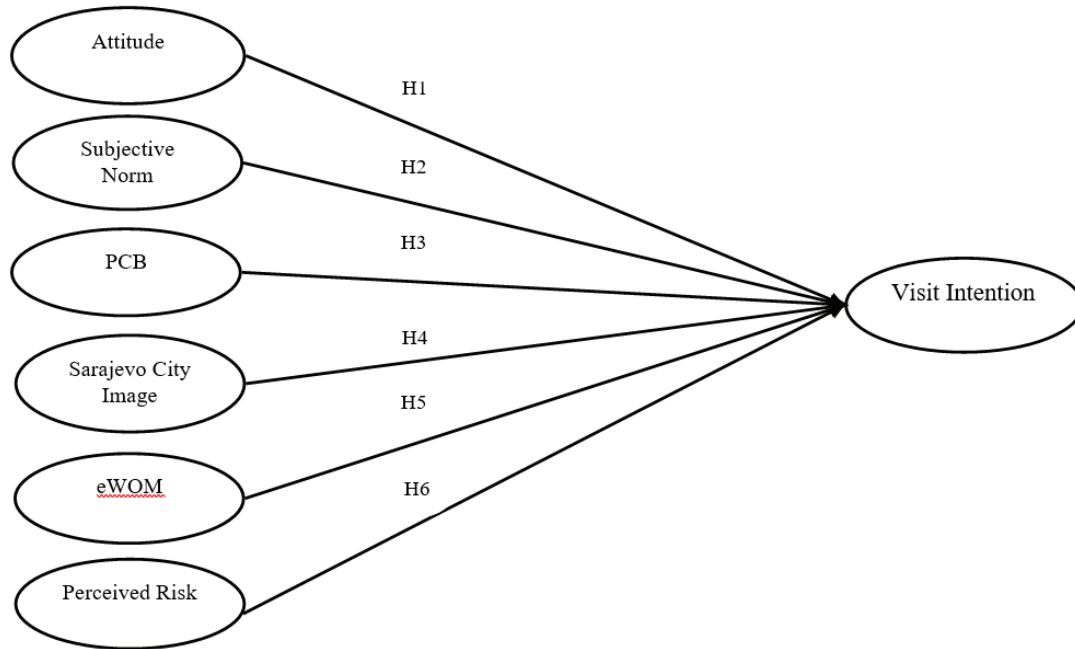
1.2.6. Perceived risk

Jiang et al. (2022, p. 5) define perceived risk as “tourists’ subjective expectation of potential harms or losses to be suffered in the course of travel.” In our research, perceived risk refers to the potential adverse consequences related to travel to Sarajevo, which can influence tourists’ willingness to visit. Tourists are likely to avoid destinations perceived as risky, which can lead to cancellations, postponements, or changes in travel plans (Paliska et al., 2020). High levels of perceived risk may even drive tourists to favor domestic over international travel. Isaac and Keijzer (2021) suggest that domestic travel is viewed as safer compared to international travel, leading individuals to favor domestic leisure trips over those abroad. During the COVID-19 pandemic, perceived risk related to contracting the virus significantly influenced travel intentions (Liu et al., 2021; Luo & Lam, 2020; Şengel et al., 2023) and travel behavior (Čaušević, 2023). Şengel et al. (2023) propose that individuals’ anxiety regarding COVID-19 will have a detrimental impact on their travel behavior following the pandemic. Perceived risk has been shown to negatively impact destination image (Jiang et al., 2022) and tourists’ intention to travel (Jiang et al., 2022), decision-making processes (Nilashi et al., 2022), and to moderate the relationship between subjective norms and travel intention (Wang et al., 2022). However, in the context of adventure tourism, certain dimensions of risk can have a positive relationship with visitor behaviors (Hasan et al., 2017). Additionally, recent studies by Goel and Parayitam (2024) and Hsieh et al. (2016) found that perceived risk did not significantly predict tourists’ intentions to travel. Thus, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H6. Perceived risk has a negative and significant effect on tourists’ intentions to visit Sarajevo city.

Figure 1 illustrates the research framework.

Figure 1: Research framework



2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Sample and Data Collection

The study utilized both qualitative and quantitative methods. Initially, a qualitative approach was employed through semi-structured interviews with a sample of 40 Algerian tourists who had prior experience in international travel. These interviews were conducted during the second week of March 2023 and each lasted approximately ten minutes. Participants were asked three key questions: (1) which three destinations they considered the best among the capitals of the nine Balkan countries, (2) their reasons for favoring a particular city, and (3) their perception of the image of their preferred city. The respondents' answers from the qualitative interviews were manually recorded on paper and subsequently analyzed using Excel. For the quantitative phase, a questionnaire was distributed to examine the antecedents of intentions to visit Sarajevo. Using a convenience sampling method, 384 international Algerian tourists were recruited to complete the questionnaire. This sampling approach is commonly used in empirical research to study consumer and tourist behavior (Bouarar et al., 2023). The sample size was determined based on Krejcie & Morgan's (1970) table, which indicates that 384 responses are sufficient for populations of one million or more. The sample selection criteria were as follows: (1) participants had to be Algerian citizens with prior experience in international travel; and (2) they needed to be at least 18 years old. Participants were informed about the study's objectives, assured of anonymity, and advised that participation was voluntary. Completing the questionnaire took approximately 8-10 minutes. Data were collected over two months, starting May 10, 2023, with the questionnaires distributed at tourist agencies, commercial centers, and public parks. Out of 384 distributed questionnaires, 245 valid responses were received, resulting in a response rate of 63.80%. All respondents had prior international travel experience, with 4.49% having previously visited Sarajevo (at least once).

Regarding sample characteristics, 69.80% of respondents were males and 30.20% were female. A total of 45.71% were between 41-50 years old, 25.72% were between 31-40 years of age, and 25.72% were between 18-30 years. Most respondents were married (57.96%), and 31.03 % were single. In terms of education level, 42.45% had a undergraduate degree, 39.59% had a secondary and lower degree, and 14.69% had a post-graduate degree. With regard to income level, 41.23% had a monthly income between 40,001-60,000 Algerian Dinar (DZD), 23.67% had a income between 60,001-80,000 DZD, while 19.18% had an income of 40,000 DZD or less. Table 1 presents a detailed summary of the respondents' characteristics.

Table 1: Demographical Profiles of Respondents (*N* = 245)

Category	Number	(%)
<i>Gender</i>	245	100
Male	171	69.80
Female	74	30.20
<i>Age</i>	245	100
18-30	33	13.47
31-40	63	25.72
41-50	112	45.71
Over 50	37	15.10
<i>Marital Status</i>	245	100
Single	76	31.03
Married	142	57.96
Others (Divorced, widowed, or separated)	15	6.13
Missing	12	4.88
<i>Education level</i>	245	100
Secondary and lower	97	39.59
Undergraduate	104	42.45
Post-graduate	36	14.69
Missing	8	3.27
<i>Monthly Income</i>	245	100
40000 DZD or below	47	19.18
40001-60000 DZD	101	41.23
60001-80000 DZD	58	23.67
More than 80000 DZD	39	15.92
<i>Previously visited Sarajevo</i>	245	100
Yes	11	4.49
No	234	95.51

2.2. Measurement

In this study, we utilize a questionnaire to gather primary data from participants. The questionnaire is divided into two sections: the first section collects demographic information, while the second measures the study's constructs. To assess tourists' intentions and attitudes, we adapted scales from Jalilvand and Samiei (2012). For measuring subjective norms and PBC, we used scales from Bouarar et al. (2023) and Liu et al. (2021). The Sarajevo city image scale was adapted from Doosti et al. (2016) and Park et al. (2017), and the eWOM scale was derived from Jalilvand and Heidari (2017). For perceived risk, we used the scale from Jiang et al. (2022). The original questionnaire was crafted in English and then translated into Arabic through a back-translation process to ensure both accuracy and validity of the translation. To ensure content validity, four experts reviewed the questionnaire, leading to minor revisions. Specifically, the fourth items in both the attitude and perceived risk constructs were removed: "I think Sarajevo city as a tourist destination is very delightful" and "If I travel to Sarajevo city in the future, I will feel comfortable," respectively. A 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "1 = strongly disagree" to "5 = strongly agree," was employed. A pilot study with 25 international tourists was conducted to assess the clarity of the measurement items. The feedback confirmed that all items were understood and clear to the respondents. Details of the measurement items are provided in Appendix A.

2.3. Data Analysis

Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS v26 ("IBM Corporation, Armonk, NY, USA"). Descriptive statistics tools such as frequencies, percentages, means scores, and standard deviations (SD) were also used to analyze the characteristics of the respondents and their answers to the questionnaire items. Furthermore, internal consistency were measured through Cronbach's alpha coefficients, and normality were verified using both skewness and kurtosis. Moreover, the multicollinearity problem in regression analysis were checked using two techniques, namely, "variance inflation factor" (VIF) and tolerance. In addition, hierarchical multiple regression analysis (HMRA) were performed to verify the research hypotheses. The purpose of applying HMRA was to assess the significance of adding new factors to the "original TPB model" (Njoku et al., 2024). To determine whether to accept or reject a hypothesis, we rely on the significance level. If the p-value is less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$), the hypothesis is considered statistically significant and thus accepted. Conversely, if the p-value is 0.05 or greater, the hypothesis is rejected.

3. RESULTS

Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS 26. To test our hypotheses we used hierarchical regression, where in the first step we examined TPB constructs, and in the second step we added the three constructs (Sarajevo city image, eWOM, and perceived risk) to test the expanded TPB model. Table 2 shows that tourists have positive attitudes towards Sarajevo city ($M = 3.76$), a good image about this city ($M = 3.63$), and high intentions to visit it ($M = 3.98$). Besides, they are perceived a few difficulties that may limit their ability to visit Sarajevo city ($M = 3.65$). In addition, they are moderately influenced by eWOM ($M = 3.49$), and a lower level of perceived subjective norm ($M = 2.85$). Interestingly, they perceived that Sarajevo city is a low risk ($M = 2.58$).

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics and Cronbach's Alpha

Variables	Mean	SD	Alpha	Skewness	Kurtosis
1. Attitude	3.766	0.704	0.829	-1.055	1.300
2. Subjective norm	2.851	0.659	0.881	0.333	0.416
3. PBC	3.659	0.769	0.910	-1.079	1.340
4. Sarajevo city image	3.631	0.592	0.674	-1.396	2.866
5. eWOM	3.493	0.800	0.938	-0.911	0.968
6. Perceived risk	2.589	0.663	0.911	-0.397	-0.042
7. Visit intention	3.983	0.733	0.876	-1.385	2.383

To measure reliability we calculated the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for all variables. The results reveal that all the coefficients exceeded 0.60, which means that "internal consistency reliability" is satisfactory (Mouloudj & Bouarar, 2023). Regarding normality test, "the data follows a normal distribution if the values of skewness range between ± 2 and values of kurtosis range between ± 7 " (Mouloudj & Bouarar, 2023, p. 212). As shown in Table 2, the skewness values ranged between -1.39 and 0.33, while the Kurtosis values ranged between -0.04 and 2.86. This means that the data follows a normal distribution. In addition, we verify the multicollinearity by calculating "variance inflation factor" (VIF) values and tolerance values. Where we notice that all values of VIF are less than 5, and all values of tolerance are higher than 0.2 as suggested by Hair et al. (2013) and this means that multicollinearity does not exist.

Table 3 summarizes the results of the hierarchical regression for factors affecting the intentions of Algerian tourists to visit Sarajevo city. In first step, all of the TPB constructs were discovered to have a positive and significant effects on tourists' intentions. Model 1 significantly predicted the tourists' intentions, $F = 205.421$ ($p < 0.001$). Where it was found that attitudes ($\beta = 0.500$, $p < 0.001$), PBC ($\beta = 0.383$, $p < 0.001$), and subjective norms ($\beta = 0.120$, $p < 0.05$) are contribute to explain 71.5% of variance in intention.

Table 3: Results of Hierarchical Regress Analysis

Models		B	T	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
Step 1: $F = 205.421$ ($P < 0.001$) $R^2 = 0.715$	(constant)	0.357	2.327	0.021		
	AT	0.500	10.548	0.000	0.562	1.778
	SN	0.120	2.863	0.005	0.824	1.213
	PBC	0.383	9.070	0.000	0.594	1.685
Step 2: $F = 119.189$ ($P < 0.001$) $R^2 = 0.744$	(constant)	0.195	1.070	0.000		
	AT	0.271	4.221	0.000	0.275	3.640
	SN	0.123	3.033	0.003	0.793	1.261
	PBC	0.307	6.565	0.000	0.436	2.293
	SCI	0.296	4.129	0.000	0.312	3.204
	eWOM	0.109	2.519	0.012	0.473	2.212
	PR	-0.063	-1.715	0.088	0.955	1.047

Notes: Visit intention (VI), Attitude (AT), Subjective norm (SN), Perceived behavioral control (PBC), Sarajevo city image (SCI), Electronic word of mouth (eWOM), and Perceived risk (PR).

In second step (see Table 3), all of the TPB constructs, city image, and eWOM were discovered to have a positive and significant effects on tourists' intentions. Model 2 significantly predicted the tourists' intentions, $F = 119.189$ ($p < 0.001$). Where it was found that PBC ($\beta = 0.307$, $p < 0.001$), Sarajevo city image ($\beta = 0.296$, $p < 0.001$), attitudes ($\beta = 0.271$, $p < 0.001$), subjective norms ($\beta = 0.123$, $p < 0.05$), and eWOM ($\beta = 0.109$, $p < 0.05$) contribute to explain 74.40% of variance in intention, indicating that the added variables improved the model predictive power by 2.90%. Surprisingly, we found that perceived risk ($\beta = -0.063$, $p = 0.088$) has a negative effect, but it is not significant.

4. DISCUSSION, MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATION

4.1. Discussion

The objective of this study was to investigate the factors influencing tourists' intentions to visit Sarajevo through the framework of an extended TPB model. Our findings indicate that attitudes significantly positively influence tourists' intentions (H1). This suggests that strengthening positive attitudes towards Sarajevo as an attractive tourist destination will increase tourists' preference for it over other city destinations. The tourism marketing literature supports the notion that attitudes can enhance visitors' intentions (Doosti et al., 2016; Jalilvand & Heidari, 2017; Liu et al., 2021; Pahrudin et al., 2021; Park et al., 2017; Sujood et al., 2022), revisit intentions, and recommendations of the city (Zhang et al., 2021). Tourists' attitudes towards the city can be shaped by various factors including the opinions of others (Jalilvand & Heidari, 2017), eWOM about the city (Doosti et al., 2016), image congruence (Zhang et al., 2021), portrayals in films (Quintal & Phau, 2015), perceived risk levels (Hsieh et al., 2016), and other situational and external influences. Consequently, attitude is a multifaceted construct encompassing beliefs and emotions, which complicates efforts to modify it. Thus, understanding the determinants of tourists' attitudes towards Sarajevo can enhance the city's appeal and competitiveness in attracting tourists from other destinations.

Based on the TPB model, we hypothesized that subjective norms influence travel intentions (H2). Our analysis confirmed this hypothesis, indicating that social pressure from reference groups plays a significant role in shaping intentions to visit foreign city destinations such as Sarajevo. Previous research supports the impact of subjective norms on tourists' intentions (Hsieh et al., 2016; Liu et al., 2021; Park et al., 2017; Sudarsono et al., 2021). Members of these reference groups, drawing from their past experiences, can provide extensive information—both positive and negative—about factors such as costs, exchange rates, popular destinations (e.g., beaches, parks, museums), service quality, transportation, and types of food. However, this finding contrasts with some recent studies (e.g., Pahrudin et al., 2021; Sujood et al., 2022), which reported that subjective norms did not influence travel intentions during the COVID-19 pandemic. This discrepancy is likely attributable to the heightened risk of COVID-19 infection, which led tourists to prioritize personal safety over external opinions and may have reduced their likelihood of considering travel during the crisis.

The results confirmed the positive effect of PBC on travel intentions (H3). This indicates that the perceived ease or difficulty of travel procedures significantly influences travel intentions. Specifically, when individuals perceive fewer difficulties and greater resources available, their intentions to travel strengthen. This finding aligns with previous research by Hsieh et al. (2016), Liu et al. (2021), Pahrudin et al. (2021), and Sujood et al. (2022), which demonstrated that PBC significantly impacts the formation of visitors' intentions. Similarly, Park et al. (2017) found a positive correlation between PBC and travel intentions. Ajzen (1991) suggests that PBC is thought to encompass both previous experiences and expected obstacles and outcomes. In the context of international travel, factors such as high costs, distance, perceived risk, language barriers, lack of direct air transport, and visa requirements can pose significant barriers to travel behavior. Addressing these challenges is likely to mitigate obstacles—particularly administrative difficulties during the pre-travel phase—and enhance readiness to visit the destination. Given the array of alternative options available to tourists, those destinations that present fewer complications are more likely to attract visitors.

Consistent with findings from several studies (e.g., Doosti et al., 2016), our results affirm that a city's image positively influences the intention to visit (H4). This suggests that improvements in the city's image lead to stronger intentions to visit. The city's image can be shaped through various means, including images from sporting events (Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2007), online reputation and social media marketing (Baber & Baber, 2023), films and television series (Hudson et al., 2011; Quintal & Phau, 2015), eWOM (Chaieb & Chaieb, 2023; Setiawan et al., 2021), attitudes towards the city (Doosti et al., 2016), and previous travel experiences (Gibson et al., 2008). Nazir et al. (2021) have noted that destination image positively affects visitor behavior but can be negatively impacted by perceived risks. Additionally, some research indicates that destination image is a predictor of tourists' visit (Bui, 2023) and revisit intentions (Li et al., 2021). Nazir et al. (2021) observed that while a favorable image of a destination can mitigate risks and limitations, destinations often face challenges in overcoming these constraints. Furthermore, Park et al. (2017) discussed that destination image significantly influences attitudes, subjective norms, and PBC. Therefore, investing in enhancing Sarajevo's image is expected to attract more tourists, particularly those from distant geographical regions, where Bosnia and Herzegovina and its attractive cities remain relatively unknown and unclear.

Our findings demonstrate that positive eWOM significantly impacts the intention to travel to Sarajevo (H5). The marketing literature supports the notion that eWOM plays a crucial role in shaping tourists' intentions (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012; Chaieb & Chaieb, 2023; Saidani et al., 2023; Setiawan et al., 2021; Song et al., 2021; Wang, 2015). Jalilvand and Heidari (2017) identified both WOM and eWOM as significant predictors of travel intentions. Similarly, Doosti et al. (2016) demonstrated a positive relationship between eWOM about a city and the intention to visit that city. Additionally, social media influencers on platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram can significantly affect visitors' opinions, preferences, and choices through the information and imagery they share. Abbasi et al. (2022) found that vlog advertisements (a form of eWOM) effectively influence travel intentions. Empirical research further highlights the impact of specific social media platforms, with YouTube channels (Arora & Lata, 2020) and destination Facebook pages (Leung & Jiang, 2018) demonstrating a significant effect on intentions to visit destinations.

Finally, our findings indicate that perceived risk does not significantly affect the intention to travel to Sarajevo. This result aligns with studies by Hsieh et al. (2016) and Goel and Parayitam (2024) but contrasts with recent research suggesting that perceived risk is a critical determinant of travel intentions (e.g., Liu et al., 2021; Luo & Lam, 2020; Nazir et al., 2021; Şengel et al., 2023) and revisit intentions (Hasan et al., 2017). A plausible explanation for this discrepancy is that perceived risk among tourists is often associated with factors such as epidemics, disease outbreaks, wars, political instability, terrorism (Jiang et al., 2022), and crimes against tourists (Paliska et al., 2020). These factors typically heighten fears among international tourists who seek relaxation in safe and secure environments. Given that Sarajevo is perceived as a safe tourist destination, as reported by participants in semi-structured interviews, it is reasonable that foreign tourists may not consider risks as a significant factor in their travel decisions. Additionally, the divergence may be attributed to the timing of the studies. Some of the research reporting a significant effect of perceived risk was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, whereas our study focuses on travel intentions in the present context. The pandemic likely intensified perceived risks and fears among international tourists, which may no longer be as prevalent today.

4.2. Theoretical Implications

As Algerians' purchasing power has increased in the new millennium, their international travel patterns have expanded significantly. While traditional destinations like Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, France, Spain, and Turkey have seen high visitation rates, Balkan countries, particularly Bosnia and Herzegovina, remain less frequented. Despite Bosnia and Herzegovina's growing significance in the global tourism market, there has been a lack of research into tourists' intentions to visit its capital, Sarajevo. Therefore, this study aimed to address this gap by examining the factors influencing tourists' intentions to visit Sarajevo. Using a questionnaire distributed to 245 tourists and analyzing the data with hierarchical multiple regression, we found that PBC, city image, attitudes, subjective norms, and eWOM are significant predictors of the intention to visit Sarajevo. Conversely, perceived risk did not significantly influence travel intentions. The extended TPB model explained 74.4% of the variance in travel intentions.

Theoretical contributions include extending the TPB by incorporating city image and eWOM as significant predictors of travel intentions. This extension enriches our understanding of tourism behavior and provides a more nuanced framework for analyzing travel intentions. By integrating these additional constructs, our study offers a refined perspective on how traditional TPB factors interact with new variables in the context of urban tourism. In addition, the insights gained from this investigation can inform theoretical discussions on urban tourism strategies and development, especially in destinations seeking to rebuild their image and attract visitors after crises. Thus, integrating theoretical insights with practical implications can bridge the gap between academic research and real-world applications.

4.3. Managerial Implications

Various stakeholders, including hoteliers, airlines, tourism agencies in both countries, and ministries of tourism, can leverage the results of this study in several ways. First, our research shows that constructs of the TPB significantly impact the intention to visit Sarajevo. Accordingly, tourism managers should focus on fostering positive attitudes towards the city. This can be achieved by designing targeted advertising campaigns for specific tourist segments, such as young tourists. Offering diverse packages that consider potential tourists' purchasing power, especially concerning transportation costs to Bosnia and Herzegovina, could further attract visitors. Additionally, promoting the city through scientific conferences, sports events, and cultural festivals can generate positive WOM, particularly among audiences from African countries, with a focus on North Africa. Second, the study highlights the importance of city image in shaping visit intentions. Sarajevo's image can be enhanced through the production and dissemination of documentaries, television series, and short videos that highlight the city's positive aspects and major attractions. It is essential to tailor these promotional materials to the cultural preferences of the target audience, considering factors such as language, religion, and customs. Third, our findings indicate that eWOM effectively influences travel intentions. Therefore, digital marketing should be a central component of promotional strategies. Engaging opinion leaders and social media influencers (such as YouTubers, Facebook personalities, and vloggers) to visit Sarajevo can significantly boost the city's image among their followers, thereby enhancing travel intentions. Fourth, our research found no significant fear or hesitation among tourists regarding travel to Sarajevo. Therefore, stakeholders should continue to promote the city as a safe and secure destination. This includes showcasing tourist statistics, investing in security measures, and actively countering any negative campaigns that may distort the city's image. Finally, expanding cooperation and partnership efforts between Algeria and Bosnia and Herzegovina can improve tourist flow between the two countries. Tools such as joint promotional activities, support for tourism agencies, and measures to ease travel procedures (e.g., visa simplification, electronic visas, and direct flights or sea routes) are crucial. Strengthening these aspects will facilitate travel and enhance mutual tourism interests.

4.4. Limitation and Future Research

Although this study made a significant contribution, it is not without some limitations that provide opportunities for future research. First, the extended TPB model has explained 74.4% of the variance in tourists' intentions; this means that 25.6% of the variance is predicted by other factors such as personal motivations, social media influence, budget constraints, international travel experiences, satisfaction, and trust in travel agencies. Therefore, it would be useful for future studies to extend the TPB with

these or other factors. Besides, Sarajevo's unique historical and cultural attributes, such as its rich Ottoman heritage, historical landmarks, and post-conflict recovery, play a significant role in shaping tourists' perceptions and intentions. Future research could benefit from integrating these specific attributes into the TPB model to explore their impact on tourists' attitudes and intentions. This inclusion could provide a more detailed view of how historical and cultural factors influence travel behavior and further enhance the model's applicability to urban tourism contexts. In addition, our model can be adopted to examine the visit or re-visit intentions of capital cities in many countries, and it is also possible to delete some constructs and include others. Second, our study focused on examining the direct effects of intentions to visit Sarajevo city, while it did not examine the role of mediating (e.g., trust, tourist satisfaction, city attachment, perceived value, destination loyalty, and/or travel constraints) or moderating variables (e.g., socio-economic status, travel experience, and/or cultural variables), and then future studies can examine those roles. Third, our study faces certain geographical and historical constraints. (1) The focus on Sarajevo and Algerian tourists may limit the applicability of our findings to other destinations or regions. Future research could benefit from applying similar models to diverse geographical contexts to assess their generalizability. (2) Cultural factors specific to Algerian tourists may affect the broader applicability of our results to tourists from different cultural backgrounds. Conducting comparative studies involving tourists from various cultural contexts could offer more comprehensive insights into travel behaviors and preferences. Fourth, the use of convenience sampling may introduce selection bias. Future research could address this limitation by employing random sampling techniques to enhance the representativeness and generalizability of the findings. Fifth, we recommend conducting longitudinal studies to monitor changes in travel intentions over time. This approach would offer valuable insights into how travel intentions evolve in response to shifts in attitudes, external factors, and personal experiences. Sixth, we acknowledge that "structural equation modeling" (SEM) could provide further insights and be a valuable tool for future research. We recommend that future studies, especially those with larger sample sizes or focusing on different research questions, consider using SEM. This approach would allow for a more in-depth exploration of the relationships between constructs and the testing of more complex models. Finally, future studies could benefit from examining how demographic variables such as age, gender, education level, and travel experience might moderate the relationships between TPB constructs and travel intentions. Such analyses could offer deeper insights into how different demographic groups perceive and respond to factors influencing their travel decisions.

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APPENDIX A: MEASUREMENT ITEMS

Constructs	Item	Source
Attitude	AT1 I think Sarajevo city as a tourist destination is very good	Jalilvand & Samiei (2012)
	AT2 I believe Sarajevo city as a tourist destination is very attractive	
	AT3 I believe Sarajevo city as a tourist destination is very pleasant	
Subjective Norm	SN1 Most people who are important to me think I should visit Sarajevo city in the future	Bouarar et al. (2023); Liu et al. (2021)
	SN2 People whose opinions I value would support me to visit Sarajevo city in the future	
	SN3 Most people who influence my decisions agree with me about visiting Sarajevo city in the future	
PBC	PBC1 I have the resources to travel to Sarajevo city in the future	Bouarar et al. (2023); Liu et al. (2021)
	PBC2 I am confident that if I want, I can visit Sarajevo city in the future	
	PBC3 I think there is nothing that will prevent me from visiting Sarajevo city in the future if I so desire	
Sarajevo City Image	SCI1 Sarajevo city is safe and stable	Doosti et al. (2016); Park et al. (2017)
	SCI2 I have good impressions of Sarajevo city as a tourist destination	
	SCI3 Sarajevo city has a pleasant weather	
eWOM	eWOM1 "I often read other tourists' online travel reviews to know what destinations make good impressions on others."	Jalilvand & Heidari (2017)
	eWOM2 Online reviews influence my decision to choose a city destination.	
	eWOM3 I have great confidence in what others say online about cities' destinations	
Perceived Risk	PR1 I feel worried travel to Sarajevo city in the future	Jiang et al. (2022)
	PR2 I feel anxiety traveling to Sarajevo city in future	
	PR3 I feel that traveling to Sarajevo city in the future is safe (inverse)	
Intention	INT1 I intend to visit Sarajevo city in the future	Jalilvand and Samiei (2012)
	INT2 If everything goes as I think, I will plan to visit Sarajevo city in the future	
	INT3 I am likely to will visit Sarajevo city in the future	