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AN EXAMINATION OF FACTORS AFFECTING TOURISTS' DESTINATION CHOICE: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM BANGLADESH

Mahabuba Khanm Mim, https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6657-4929

Student, College of Tourism and Hospitality Management (CTHM), IUBAT – International University of Business Agriculture and Technology, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Md. Mahide Hasan, https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7401-4227
Student, College of Tourism and Hospitality Management (CTHM), IUBAT – International University of Business Agriculture and Technology, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Afzal Hossain, https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0747-7656
Lecturer, Department of Business Administration, Trust University, Barishal, Bangladesh

Md Yusuf Hossein Khan, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5981-8849
PhD Researcher in Tourism, Faculty of Economics, University of Algarve, Faro, Portugal

Corresponding author: Md Yusuf Hossein Khan, ysf.khn86@gmail.com
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Abstract: *The tourism industry has become an important sector that has a substantial influence on the development of a country's economy. One of the most significant benefits of tourism includes the construction and improvement of local infrastructure. Tremendous opportunities waits for Bangladesh as she has potentials to attract both local and global tourists. However, tourism and destination marketers should utilize different marketing tactics to content and retain existing customers, encourage new and prospective ones. The research was to examine the impact of destination familiarity, destination image, safety and security, travel motivation, social media and reference groups on tourists' destination choice in the contexts of Bangladesh. The research design of this study was descriptive. The study was used purposive sampling method. Primary and secondary data both were used. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire by survey method from 256 Bangladeshi tourists visiting to tourism destination using a five-point Likert scale. Statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) 25.0 version software was used for analysis the data. It was analysed using descriptive statistics analysis, multicollinearity test, reliability analysis and multiple regression analysis. The results of the regression analysis revealed that all aspects except travel motivation had a significant and positive influence on destination choice in Bangladesh. Therefore, it is recommended that the research creates awareness among prospective tourists, investigators, academicians, government authorities, tourism businesses, politicians and all the stakeholders. Hence, the research will be aided destination choice advance along with tourism destination products offer to prospect tourists in Bangladesh.*

Introduction

The world's tourism business is growing rapidly. Because of its importance to both developing and developed countries, the tourism industry is always evolving. People who travel and stay in a new location for more than a year for vacation, business, or other reasons are considered tourists by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). The tourist industry is critical to a country's economic success. International tourism is described by the UNWTO as the movement of humans to nations or areas outside their typical surroundings for personal, business, or occupational reasons. Tourism is a critical driver of socioeconomic growth on a global scale, creating jobs and businesses, exporting currency, and building infrastructure (UNWTO, 2015).

Tourism is the fastest growing and most important industry on the planet. It has the ability to play a substantial role in the country's overall economy's supply of products and services. The project's objective is to conduct an evaluation of Bangladesh's tourism business. To present an overview of the difficulties and challenges confronting the tourism marketing sector in Bangladesh (Ahmmed, 2013). Travel and tourism have an important part in economic development. The natural beauty and rich cultural history of Bangladesh attract potential tourists, but the tourism sector is unable to reach its goals because of inadequate marketing methods. The study recommends that the government establish a tourism strategy immediately in order to expand this business. Bangladesh's GDP is heavily reliant on tourism, which is critical to a variety of growing businesses around the world (Tuhin and Majumder, 2011). For her natural beauty, Bangladesh is a popular destination for tourists. The tourism business relies heavily on these treasured natural and cultural resources. Nature-lovers from all over the world come here every year and contribute significantly to our national economy. Archaeological and historical tourism in Bangladesh, as part of a wider tourism industry, can be the main source of overall tourism revenues, as Bangladesh has many things to offer our important tourists (Chowdhury and Ahmed, 2015). Archaeological and historical sites are the first choice of foreign visitors to Bangladesh, followed by scenic beauty.

Attractions, support services, and tourist resources are all included in the definition of a "destination," which is defined as a unique location where visitors spend at least one night. A destination has a number of crucial qualities that draw in tourists and suit their demands after they've there. Many authors have defined and classified these elements (Holloway et al., 2009). Attractions, amenities, infrastructure, transportation, and hospitality are just a few of the components that make up a destination, according to Mill and Morrison (1992). Among the essential components of a location, according to Buhalis (2000), are the following: activities and supplementary services, as well as attractions, accessibility, facilities, and available packages. However, according to Holloway et al. (2009), a successful destination's success in attracting tourists is dependent on the quality of the essential benefits that it offers: attractions, facilities, and accessibility. These are the only three basic characteristics. It is important to consider all of these aspects while making travel plans, as stated by Moutinho (2005). They all serve the same aim but in slightly different ways: to make a destination accessible and appropriate for visitors. Making a decision is the process of recognizing and selecting from among the possible solutions to a problem in light of the requirements of the situation (Al-Tarawneh, 2012). The choice set approach (Sirakaya and Woodside, 2005) has been used to describe how this process occurs, given the primary challenge in consumer behavior is choice. In order to make a decision, you must choose between two or more possibilities (Djeri et al., 2007). The most important stage of the purchase process, choice, deals with the transition from motivation to action and is closely linked to activity (Moutinho, 1987). When a solution to an issue is chosen and put into action, that's when a decision is made. In general, travellers tend to make a series of decisions before settling on a final location. Destination-selection decisions are influenced by numerous variables, including the impact on tourists' personal preferences, as well as the impact of other external circumstances (Djeri et al., 2007). Diverse motives motivate and entice travelers to visit various locations (Cohen et al., 2014). Visitors who have had a pleasant experience are more likely to tell their friends about their trip, return, and provide comments about their trip. However, disappointed tourists, in addition to not recommending it to others, may also criticize the choice (Chen and Chen, 2010).

After reviewing most related literature of factors that impact on tourists' destination choice, it is clear that maximum researchers tried to measure the impact of destination familiarity, destination image, safety and security, travel motivations, social media and reference groups on satisfaction, revisit intention, loyalty, purchase decision, loyalty, choice of accommodation in destinations of all over the world, but this study has been tried to

focus on investigating the influence of destination familiarity, destination image, safety and security, travel motivations, social media and reference groups on tourists' destination choice in the contexts of Bangladesh.

The research paper is allocated into several sections. Initially, objectives of the study. Secondly, the literature review is provided based on a past study. Thirdly, the conceptual model and hypotheses development have been demonstrated. Fourthly, research methodologies that are applied to the current research are described. Fifthly, the paper is presented with the results and interpretations. Sixthly, the discussions, conclusion and implications section incorporate the consequences of present research and its linkups with the previous studies. At the end of the segment, the shortcomings and potential directions of the research are stated.

Objective of the study

The broad objective of this study was to examine the factors influencing tourists' destination choice in the perspectives of Bangladesh. Specific objectives are: to measure the tourists' knowledge level toward tourism destinations; to evaluate the tourists' interest level of tourism destinations; to analyse the tourists' perception toward tourism destinations; and to assess the influence of destination familiarity, destination image, safety and security, travel motivations, social media and reference groups on tourists' destination choice in the contexts of Bangladesh.

Literature review and conceptual framework

Destination choice

Destination choice refers to narrowing down the number of destinations and making a final decision by potential tourists. Before choosing a holiday destination, people gather information and assess the pros and disadvantages of each (Crompton, 1992). The choice of destination is impacted by internal and external factors (motivation, personality, travel costs, accessibility, and the surrounding environment) (Belk, 1975). Because each site has its own demand type, destination marketers must consider visitor motivations when recommending destinations. Marketers must also consider the motives of new tourists as well as current tourists' objectives and needs. The impact of factors such as basic tourist personality traits (Lepp & Gibsonb, 2008), distance from or cost of a site, and climate information on destination selection has been explored (Bigano et al., 2006). While these studies examine how a destination's qualities affect visitors' intentions to visit, return, or never return, the importance of a visitor's choice of location within a specific area is often disregarded. Familiarity should be studied more closely when it comes to destination sub-choices. Determining a vacation destination has long been stressed in travel literature (Papatheodorou, 2001). Tourists' choices, according to Dellaert et al. (1998), are multi-faceted and change over time. Quality and cost (Nicolau and Mas, 2006) are among the key destination attributes previously studied (Goossens, 2000). Brau (2008) found that fair access to key attractions and environmental quality were the most important criteria in attracting tourists. Segumpan et al. (2010) evaluated a city's family tourism activities. According to their research, the most critical elements that families consider when determining whether to travel domestically or internationally are cost, safety, and the chance to travel together. Huybers (2003) discovered that the quality of amenities and population density of a place were also major factors in travel decisions. Crouch and Louviere (2000) reviewed a large body of research on decision modeling in tourism, hospitality, and leisure. Visitors naturally construct mental representations of the decision options and context they encounter, as Dellaert et al. (2014) reveal. The research on choice modeling can benefit from better understanding the main components that influence tourists' mental representations of travel decisions.

Destination familiarity

Making a travel decision is a dangerous and uncertain process (Sirakaya and Woodside, 2005). Travelers seek ways to lessen the risks associated with the destinations they choose for their vacations in the same way that consumers do when making product purchase decisions, where the perception of purchase risk causes caution or risk aversion and leads to various risk-handling activities intended to reduce choice uncertainty (Campbell and Goodstein, 2001). Lepp and Gibson (2003) stated that risk perceptions and decisions can be influenced by familiarity, which has been found in both the product selection and tourist literatures. Consumer research demonstrates that product familiarity reduces risk and increases the likelihood that a new product or brand would

be chosen over an existing one (Heilman et al., 2000). Familiarity with tourist destinations is also an essential factor in influencing tourist travel inclinations and the risk perceptions of tourists (Yang et al., 2009). According to Lepp and Gibson (2003), People's mental imagery and desire to travel to a place improve when they have a high level of familiarity with the location (Prentice, 2004; Yang et al., 2009). According to the research of Chen and Lin (2012), tourists feel more secure in places they are familiar with, while places they are unfamiliar with may be seen as more dangerous. Accordingly, familiarity reduces the impression of risk and so increases the confidence of passengers in their destination decision (Lepp and Gibson, 2003). Through previous travels or information about a destination, familiarity can be improved (Baloglu, 2001). This may explain why long-haul travelers may have a higher sense of risk due to a lack of prior travel experience and knowledge about a destination, but short-haul passengers may have a lower impression of risk. In addition, long-haul travel often has larger financial risks (costs) than short-haul travel. It is crucial for long-haul travelers to be familiar with a location since the dangers connected with long-haul travel tend to be higher than those associated with short-haul trips. Therefore, it is expected that,

Hypothesis 1 (H₁): Destination familiarity has a positive and significant influence on destination choice.

Destination image

A person's overall impression of a location is referred to as their "destination image" (Jalilvand et al., 2012). The image of a destination has long been a focus of marketing scholarship in tourism (Song et al., 2017). According to research conducted by Song et al. (2017) among golf tourists in Hainan Area, China, the perception of a tourist location has a considerable impact on the likelihood that those tourists will return. A study of Iranian tourists found that the country's image as a sports tourism destination increases people's desire to return (Allameh et al., 2015). According to Kim et al. (2013), both high- and low-spending tourists' intentions to return to Crete were positively correlated with the destination's image. It was found that travelers who had a favourable overall impression of the destination were more likely to return and suggest the place they had visited to others. This suggests that if a tourist's spot's reputation as a destination is tarnished in any way, it will influence their desire to return there. In the field of tourism, Baloglu and McCleary (1999) found that stimuli and personal variables had a beneficial impact on the perception of a location. As a result, tourists' perceptions of the destination have a considerable impact on their attitude toward the place (Kim and Stepchenkova, 2015). According to Jalilvand et al. (2012), the information source (stimulus/pull factors) indirectly affects tourists' opinions toward the destination through the image of the place. Consumer attitude formation has been studied by Zhou and Bao (2002), who identified perception as an important mediator between the relationship between motivation and attitude. It's essential that the product had a good effect on visitors' decision-making process (Hossain and Khan, 2018). Therefore, it is expected that,

Hypothesis 2 (H₂): Destination image has a positive and significant influence on destination choice.

Safety and Security

All tourist sites, including transportation routes, zoos, parks, restaurants, rest rooms, hotels, malls, and religious places, require a high level of safety for visitors (Abraham and Mansfel, 1996). Other factors that contribute to a tourist's sense of safety include the character of the physical environment, the likelihood of criminal behavior (such as pickpocketing or theft), and the likelihood of a tourist being attacked. If the safety image of the destination in tourist-generating regions is tarnished by media attention, it will have an impact on tourism, which in turn will have an impact on the economy. The number of tourists and the amount of money they bring in will fall if any civil upheaval culminates in violence is reported in the media. It doesn't matter if you call it safety or security; they're both critical to the tourism sector. This is why it's common for authors to combine the words safety and security into a single term, assurance (Popescu, 2001). According to Tarlow (Tarlow, 2014), a vacation is not the only thing that is affected by a lack of confidence in the tourism business. The intersection of safety, security, reputation, and economic viability is where "certainty" in tourism is found. Furthermore, the goal of ensuring certainty is to lessen the likelihood of a negative occurrence occurring. Crime, terrorism, food safety, health difficulties, and natural catastrophes are the five key factors affecting the tourism business in this new era (Mohd and Masron, 2014). According to research, tourists are exposed to varying degrees of risk, and their choice of

location is not solely determined by price or image of the area, but also by their own level of personal safety and security (Eitzinger and Wiedemann, 2009). There will be a greater emphasis on crime and health in the country tourism industry. Therefore, it is expected that,

Hypothesis 3 (H₃): Safety and security have a positive and significant influence on destination choice.

Travel motivation

Travel motivation refers to an individual's personal goals and characteristics of a destination that motivate him or her to take a trip there. It is described as push and pull motivation (Mutinda and Mayaka, 2012). Travel motivation is a tourist's conviction that their visit to a certain destination would fulfill internal travel desires and experience certain features that they value. Tourism, like other industries, has proven motivation as a key predictor of behavior judgments. Physiological, safety, belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization requirements are engrained in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Chon, 1989). Tourists' motive for travel comprises two more wants: aesthetic and knowledge-based. Arousal seeking motives are those that seek inductive arousal to satisfy the first three human wants (physiological, safety, and belonging) (Mill and Morrison, 1985). According to Wu (2015), travel motivation is the desire to relieve stress, appreciate nature, see beautiful sights, and learn. Tourism literature and associated models of travel destination selection and decision-making suggest that a tourist's choice of place is impacted by Push and Pull motive (Crompton, 1979). This idea explains why people are forced out of their homes and lured to certain places by external forces (Mutinda & Mayaka, 2012). Push factors are socio-psychological factors that influence travel decisions. Most push factors are fundamental human desires (Awaritefe, 2004). Pull factors, on the other hand, are those that entice people to travel once they have decided to do so. It is commendable that the tourism and hospitality industries are embracing new technology such as social media to engage with consumers. Because ICT was used wisely and efficiently, fewer people were needed (Khan and Hossain, 2018). They are both real and intangible resources linked with a destination that lure people to travel (Hsu et al., 2009). In addition to knowing trip desires, pull incentives help highlight actual destination selection (Baloglu and Uysal, 1996). Therefore, it is expected that,

Hypothesis 4 (H₄): Travel motivation has a positive and significant influence on destination choice.

Social media

The way people communicate, make decisions, socialize, learn, entertain, shop, and engage has been profoundly impacted by the proliferation of social media. The dissemination of tourism-related information and the way people plan and consume travel have been fundamentally revolutionized by the internet and related technologies (Buhalis and Law, 2008). It is possible for people to share a great deal of information on social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest and others. Social networking services are becoming increasingly popular as a means of exchanging, requesting, and acquiring data and expertise. People use social networking sites for amusement and to find solutions to issues they face on a daily basis (Lin and Wang, 2020). When it comes to social media, Facebook is one of the most popular options for internet users around the world (Zarella, 2010). Established in 2004, Facebook is a leading social media platform. Groups such as friends, family, and coworkers can be readily formed on Facebook to facilitate communication. Every aspect of a person's life can be shared on Facebook. Other members of the network have access to view the profiles of other members. People, academics, and businesses can all make use of Facebook for a variety of things. Users of Facebook's Trips program can share their vacation plans and experiences. They have the opportunity to make new acquaintances while on the road. Trips is a Facebook application that helps users decide where to go and how to get there. This software also allows users to rapidly connect with other travelers who share their interests (Sigala et al., 2012). While there are many people who use Facebook, it's clear that the social media network has a significant impact on travelers' destination preferences. Therefore, it is expected that,

Hypothesis 5(H₅): Social media has a positive and significant influence on destination choice.

## Reference groups

Consumers use reference groups to compare their own views and behaviors to those of other people in their social circles (Escalas and Bettman, 2003). Parents, instructors, and friends (or peers) are examples of normative

referents, a variety of reference groups that have a considerable impact on consumer decision-making. In addition, due of the importance of family effects in shaping a person's values and expectations, the immediate family will always be the most reliable source of information (Moutinho, 1987). Numerous studies in marketing, psychology, and sociology have scientifically validated and supported the premise that reference groups are a key source of individual norms, attitudes, and values through direct interaction (Park and Lessig, 1977). (Childers and Rao, 1992; Johar and Sirgy 1991; Leigh and Gabel, 1992; Mehta et al., 2001). Influenced by promotional activities and reference groups, travelers chose destinations based on the positive and significant impact (Siddique and Hossain, 2018). People whose values and beliefs are followed by others, and hence affect others' purchase decisions, are referred to as the "reference group" by Solomon (2006). It's common for people to look up to others in their social circles for guidance on how they should live their lives (Mowen and Minor, 2000). There are several aspects that affect the development of tourist industries, such as fiscal, environmental, as well as social, that need to be taken into account by the private sector, according to Khan and colleagues (2018). People can be influenced by reference groups in a variety of ways, including their behavior and attitudes, the conventions of the group's adherents, and so on (Mowen and Minor, 2000). Using social dilemma theory, we identify the influence of a tourist's reference group on their destination decision (Gupta and Ogden, 2009). Therefore, it is expected that,

Hypothesis 6 (H₆): Reference groups have a positive and significant influence on destination choice.

In this research, there are seven independent variables (destination familiarity, destination image, safety and security, travel motivation, social media, and reference groups) and one dependent variable (tourists' destination choice) have recognized. Based on the previous literatures and discussions, the conceptual model (Figure 1) and research hypotheses (from H_1 to H_6) have been developed.
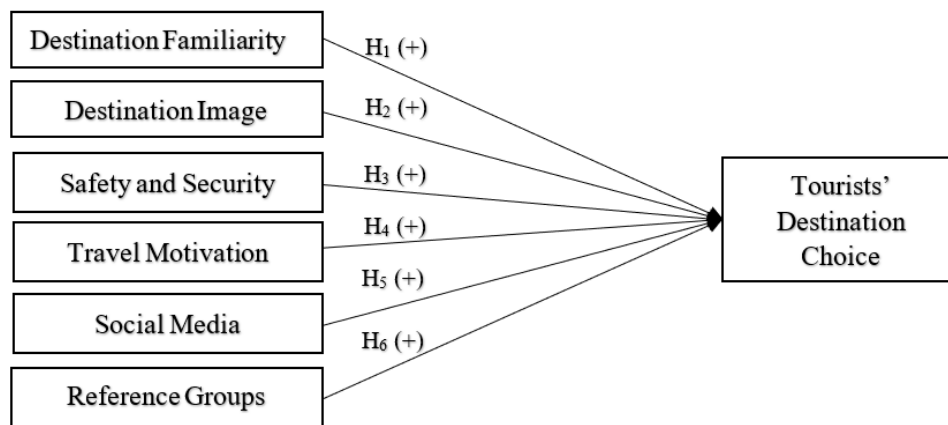
Figure 1. Conceptual model

Source: developed by the author.

Research methods

Research design & sampling method

The present study was of a quantitative kind. It was decided to employ a descriptive research approach for this research. Using descriptive method and with the goal of collecting primary data, the study conducted surveys on investigation of factors influencing tourists' destination choice in Bangladeshi settings, with an emphasis on descriptive data collection. It was decided to adopt non-probability sampling method, specifically purposive sampling, for this study.

Sources of data

A combination of primary and secondary data was employed in the study project. The primary data was gathered through the use of a detailed questionnaire that was well-structured. Past research were used as secondary data sources.

Measurement instruments and scaling

Scale items were adapted from Yang et al. (2009), Lepp and Gibson (2003), Allameh et al. (2015), Jalilvand et al. (2012), Lee and Lockshin (2011), Liliana (2011), Vijay Pereira et al. (2019), Joyeeta and Nigel (2021), Siddique and Hossain (2018), Dellaert et al. (2014), Bigano et al. (2006), where the items were found to be reliable and valid. The scale items for measuring constructs (Destination familiarity, destination image, safety and security, travel motivation, social media, reference groups), The variables that were measured are listed in Table 1. Among the general information provided by respondents is their age categories, gender types, education level, occupation, and purpose of the visit. The first section of the questionnaire asks for basic information about them. The second segment contains questions pertaining to examine the factors affecting destination choice in the contexts of Bangladesh. A five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree was used to gauge respondents' level of agreement or disagreement with the survey's conclusions. Prior to finishing the questionnaire, a pretesting phase was carried out on 30 tourists.

Table 1. Constructs and measured variable

Constructs	Measurement Items	Sources
Destination familiarity	Tourists are familiar with tourism destination Tourits aware about tourism destination Tourist have a past experience about tourism destination	Yang et al. (2009), Lepp and Gibson (2003)
Destination image	Bangladesh has beautiful scenery and natural attractions Bangladesh has a pleasant climate and weather Bangladesh offers exciting and interesting places to visit	Allameh et al. (2015), Jalilvand et al. (2012), Lee and Lockshin (2011)
Safety and Security	Business cost of terrorism Reliability of police services Business costs of crime and violence	Liliana (2011)
Travel motivation	Get knowledge about the destination Reduce psychological stress Enjoy good weather and remain healthy and fit Seek adventure and entertainment	Vijay Pereira et al. (2019)
Social media	Social media provide needful information to the tourists Social media increase footfall in the tourism destination Social media motive to choice the destination	Joyeeta and Nigel (2021)
Reference groups	Friends & colleagues influence to visit the destination Family members persuades to select the destination Pressure groups and celebrities impact on choice destination	Siddique and Hossain (2018)
Destination choice	Tourists have decided to visit the destionation Tourits are satisfied to visit the destionaion Tourits will recommed to visit the destination	Dellaert et al. (2014), Bigano et al. (2006)

Source: developed by the authors.

Data collection

The research was collected data from the month of January to March 2022 in personal interview by survey technique through a structured questionnaire with five-point Likert scales from 256 tourists who have selected to tourism destination areas in the perspective of Bangladesh.

Data analysis

Statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) 25.0 version software was used for analysis the data. It was analysed using descriptive statistics analysis, multicollinearity test, reliability analysis and multiple regression analysis.

Results and analysis

Descriptive statistics analysis

The centre of a distribution is indicated by the mean or central tendency (Malhotra, 2010). Furthermore, the deviation of the data or observation from the mean or central point can be measured by the standard deviation

(Malhotra, 2010). The shape of the distribution is generally determined by Kurtosis and skewness (Hair et al., 2019). The results of descriptive statistics including mean, standard deviation, kurtosis and skewness were illustrated in Table 2. Mean statistic indicated that all the constructs had a mean value above 3.0 whereas safety and security generated the highest mean of 4.0859. Besides, the travel motivations had the lowest mean value of 3.2148. Skewness and kurtosis values were close to 0 indicating that the distributions of the data related to the research variables follow normality assumption.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics analysis

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Destination familiarity	256	3.5938	.97367	-.343	.152	-.233	.303
Destination image	256	3.8281	1.12099	-.717	.152	-.261	.303
Safety and Security	256	4.0859	1.09206	-1.027	.152	.050	.303
Travel motivation	256	3.2148	1.27907	-.239	.152	-.981	.303
Social media	256	3.7734	1.01142	-.496	.152	-.444	.303
Reference groups	256	3.3203	1.10920	-.087	.152	-.737	.303
Destination choice	256	3.7949	.84130	-.366	.152	-.276	.303

Source: Field survey 2022.

Multicollinearity test

According to Hair et al. (2019), the estimated path coefficients can be affected if the exogenous constructs are highly correlated among themselves. Among various methods, variance inflation factor (VIF) and tolerance level are commonly used to assess any presence of multicollinearity. As recommended by Hair et al. (2019), VIF should be less than 5 and tolerance should be more than above 0.10. As illustrated in Table 3, all VIF and tolerance values did not cross the recommended threshold levels and thus, no such multicollinearity was there.

Table 3. Multicollinearity test

Constructs	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
Destination familiarity	.687	1.456
Destination image	.691	1.447
Safety and Security	.904	1.106
Travel motivation	.725	1.379
Social media	.812	1.232
Reference groups	.785	1.273

Source: Field survey 2022.

Assessment of reliability tests

Construct reliability denotes the dependability of each latent construct's internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha is one of the most common approaches for determining the construct's reliability. The recommended reliability value scores are equal to or greater than 0.70. (Hair et al., 2019). Table 4 demonstrated that all of the Cronbach's alpha values are within acceptable limits, indicating that the constructs are reliable for further analysis.

Table 4. Assessment of reliability tests

Constructs	Number of measurement items	Cronbach's Alpha
Destination familiarity	3	0.721
Destination image	3	0.801
Safety and Security	3	0.761
Travel motivation	4	0.770
Social media	3	0.711
Reference groups	3	0.720
destination choice	3	0.897

Source: Field survey 2022.

Model Summary

As illustrated in Table 5, the correlation coefficient value (R) is equal to 0.672 which recommends that there is moderate positive relationship between destination choice and destination familiarity, destination image, safety and security, travel motivation, social media, reference groups. However, only 45.2% (R-square values of .452) variation in destination choice accounted due to destination awareness, destination image, safety and security, travel motivation, social media, and reference groups. The adjusted r2 is .439 indicating that the six factors can significantly account for 43.9% variance in the destination choice.

Table 5. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.672	.452	.439	.63041

Source: Field survey 2022.

ANOVA

As illustrated in Table 6, multiple regression analysis is performed to examine the relationship between destination familiarity, destination image, safety and security, travel motivation, social media and reference groups with destination choice. Six factors are proposed and results are computed. The F- value is 34.191 with a significant level 0.000 which is less than 0.01 with 6 and 249 degrees of freedom and it declares model fitness for regression analysis.

Table 6. ANOVA

|	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	81.528	6	13.588	34.191	.000b
	Residual	98.955	249	.397		
	Total	180.483	255			

Source: Field survey 2022.

Coefficients

To test the formulated hypotheses, a two-tailed t-test was adopted where the level of significance was 5%. If the measured t-value is greater than the critical value of 1.96, the coefficients would be statistically significant. Table 7 and Figure 2, the results found that the path coefficients of three latent constructs including destination familiarity, destination image, safety and security, social media and reference groups had a significant and positive impact on destination choice at $p<0,05$. Hypotheses H_1, H_2, H_3, H_5 and H_6 were accepted. However, the other one factor, travel motivation had no significant positive influence on destination choice. Thus, H_4 were rejected. The largest path coefficient ($\beta 5 = 0.420$) of social media indicated that if the social media is increased by one standard deviation unit, the destination choice of tourists would possibly increase by 0.420 standard deviation unit provided that all other independent aspects remain unchanged.

Table 7. Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Results
		B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	.715	.237		3.018	.003	
	H_1: Destination familiarity	.125	.049	.145	2.564	.011	Accepted
	H_2: Destination image	.137	.042	.183	3.240	.001	Accepted
	H_3: Safety and Security	.105	.038	.136	2.755	.006	Accepted
	H_4: Travel motivation	.022	.036	.034	.614	.539	Rejected
	H_5: Social media	.349	.043	.420	8.056	.000	Accepted
	H_6: Reference groups	.130	.040	.171	3.228	.001	Accepted

Source: Field survey 2022.
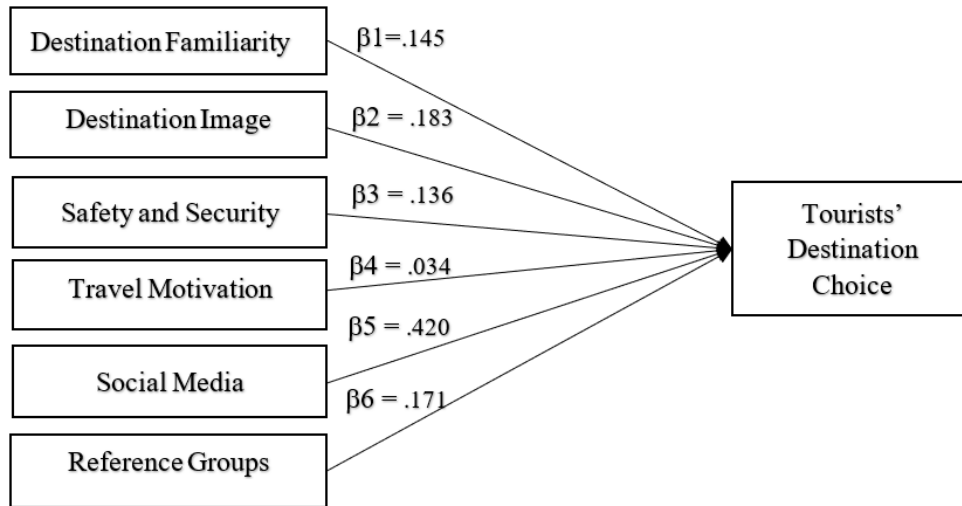
Figure 2. The results of the full model

Source: developed by the authors.

Discussions and Conclusion

The research aimed at investigating the influence of destination familiarity, destination image, safety and security, travel motivation, social media and reference groups on tourists' destination choice in the contexts of Bangladesh. It had been found that most of the researchers explored the impact of destination familiarity, destination image, safety and security, travel motivation, social media and reference groups on satisfaction, revisit intention, loyalty, purchase decision, loyalty, choice of accommodation in destinations (Lepp and Gibsonb, 2008; Yang et al., 2009; Hossain et al., 2020; Rahman et al., 2019; Van and Viet, 2019; Pomering et al., 2011). However, there was less focus and thus few studies into the impact of destination familiarity, destination image, safety and security, travel motivation, social media and reference groups on tourists' destination choice in Bangladesh.

The results showed a significant impact of the destination familiarity, destination image, safety and security, social media and reference groups had a significant and positive impact on destination choice. On the contrary, there was not a significant relationship between travel motivation and destination choice. Among all the factors, social media was the most important driver ($\beta5 = 0.420$). This result was in line with Sigala et al. (2012) who noted that social media did have a significant effect on destination choice. Among all the factors, the travel motivation was the least insignificant driver ($\beta4 = 0.034$). Travel motivation was the insignificant factor which was inconsistent with Wu (2015), who found that travel motivation had a significant impact on destination choice. Likewise, Destination image was the significant factor ($\beta2 = 0.183$) which was consistent with Kim and Stepchenkova (2015) who found a significant relationship between destination image and destination choice. Reference groups was the significant factor ($\beta6 = 0.171$) which was consistent with Siddique and Hossain (2018), Gupta and Ogden (2009) who found a significant association between reference groups and awareness and destination choice. Also, destination familiarity was the significant factor ($\beta1= 0.145$) which was consistent with Lepp and Gibson (2003) who found a significant relationship between destination familiarity and destination choice. Last one, safety and security was the significant factor ($\beta3= 0.136$) which was consistent with Eitzinger and Wiedemann (2009) who found a significant relationship between safety and security and destination choice.

Many countries around the world rely heavily on tourism for their economic well-being. Tourism has a number of advantages for the host countries. For the economy to grow and people to have a sense of cultural interchange between citizens and foreigners is fostered by the growth of tourism. Visitors' expectations of a given site are influenced by a wide range of factors, including culture, architecture and gastronomy; infrastructure; landscape; events; shopping; etc. Attractions like these draw tourists to a location and enhance their vacations. The global economy and the development of each nation have been greatly influenced by the tourism industry (Milne and Ateljevic, 2001). Rather than producing or manufacturing goods, many countries are rapidly turning to service

industries like business consulting, technology, banking, cooking, cleaning, advertising, accounting, education, and tourism. In terms of these services, the worldwide market is focusing on the tourism industry. However, it also encompasses other industries like as lodging and food service and entertainment, all of which contribute to the expansion of job opportunities in the region. World Tourism Organization (WTO) data shows that (UNWTO, 2015). The study aimed at exploring how the factors affect destination choice in the perspectives of Bangladesh. The findings reveal that the destination choice of tourists has been influenced by five factors. Conversely, one factor had an insignificant relationship with tourists' destination choice. Thus, it is recommended that the research creates awareness among prospective tourists, investigators, academicians, government authorities, tourism businesses, politicians, and all the stakeholders. Hence, the research will be supported destination choice advance along with tourism destination products offer to prospect tourists in Bangladesh.

Limitation and further research

The research has been demonstrated the influence of destination familiarity, destination image, safety and security, travel motivation, social media and reference groups on destination choice in the perspectives of Bangladesh. However, the study has also some limitations. First of all, it is challenging to generalize results using a purposive sampling method which may not represent the true population. It is recommended that the probability sampling technique be used in future studies to improve the generalization of the population. Secondly, owing to sampling area including Dhaka based tourism destination the data may not be the true representation of the overall judgment of the Bangladeshi tourists. Third, the present research considers the destination choice toward tourism destination sector in the case of Bangladeshi tourists, thus ignores tourists from abroad. Fourthly, a small group of 256 tourists with at least one time visit to the tourism destination in Bangladesh was considered. A broader sample size, including national and international tourists, should be included in the expanded version of the study. Finally, the data were analysed by SPSS 25.0 version, the limitation is the complexity of the reality which could be not demonstrated perfectly in a model. Future study can take account of diverse tourists sectors to get comprehensive outcomes.

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