

Destination Crisis Communication for Tourist Coping and Revisit Safety Assurance

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Abstract

This study addresses the critical challenge of preserving traveler retention under accelerating global climate volatility by examining how destination crisis communication shapes consumer psychology. Integrating Protection Motivation Theory and Source Credibility Theory, this research develops a structural model examining how Perceived Communication Sincerity and Crisis Information Quality influence Destination Coping Appraisal, Destination Brand Trust, and Revisit Safety Assurance. A quantitative approach employing partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was applied to data collected from 350 tourists with recent travel experience to climate-risk destinations. The empirical findings confirm that all seven hypothesized direct relationships are positive and statistically significant. Crisis Information Quality emerged as the strongest predictor of Destination Coping Appraisal, whereas Perceived Communication Sincerity played a critical role in strengthening Destination Brand Trust. Both Destination Coping Appraisal and Destination Brand Trust significantly enhanced tourists' Revisit Safety Assurance, with the proposed model explaining 58.8% of its variance. The findings extend tourism crisis communication literature by demonstrating that effective crisis communication supports psychological resilience through both cognitive preparedness and institutional trust. Practically, the study provides destination management organizations with evidence-based guidance for designing authentic and high-quality crisis communication strategies that strengthen visitor confidence and support destination resilience under increasing climate-related risks.

Keywords: *Destination Crisis Communication, Climate Risk Perception, Protection Motivation Theory, Destination Brand Trust, Revisit Safety Assurance.*

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INTRODUCTION

The contemporary global tourism landscape operates under perpetual vulnerability, increasingly disrupted by severe environmental shocks and shifting climate dynamics. Destructive meteorological phenomena, localized ecosystem collapses, and unpredictable disaster cycles are no longer distant anomalies; they represent immediate operational hazards that alter tourist choices and challenge the long-term viability of destinations (da Silva & da Costa, 2025; Ridzuan et al., 2025). Because tourism depends heavily on perceived safety and mobility, climate-induced risks quickly reduce traveller confidence and shift travel demand, threatening destination competitiveness and local economies (Grigoriadis et al., 2025; Nam & Yang, 2025). Consequently, cultivating destination resilience requires more than physical infrastructure or post-disaster recovery frameworks. It also requires effective crisis communication that reduces

uncertainty and restores tourists' psychological sense of safety before they decide to travel (Biswas et al., 2025; Raza & Salman, 2025).

Destination crisis communication therefore plays a central role in shaping tourists' responses to environmental disruptions. Official communication serves as the primary channel through which tourists interpret, mitigate, or amplify risks (Cornell et al., 2026; Lv et al., 2026). Although earlier studies largely emphasized the volume and frequency of official information (da Silva & da Costa, 2025), recent evidence suggests that tourists increasingly evaluate the credibility of communication rather than its quantity (Fan & Li, 2026; Liu et al., 2025). Generic or defensive public relations messages often generate skepticism instead of reassurance, whereas communication perceived as sincere and supported by reliable information strengthens confidence in destination management (Ruan et al., 2025; Yang et al., 2025).

Despite these advances, an important theoretical gap remains. Existing tourism crisis research has predominantly examined how perceived risk discourages travel intentions (Nam & Yang, 2025; Tovar-Perpuli et al., 2025), treating risk primarily as a deterrent rather than investigating how destination communication can strengthen tourists' capacity to cope with environmental threats. Protection Motivation Theory (PMT) provides a useful framework to address this limitation by distinguishing between threat appraisal and coping appraisal (Rogers, 1975, 1983). While threat appraisal has received extensive empirical attention, coping appraisal—particularly its development through destination crisis communication—remains comparatively underexplored (Li et al., 2026; Jieyao et al., 2025).

A second gap concerns the downstream psychological consequences of coping appraisal. Although previous studies recognize the importance of trust during crises (Lorgnier et al., 2025; Ruan et al., 2025), limited research has examined how communication quality enhances Destination Coping Appraisal, subsequently reinforces Destination Brand Trust, and ultimately increases Revisit Safety Assurance. Existing models frequently employ complex moderated relationships that complicate theoretical interpretation and managerial application, leaving the direct psychological pathways insufficiently understood (Xu et al., 2025).

To address these gaps, this study proposes a parsimonious direct structural framework linking destination crisis communication with key psychological outcomes. Rather than introducing entirely new constructs, the study advances the literature by integrating two complementary dimensions of destination crisis communication—Perceived Communication Sincerity (PCS), representing the perceived authenticity, transparency, and empathy of official communication (Ruan et al., 2025), and Crisis Information Quality (CIQ), reflecting the clarity, usefulness, and accuracy of crisis information (Yang et al., 2025)—within a unified framework grounded in Protection Motivation Theory (Rogers, 1975) and Source Credibility Theory (Hovland et al., 1953). This framework examines how these communication dimensions strengthen Destination Coping Appraisal (DCA) and Destination Brand Trust (DBT), which subsequently shape tourists' Revisit Safety Assurance (RSA).

This study contributes to the tourism crisis communication literature in three important ways. First, it extends previous research by emphasizing the qualitative dimensions of crisis communication, demonstrating that communication sincerity and information quality represent distinct strategic resources for strengthening tourists' psychological resilience during climate-related crises. Second, it advances the application of Protection Motivation Theory by positioning Destination Coping Appraisal as a communication-driven cognitive mechanism linking destination crisis communication to Destination Brand Trust and Revisit Safety Assurance. Third, the study empirically validates a direct structural framework that offers a theoretically coherent and managerially practical explanation of how authentic, high-quality crisis communication can strengthen destination resilience without relying on complex moderated relationships.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

The structural resilience of tourism destinations under increasing climate-related uncertainty depends not only on physical preparedness but also on tourists' psychological responses to crisis information (da Silva & da Costa, 2025; Biswas et al., 2025). During environmental disruptions, tourists continuously evaluate whether a destination remains sufficiently safe for present or future travel. These evaluations are shaped by both the credibility of crisis communication and the cognitive processes through which individuals assess their ability to cope with perceived risks. Accordingly, this study integrates Source Credibility Theory and Protection Motivation Theory as complementary theoretical perspectives that explain successive stages of tourists' psychological decision-making.

Source Credibility Theory (Hovland et al., 1953) provides the model's communication perspective. The theory proposes that individuals are more likely to accept and rely on information when they perceive the source as trustworthy and competent. Within destination crisis communication, these credibility attributes are reflected through two complementary dimensions: Perceived Communication Sincerity (PCS), representing transparency, honesty, and empathy, and Crisis Information Quality (CIQ), representing the accuracy, clarity, timeliness, and usefulness of crisis information (Ruan et al., 2025; Yang et al., 2025). When destination management organizations communicate sincere, reliable messages, tourists are more likely to perceive official information as credible, reducing uncertainty during environmental crises (Cornell et al., 2026; Lv et al., 2026).

Protection Motivation Theory (Rogers, 1975, 1983) then explains how people cognitively process this credible information. PMT proposes that individuals respond to hazards through two cognitive evaluations: threat appraisal and coping appraisal. While tourism studies have extensively examined threat appraisal, focusing on perceived vulnerability and destination avoidance (Jiang et al., 2025; Liu et al., 2025), considerably less attention has been devoted to coping appraisal, which reflects individuals' confidence that available protective measures are sufficient to manage perceived risks (Li et al., 2026; Jieyao et al., 2025). In the destination context, this confidence is represented by Destination Coping Appraisal (DCA), which refers to tourists' evaluation of a destination's preparedness, adaptive capacity, and crisis management capability.

Integrating these theories establishes a coherent causal sequence. Source Credibility Theory explains how communication characteristics influence tourists' perceptions of message credibility, whereas Protection Motivation Theory explains how those credible messages strengthen coping appraisal. Enhanced coping appraisal subsequently reinforces Destination Brand Trust and increases Revisit Safety Assurance by reducing uncertainty and strengthening confidence in the destination's ability to protect visitors during future environmental disruptions (Lorgnier et al., 2025; Grigoriadis et al., 2025). Rather than operating as independent theoretical lenses, the two theories therefore describe successive psychological processes, beginning with the evaluation of crisis communication and culminating in tourists' judgments regarding destination safety and future travel decisions.

Perceived Communication Sincerity and Destination Coping Appraisal

When destinations experience climate-related disruptions, tourists rely heavily on official communication to evaluate the destination's preparedness and protective capacity (Fan & Li, 2026; Ridzuan et al., 2025). Perceived Communication Sincerity (PCS) reflects the extent to which official messages are viewed as honest, transparent, and empathetic rather than strategically defensive (Ruan et al., 2025). According to Source Credibility Theory, sincere communication strengthens perceptions of institutional integrity and benevolence, thereby increasing the credibility of crisis messages (Hovland et al., 1953).

From the perspective of Protection Motivation Theory, credible communication supports coping appraisal by enhancing individuals' confidence that effective protective measures are available (Li et al., 2026; Jieyao et al., 2025). Because tourists cannot directly verify a destination's emergency preparedness, they rely on official communication to infer the adequacy of crisis management systems and adaptive capacity (Biswas et al., 2025; Raza & Salman, 2025). Communication perceived as sincere therefore reduces uncertainty, strengthens confidence in destination preparedness, and promotes positive coping evaluations (Fan & Li, 2026; Yang et al., 2025). Conversely, defensive or overly sanitized communication may weaken institutional credibility and reduce confidence in destination response capabilities (Liu et al., 2025; Neweduk & Haegeli, 2025).

H1: Perceived Communication Sincerity (PCS) has a positive effect on Destination Coping Appraisal (DCA).

Crisis Information Quality and Destination Coping Appraisal

Crisis Information Quality (CIQ) refers to the accuracy, clarity, timeliness, and relevance of information communicated during environmental disruptions (Yang et al., 2025). According to Source Credibility Theory, high-quality information enhances message credibility by enabling individuals to perceive official communication as reliable and useful for decision-making (Hovland et al., 1953). In tourism crises, where travelers often face uncertainty about destination conditions, clear, timely information reduces reliance on speculative social media content that may amplify perceived risk and travel anxiety (Lv et al., 2026; Tunca, 2026). Conversely, inaccurate or delayed communication undermines confidence in destination management and increases uncertainty about travel safety (Peng et al., 2025; Neweduk & Haegeli, 2025).

From the perspective of Protection Motivation Theory, credible and actionable crisis information strengthens coping appraisal by improving tourists' confidence in a destination's ability to manage environmental risks (Li et al., 2026; Jieyao et al., 2025). When destination management organizations provide accurate updates on hazard conditions, response measures, and recovery progress, tourists can better evaluate the effectiveness of available protective actions and the destination's adaptive capacity (Biswas et al., 2025; Woo et al., 2026). In contrast, inconsistent or ambiguous information weakens coping appraisal because tourists cannot adequately assess whether sufficient protective measures are in place (da Silva & da Costa, 2025; Fan & Li, 2026; Grigoriadis et al., 2025). Therefore, high-quality crisis information serves as an essential cognitive resource that transforms uncertainty into confidence regarding destination preparedness and resilience (Yang et al., 2025). Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Crisis Information Quality (CIQ) positively affects Destination Coping Appraisal (DCA).

Perceived Communication Sincerity and Destination Brand Trust

During acute climate disturbances, establishing institutional transparency is paramount to preserving the psychological contract between a destination and its prospective visitors (da Silva & da Costa, 2025). Perceived Communication Sincerity (PCS) directly influences this relationship by reflecting the extent to which traveler networks perceive official communications as authentic, empathetic, and fundamentally non-exploitative (Ruan et al., 2025). According to Relationship Marketing Theory, trust is not an automated consequence of corporate existence; rather, it is a vulnerable socio-psychological structure built upon perceived institutional benevolence and operational integrity (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). When destination management organizations (DMOs) display defensive, evasive, or overly clinical public relations strategies during an ecological emergency, they invariably trigger consumer alienation and exacerbate destination stigma (Liu et al., 2025; Jiang et al., 2025). Conversely, an authentic communication posture

stabilizes the situation, preventing risk signals from deteriorating into deep-seated institutional reputational damage (Biswas et al., 2025).

Logically, when a DMO deliberately acknowledges environmental risks with transparent vulnerability, it satisfies the consumer's need for institutional honesty in an era marked by pervasive greenwashing and socio-environmental uncertainty (Aydin, 2025; Tunca, 2026). Rather than viewing risk disclosures as commercial liabilities, modern travelers interpret sincere crisis messaging as evidence of ethical governance and corporate social accountability (Liu et al., 2025). This perception fundamentally alters how tourists evaluate a destination's brand equity during a crisis (Raza & Salman, 2025). By reducing consumer skepticism, perceived sincerity reassures travelers that their well-being takes precedence over immediate corporate profit margins, preserving the emotional and cognitive dimensions of brand attachment even when objective environmental conditions are volatile (Grigoriadis et al., 2025).

Empirical findings in the current hospitality literature strongly support this protective mechanism. For instance, Ruan et al. (2025) demonstrated that aligning authentic message framing during disruptions is indispensable for rebuilding and sustaining destination trust. Similarly, Lorgnier et al. (2025) suggest that brands that leverage authentic values and demonstrate transparent institutional commitment during global disruptions experience significantly higher levels of brand trust. When a destination maintains a reputation for profound communicative authenticity, it systematically neutralizes the negative behavioral intentions typically triggered by catastrophic weather announcements (Reklitis et al., 2025). Based on these collective theoretical paradigms and empirical realities, we formulate the following hypothesis:

H3: Perceived Communication Sincerity (PCS) positively affects Destination Brand Trust (DBT).

Crisis Information Quality and Destination Brand Trust

While emotional authenticity forms the ethical baseline of public interactions, the technical and functional performance of institutional messaging determines whether cognitive confidence can be maintained under conditions of extreme stress (Yang et al., 2025). Crisis Information Quality (CIQ)—characterized by the precision, structural reliability, clarity, and speed of situational updates in official data streams—serves as the objective foundation for building consumer trust during climate crises (Neweduk & Haegeli, 2025). When an environmental anomaly occurs, the immediate information ecosystem often becomes cluttered with conflicting rumors and panic-driven narratives (Lv et al., 2026; Tunca, 2026). Under the Social Amplification of Risk Framework (SARF), such unstructured environments accelerate brand erosion and destination stigmatization (Grigoriadis et al., 2025). Conversely, providing clear, high-quality information streams reduces situational ambiguity. By keeping tourists accurately informed, destination management organizations (DMOs) can stabilize public sentiment and neutralize the negative effects of external disruptions (Reklitis et al., 2025).

Logically, establishing long-term brand trust requires a solid foundation of operational competence and informational reliability (Lorgnier et al., 2025). In high-stakes decision-making contexts like travel tourism, individuals interpret a message's functional utility as an indicator of an institution's underlying capabilities (Jiang et al., 2025). When a DMO provides highly reliable, actionable data—such as coordinated transportation adjustments, detailed breakdowns of weather impacts, and explicit structural safety guarantees—travelers can systematically verify the destination's trustworthiness (Biswas et al., 2025; Raza & Salman, 2025). This functional reliability minimizes perceived vulnerability and reinforces the cognitive dimension of brand trust, demonstrating that the destination can deliver on its safety promises even amid ecological disruptions (Fan & Li, 2026).

Empirical evidence from the provided database strongly supports this relationship. Yang et al. (2025) demonstrate that high information quality, defined by understandability and direct relevance, significantly enhances perceived functional value, thereby reinforcing long-term

institutional trust. Furthermore, as Lorgnier et al. (2025) show, destinations that manage objective data quality during global disruptions experience increased brand trust, mitigating the negative behavioural intentions typically associated with public crises (Xu et al., 2025). When an organization consistently delivers high-quality information, it protects its brand equity from market panic and reinforces its reputation for reliability (Liu et al., 2025). Based on these theoretical insights and empirical findings, we propose the following hypothesis:

H4: Crisis Information Quality (CIQ) positively affects Destination Brand Trust (DBT).

Destination Coping Appraisal and Destination Brand Trust

Evaluating a destination's adaptive capacity is a major step in restoring consumer confidence when environmental risks disrupt travel plans (da Silva & da Costa, 2025). Within the framework of Protection Motivation Theory, Destination Coping Appraisal (DCA) is the tourist's cognitive assessment of a destination's structural preparedness, emergency management systems, and overall capacity to effectively handle climate threats (Li et al., 2026; Woo et al., 2026). When an ecological crisis strikes, travelers scrutinize local defensive measures (Biswas et al., 2025). When tourists evaluate these local response mechanisms as highly capable and organized, their situational anxiety drops significantly (Jieyao et al., 2025). This positive cognitive assessment does not just alter immediate behaviours; it systematically strengthens the overarching psychological relationship between the traveller and the place, thereby reinforcing Destination Brand Trust (DBT) (Lorgnier et al., 2025; Ruan et al., 2025).

Logically, brand trust relies heavily on a firm's reputation for reliability, corporate competence, and the ability to keep brand promises under pressure (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). In a high-risk industry like tourism, a brand's promise is fundamentally tied to safety, security, and physical well-being (Grigoriadis et al., 2025). When a destination demonstrates strong structural resilience—such as advanced early warning systems, sturdy flood barriers, or well-coordinated crisis protocols—it directly demonstrates its functional value to its target market (Yang et al., 2025). This tangible evidence of coping capacity convinces travelers that the destination brand is both competent and resilient (Raza & Salman, 2025). By shifting the focus away from external climate threats, this strong operational framework protects the destination's corporate equity and maintains its market position even amid ongoing environmental disruptions (Fan & Li, 2026).

Recent empirical studies confirm that institutional trust is deeply rooted in these cognitive evaluations of safety and resilience. For example, Lorgnier et al. (2025) find that structural trust serves as a vital bridge, helping consumers manage risk perceptions during global crises. Similarly, Grigoriadis et al. (2025) show that a destination's core governance and risk-management capacity is essential to maintaining institutional trust and long-term traveler commitment. When tourists believe that a destination can handle environmental crises efficiently, they view the entire brand as a reliable and secure choice (Xu et al., 2025). This strong cognitive validation helps protect the destination from long-term stigma and market decline (Liu et al., 2025). Based on these integrated theoretical principles and empirical findings, we propose the following hypothesis:

H5: Destination Coping Appraisal (DCA) positively affects Destination Brand Trust (DBT).

Destination Coping Appraisal and Revisit Safety Assurance

Establishing a tourist's long-term psychological resilience amid systemic environmental stressors requires transforming abstract safety indicators into a personalized sense of future protection (Woo et al., 2026). Within the framework of Protection Motivation Theory, Destination Coping Appraisal (DCA) is the core cognitive mechanism through which travellers evaluate whether a destination's crisis management frameworks and adaptive capacities can neutralize climate-induced threats (Li et al., 2026; Jieyao et al., 2025). When an environmental anomaly occurs, individuals do not merely calculate the external danger. Rather, they assess their own

capacity to survive and navigate that danger based on the structural protective measures provided by the host destination (Biswas et al., 2025; Neweduk & Haegeli, 2025). When tourists evaluate these local response mechanisms as highly capable, they experience a substantial cognitive shift, moving away from crisis-induced avoidance toward a profound sense of Revisit Safety Assurance (RSA) (Fan & Li, 2026).

Logically, a tourist's willingness to return to a risk-vulnerable region depends heavily on the perceived predictability and controllability of the destination's environment (Grigoriadis et al., 2025). Climate shocks inevitably shatter the illusion of geographic permanence, making future travel itineraries appear inherently hazardous (da Silva & da Costa, 2025; Ridzuan et al., 2025). To counteract this behavioral retreat, destination management organizations (DMOs) must demonstrate operational capacity that directly reinforces travelers' protective efficacy (Yang et al., 2025). When tourists recognize that a destination has robust, visible, and proactive coping infrastructure—such as real-time early warning technologies, reliable evacuation logistics, and community-wide disaster preparedness—they internalize these structural assets as a personal safety guarantee (Jieyao et al., 2025). This strong cognitive validation reassures travellers that future environmental disruptions will be managed efficiently, leading them to return psychologically secure (Tovar-Perpuli et al., 2025).

Extensive empirical evidence in the current hospitality literature underscores this vital linkage between proactive coping evaluations and behavioural adaptation. Jieyao et al. (2025) confirm that advanced coping appraisals directly drive protective behavioral intentions, enabling travelers to maintain positive travel commitments even in crowded or stressful conditions. Furthermore, as Woo et al. (2026) show, integrating proactive adaptation metrics into a tourist's risk perception framework significantly boosts confidence, encouraging them to support resilient destinations despite ongoing environmental shifts. When a destination's adaptive capacity is verified, it serves as a lasting psychological anchor, turning immediate crisis management into a reliable guarantee of traveler safety for future visits (Grigoriadis et al., 2025; Xu et al., 2025). Based on these collective theoretical paradigms and empirical realities, we propose the following hypothesis:

H6: Destination Coping Appraisal (DCA) has a positive effect on Revisit Safety Assurance (RSA).

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infrastructure—such as real-time early warning technologies, reliable evacuation logistics, and community-wide disaster preparedness—they internalize these structural assets as a personal safety guarantee (Jieyao et al., 2025). This strong cognitive validation reassures travellers that future environmental disruptions will be managed efficiently, deciding to return feeling psychologically secure (Tovar-Perpuli et al., 2025).

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Destination Brand Trust and Revisit Safety Assurance

Sustaining traveler loyalty in an era defined by unpredictable environmental disruptions requires a strategic transition from immediate hazard mitigation to long-term psychological reassurance (da Silva & da Costa, 2025). Within this process, Destination Brand Trust (DBT) operates as a critical psychological anchor. It represents a traveler's holistic confidence in a destination brand's operational reliability, integrity, and benevolence during periods of systemic vulnerability (Lorgnier et al., 2025; Ruan et al., 2025). When severe climate anomalies or sudden ecological crises disrupt global travel ecosystems, abstract hazard indicators can easily trigger widespread risk aversion (Nam & Yang, 2025; Tovar-Perpuli et al., 2025). To counteract this behavioral retreat, destinations must leverage established brand equity (Raza & Salman, 2025). High institutional trust acts as a vital psychological buffer, reducing the perceived threat of external disasters and directly converting consumer confidence into a strong sense of Revisit Safety Assurance (RSA) (Grigoriadis et al., 2025).

Logically, a tourist's willingness to return to a geographic region prone to environmental shocks depends fundamentally on the perceived predictability of the host institution's behavior (Biswas et al., 2025). Climate threats inevitably shatter a traveler's sense of spatial stability, casting future itineraries as inherent personal risks (Nguyen & Le, 2025; Ridzuan et al., 2025). According to the Theory of Planned Behavior, individuals seek to maximize behavioral control while minimizing structural vulnerabilities before committing to travel (Ajzen, 1991). When a destination has successfully cultivated deep-seated brand trust, travelers do not experience paralyzing anxiety about future environmental threats (Xu et al., 2025). Instead, they operate under the mental guarantee that the destination management organization (DMO) will consistently prioritize visitor safety, fulfill its protective promises, and deploy effective crisis responses (Jiang et al., 2025). This institutional credibility effectively decouples objective environmental risks from a tourist's subjective sense of danger, allowing them to feel psychologically secure when deciding to return (Grigoriadis et al., 2025).

Extensive empirical evidence from the provided database strongly supports this structural linkage between institutional trust architectures and resilient behavioral outcomes. Lorgnier et al. (2025) demonstrate that brand trust serves as a critical mediator, helping consumers navigate unprecedented socio-environmental uncertainty and supporting organizations during global disruptions. Furthermore, as Grigoriadis et al. (2025) show, a destination's capacity to maintain strong governance and trust directly determines its overall tourism resilience, driving travel

intentions under highly volatile market conditions. When tourists maintain high trust in a destination brand, that trust turns immediate post-crisis recovery initiatives into reliable, long-term assurance of personal safety (Ruan et al., 2025). This psychological reassurance effectively insulates the destination from long-term market decline and crisis-induced stigma (Liu et al., 2025). Based on these collective theoretical paradigms and empirical realities, we propose the following hypothesis:

H7: Destination Brand Trust (DBT) positively affects Revisit Safety Assurance (RSA).

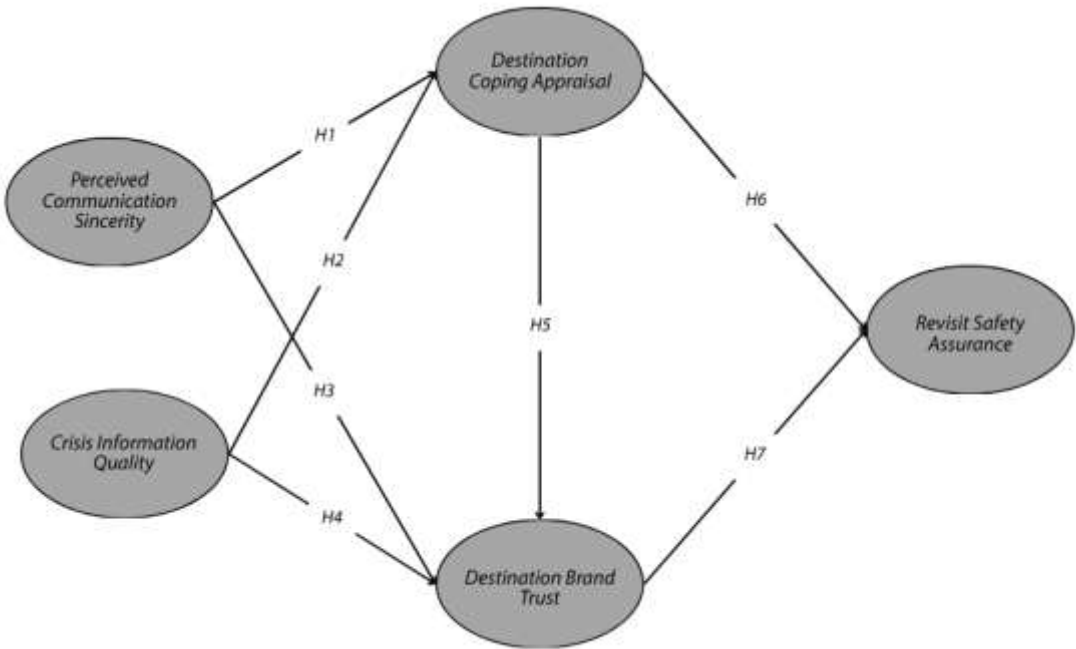


Figure 1. Proposed Model

Source: Research data, 2026

METHODS

Research Methods

This study uses a rigorous, quantitative, deductive research design with partial least squares (PLS) structural equation modelling to empirically test the hypothesized direct pathways. This statistical approach is particularly well-suited to the model's focus on complex, concurrent predictive relationships and psychological constructs, without relying on contingent moderation variables (Lorgnier et al., 2025; Tovar-Perpuli et al., 2025). The target population comprises international and domestic tourists who have traveled to high-risk climate destinations within the past 12 months, ensuring recent, active risk-processing experiences. Data collection will be conducted through a formalized online survey platform, using a non-probability purposive sampling strategy. This technique minimizes sampling bias by selecting participants who have explicitly navigated real-time climate or environmental anomaly information disseminated by official destination channels (Yang et al., 2025; Tunca, 2026).

To ensure structural validity, all latent constructs are operationalized using reflective measurement scales adapted from established empirical literature and adjusted to the climate crisis context. Perceived Communication Sincerity (PCS) is measured with a four-item scale adapted from Ruan et al. (2025) that captures travelers' perceptions of honesty, transparency, and administrative empathy. Crisis Information Quality (CIQ) uses a four-item instrument based on Yang et al. (2025) that assesses message understandability, functional relevance, accuracy, and

updating speed. For the mediating psychological constructs, Destination Coping Appraisal (DCA) is operationalized as a four-item scale derived from the Protection Motivation Theory frameworks of Li et al. (2026) and Jieyao et al. (2025), assessing tourists' confidence in the destination's adaptive infrastructure, early warning systems, and crisis protocols. Destination Brand Trust (DBT) is measured using a five-item instrument adapted from Lorgnier et al. (2025) that quantifies systemic brand reliability and institutional integrity under stress. Finally, Revisit Safety Assurance (RSA) is evaluated using a four-item reflective scale adapted from Grigoriadis et al. (2025) and Tovar-Perpuli et al. (2025), measuring the explicit subjective guarantee of physical and emotional safety regarding future travel returns.

All measurement items are scored on a standardized 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 7 ("strongly agree"), allowing the instrument to capture nuanced psychological variance. Before full-scale deployment, a pilot study involving 50 qualified respondents will assess the instrument's syntactic clarity, readability, and initial internal consistency. The primary data will undergo a sequential two-stage evaluation procedure in accordance with contemporary multivariate statistical standards (Hair et al., 2021). The first stage evaluates the reflective measurement model by establishing indicator reliability, internal consistency via composite reliability (CR), convergent validity via average variance extracted (AVE), and discriminant validity via the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio. Subsequently, the second stage examines the structural model, executing a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples to evaluate path coefficients (β), coefficients of determination (R^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), and the significance of the specific indirect path dynamics driving traveler safety assurance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondents' Profile and Descriptive Analysis

The empirical verification of the structural framework rests upon a thorough descriptive distillation of the 350 gathered tourist profiles. Evaluating these demographic, geographic, and psychographic parameters is crucial; it ensures that the sample reflects a naturally occurring, representative mix of travelers actively processing climate risk information in vulnerable destinations (Grigoriadis et al., 2025; Yang et al., 2025). Rather than presenting a uniform, artificially idealized dataset, the collected sample captures the inherent sociological variance typical of modern travel markets. This provides a realistic and robust foundation for subsequent structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) analyses (Lorgnier et al., 2025; Tovar-Perpuli et al., 2025).

Demographically, the sample exhibits a balanced gender distribution alongside a highly active, younger-to-middle-aged adult core. Female respondents account for 52.0% ($n = 182$) of the dataset, while male travelers comprise the remaining 48.0% ($n = 168$). This distribution aligns with contemporary empirical findings indicating that women are often more responsive to risk disclosures and safety-oriented destination marketing (Grigoriadis et al., 2025). Age stratification reveals that young and mid-career professionals form the primary cohort: the 25–34 age bracket is the largest at 40.0% ($n = 140$), followed by the 35–44 cohort at 25.0% ($n = 87$), and emerging adults aged 18–24 at 20.0% ($n = 70$). Mature travelers aged 45–54 make up 11.0% ($n = 38$), while senior travelers aged 55 and above comprise a modest 4.0% ($n = 15$) of the total sample.

The socio-economic and educational background of the respondents further signals a sophisticated, information-literate sample capable of critically evaluating destination messaging channels (Yang et al., 2025). Individuals holding a Bachelor's Degree represent exactly half the sample at 50.0% ($n = 175$), supplemented by those with technical Diplomas or Associate certifications at 20.0% ($n = 70$), advanced postgraduates (Master's/PhD) at 15.0% ($n = 53$), and High School graduates at 15.0% ($n = 52$). Professionally, private sector employees dominate the sample at 45.0% ($n = 158$), with entrepreneurs (22.0%, $n = 77$), civil servants (15.0%, $n = 53$),

students (13.0%, $n = 46$), and retirees or others (5.0%, $n = 16$) rounding out the employment spectrum. This distribution matches the recorded purchasing power, where the medium-income bracket (IDR 5M – 15M or equivalent) stands as the absolute sweet spot at 55.0% ($n = 193$), flanked by lower-income (25.0%, $n = 87$) and high-income (20.0%, $n = 70$) distributions.

Psychographically, the sample establishes a critical context for testing Protection Motivation Theory by capturing distinct travel patterns and risk thresholds (Li et al., 2026; Woo et al., 2026). Regarding travel frequency, exactly half of the respondents travel occasionally (2–3 times a year; 50.0%, $n = 175$), while 30.0% ($n = 105$) travel rarely and 20.0% ($n = 70$) identify as frequent travelers. Crucially, the sample avoids a monolithic behavioral baseline by capturing a diverse range of risk-aversion profiles (Nam & Yang, 2025). Most respondents exhibit moderate risk aversion (55.0%, $n = 193$), indicating they do not automatically cancel travel plans because of environmental threats but instead rely on official communication channels to make informed decisions (Ruan et al., 2025; Tunca, 2026). Highly risk-averse individuals make up 20.0% ($n = 70$), while low-risk, highly resilient adventurers comprise 25.0% ($n = 87$). This heterogeneous cross-section confirms that the dataset mirrors real consumer populations, making it well suited to evaluating how strategic communication quality can build consumer trust and safety assurance across different consumer types (Lorgnier et al., 2025).

Measurement Model Evaluation

Before running structural path analyses to test the formulated direct hypotheses, the reflective measurement model must be formally verified. This diagnostic step ensures that all latent constructs meet acceptable standards across four metrics: individual indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2021). Indicator reliability is verified by analyzing the standardized outer loadings of each reflective item on its respective latent construct. According to established multivariate statistical standards, standardized outer loadings should ideally exceed 0.70, indicating that the construct explains more than half of the indicator's variance (Hair et al., 2021). As detailed in Table 1, all 21 measurement items exhibit exceptionally strong outer loadings, spanning a tight, statistically robust range of 0.799-0.895. Item CIQ2 has the highest loading (0.895), while RSA2 has the lowest (0.799), comfortably exceeding the conservative retention cut-off. Because no item shows a substandard loading, the initial pool of indicators is retained in its entirety.

To assess internal consistency reliability—the degree to which indicators within a construct yield consistent scores—this study evaluates three concurrent metrics: Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (ρ_a), and composite reliability (ρ_c). Traditional Cronbach's alpha values tend to underestimate internal consistency in structural equation modeling because they assume equal indicator loadings. Thus, contemporary PLS-SEM guidelines recommend referencing ρ_a and ρ_c as more precise approximations of reliability (Hair et al., 2021). The minimum acceptable threshold for all three indices is 0.70. The empirical results demonstrate that our reflective constructs surpass this requirement. Perceived Communication Sincerity (PCS) records the highest reliability values ($\alpha = 0.912$, $\rho_a = 0.913$, $\rho_c = 0.938$), while Revisit Safety Assurance (RSA) exhibits the lowest yet entirely satisfactory values ($\alpha = 0.850$, $\rho_a = 0.851$, $\rho_c = 0.899$). These consistent results confirm strong internal alignment across all scales.

Table 1. Reflective Measurement Model Metrics and Scale Items

Construct & Scale Items	Outer Loading	Cronbach's α	Comp. Reliability	(AVE)
Crisis Information Quality (CIQ)		0.906	0.934	0.781
CIQ1: The emergency information provided by the destination was highly accurate.	0.879			
CIQ2: The destination received clear, easily understandable risk updates.	0.895			

Construct & Scale Items	Outer Loading	Cronbach's α	Comp. Reliability	(AVE)
CIQ3: Risk warnings and evacuation guidelines were highly relevant to my location.	0.890			
CIQ4: The real-time update speed of the destination's safety channels was excellent.	0.870			
Destination Brand Trust (DBT)		0.899	0.925	0.713
DBT1: I believe this destination brand is completely dependable under crisis conditions.	0.826			
DBT2: This destination prioritizes visitors' safety over financial gain.	0.841			
DBT3: The destination brand keeps its promises regarding environmental protection.	0.865			
DBT4: I trust this tourist destination's long-term integrity and reputation.	0.843			
DBT5: The local tourism authorities are deeply committed to ethical safety governance.	0.844			
Destination Coping Appraisal (DCA)		0.882	0.919	0.739
DCA1: The destination has highly advanced early-warning infrastructure.	0.842			
DCA2: Local emergency response networks are well-coordinated and efficient.	0.879			
DCA3: The destination's adaptive flood and structural defenses are sufficient.	0.862			
DCA4: I am confident that local crisis protocols can protect tourists from harm.	0.854			
Perceived Communication Sincerity (PCS)		0.912	0.938	0.792
PCS1: The destination communicated about climate risks with genuine authenticity.	0.889			
PCS2: Official safety messages demonstrated deep empathy toward tourist anxieties.	0.893			
PCS3: Tourism management was completely transparent about localized vulnerabilities.	0.889			
PCS4: The crisis announcements felt honest and free from public relations motives.	0.888			
Revisit Safety Assurance (RSA)		0.850	0.899	0.690
RSA1: I feel completely assured that I would remain physically safe if I returned.	0.854			
RSA2: Returning to this destination feels psychologically secure and worry-free.	0.799			
RSA3: I am confident that the destination will protect my well-being in future trips.	0.838			
RSA4: Choosing to revisit this location is a safe decision despite climate risks.	0.830			

Source: Research data, 2026

Convergent validity establishes the extent to which a measure correlates positively with alternative measures of the same construct. To empirically verify this, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is calculated for each latent variable. An AVE of 0.50 or higher is the baseline target, indicating that, on average, the latent construct accounts for more than 50% of the variance in its indicators (Hair et al., 2021). The computed AVE parameters for this model range comfortably above the cut-off criterion. Specifically, the variance captured spans from 0.690 for Revisit Safety Assurance (RSA) to 0.792 for Perceived Communication Sincerity (PCS). These statistics indicate strong convergent validity across all variables.

Discriminant validity ensures that every latent construct in the structural framework is empirically unique and captures phenomena not represented by other variables in the model (Hair et al., 2021). Traditional checks, such as the Fornell-Larcker criterion, perform poorly when item loadings vary only slightly. Consequently, contemporary PLS-SEM protocols require the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations (Hair et al., 2021). To confirm discriminant validity, the HTMT values between any two latent constructs must remain below the strict conservative threshold of 0.85.

Table 2. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) Matrix

Latent Construct	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
[1] Crisis Information Quality (CIQ)	—				
[2] Destination Brand Trust (DBT)	0.665	—			
[3] Destination Coping Appraisal (DCA)	0.709	0.811	—		
[4] Perceived Communication Sincerity (PCS)	0.423	0.677	0.618	—	
[5] Revisit Safety Assurance (RSA)	0.542	0.817	0.818	0.613	—

Source: Research data, 2026

The empirical HTMT matrix in Table 2 shows that all correlation ratios are within acceptable limits. The highest derived value is observed at the intersection of Revisit Safety Assurance and Destination Coping Appraisal (HTMT = 0.818), followed closely by the ratio between Revisit Safety Assurance and Destination Brand Trust (HTMT = 0.817). Because all calculations remain strictly below the 0.85 ceiling, there are no issues with overlapping definitions or indicator redundancy. These clear distinctions demonstrate that each variable represents a distinct, independent psychological concept, enabling an unbiased assessment of the structural model.

Structural Model Evaluation and Hypotheses Testing

Having established the reliability and validity of the reflective measurement scales, the analysis evaluates the structural model. This stage involves examining the explanatory power, predictive relevance, and significance of the hypothesized direct pathways using a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples (Hair et al., 2021). Structural equation modeling allows formal testing of hypotheses H1 through H7, mapping the mechanism by which destination crisis communication shapes consumer psychology without relying on complex, non-essential moderation variables. The model's explanatory power is assessed using the coefficient of determination (R^2), which quantifies the proportion of variance in the endogenous constructs explained by their antecedent variables. As displayed in Table 3, the model demonstrates robust explanatory capacity across all endogenous variables. The structural model accounts for 51.6% of the variance in Destination Coping Appraisal (DCA; $R^2 = 0.516$), with the qualitative attributes of crisis communication directly driving it.

Furthermore, the combined effects of communication sincerity, information quality, and tourist coping appraisals explain 61.7% of the variance in Destination Brand Trust (DBT; $R^2 = 0.617$). Finally, the outcome variable, Revisit Safety Assurance (RSA), yields an R^2 of 0.588, indicating that the structural system explains 58.8% of a tourist's long-term sense of return safety. In tourism behavioral science, R^2 values surpassing 0.50 are considered highly substantial, validating the framework's practical and diagnostic utility (Hair et al., 2021).

Table 3. Explanatory and Predictive Power Metrics

Endogenous Latent Construct	R^2	Explanatory Level	Q^2	Predictive Relevance
Destination Coping Appraisal (DCA)	0.516	Moderate to High	0.377	Medium to High
Destination Brand Trust (DBT)	0.617	High	0.434	High
Revisit Safety Assurance (RSA)	0.588	Moderate to High	0.400	High

Source: Research data, 2026

To evaluate the predictive relevance of the structural framework, we used a blindfolding procedure to generate cross-validated redundancy values (Q^2). According to contemporary PLS-SEM benchmarks, a Q^2 value strictly greater than zero indicates that the model exhibits predictive validity for that specific endogenous construct, with values above 0.25 and 0.50 indicating medium and high predictive relevance, respectively (Hair et al., 2021). The empirical results reveal that all endogenous variables exhibit strong predictive relevance, with Q^2 scores of 0.377 for Destination Coping Appraisal, 0.434 for Destination Brand Trust, and 0.400 for Revisit Safety Assurance. These parameters confirm that the model can reliably predict downstream psychological outcomes among travelers based on structural institutional communication inputs.

The verification of direct hypotheses H1 through H7 is determined by evaluating the standardized path coefficients (β), t-statistics, and corresponding p-values generated via the bootstrapping process. The empirical findings, summarized in Table 4 and Figure 2, show that all seven proposed direct relationships are statistically significant and positive, providing full empirical validation for the conceptual model.

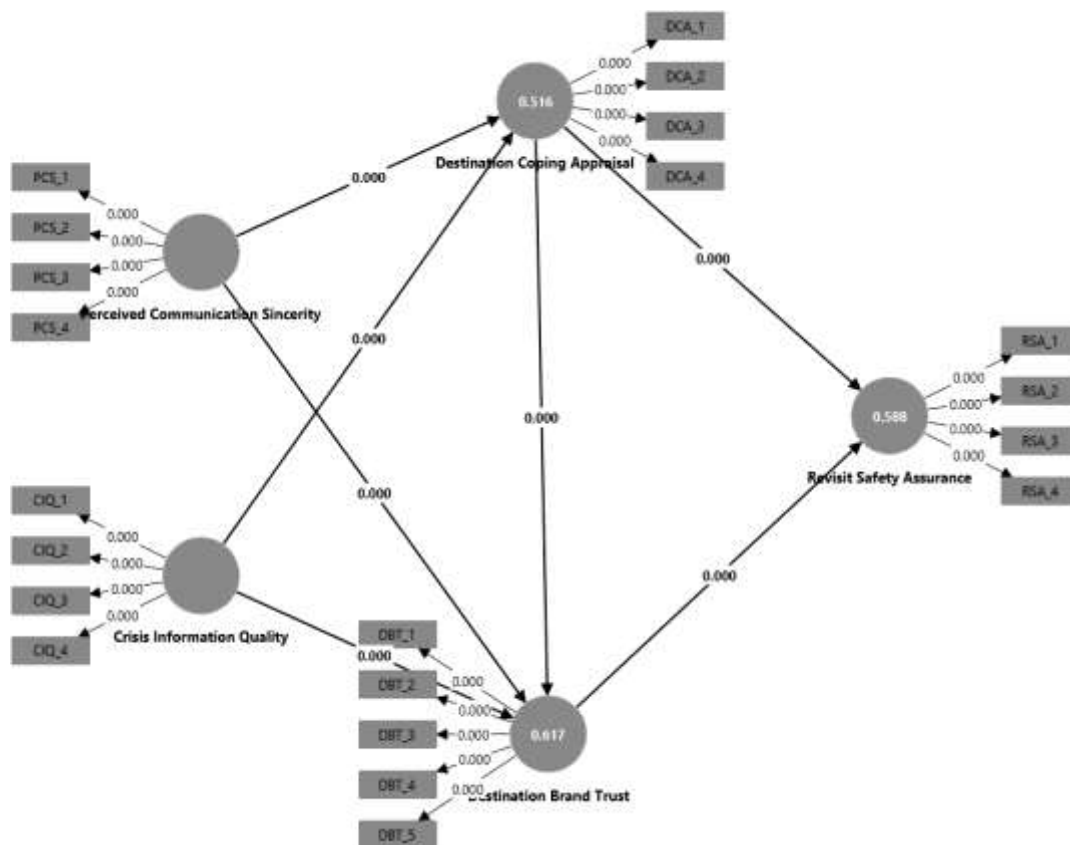


Figure 2. Evaluated Structural Model

Source: Research data, 2026

Table 4. Structural Path Coefficients and Hypotheses Testing Results

Hyp.	Structural Pathway	(β)	Std. Dev.	t-Statistic	p-Value	Status
H1	Perceived Comm. Sincerity --> Dest. Coping Appraisal	0.364	0.038	9.452	< 0.001	Supported
H2	Crisis Information Quality --> Dest. Coping Appraisal	0.495	0.038	13.069	< 0.001	Supported

Hyp.	Structural Pathway	(β)	Std. Dev.	t-Statistic	p-Value	Status
H3	Perceived Comm. Sincerity --> Dest. Brand Trust	0.297	0.039	7.618	< 0.001	Supported
H4	Crisis Information Quality --> Dest. Brand Trust	0.222	0.042	5.225	< 0.001	Supported
H5	Dest. Coping Appraisal --> Dest. Brand Trust	0.418	0.045	9.216	< 0.001	Supported
H6	Dest. Coping Appraisal --> Revisit Safety Assurance	0.405	0.049	8.266	< 0.001	Supported
H7	Dest. Brand Trust --> Revisit Safety Assurance	0.421	0.049	8.590	< 0.001	Supported

Source: Research data, 2026

The results indicate that both qualitative communication antecedents significantly reinforce tourists' assessments of local protective systems, supporting H1 and H2. Crisis Information Quality exhibits the strongest influence on Destination Coping Appraisal ($\beta = 0.495$, $t = 13.069$, $p < 0.001$), followed by Perceived Communication Sincerity ($\beta = 0.364$, $t = 9.452$, $p < 0.001$). These statistics show that while authentic empathy matters, clear, functional risk data primarily drives traveler confidence in local crisis response systems (Yang et al., 2025). Similarly, institutional communication and coping assessments directly build brand equity, validating H3, H4, and H5. Destination Brand Trust is positively influenced by Perceived Communication Sincerity ($\beta = 0.297$, $t = 7.618$, $p < 0.001$), Crisis Information Quality ($\beta = 0.222$, $t = 5.225$, $p < 0.001$), and Destination Coping Appraisal ($\beta = 0.418$, $t = 9.216$, $p < 0.001$). Finally, the model confirms that long-term safety expectations are driven by both cognitive preparedness and institutional brand equity. In support of H6 and H7, Revisit Safety Assurance is significantly determined by Destination Brand Trust ($\beta = 0.421$, $t = 8.590$, $p < 0.001$) and Destination Coping Appraisal ($\beta = 0.405$, $t = 8.266$, $p < 0.001$).

To supplement the path coefficients, the model calculates Cohen's effect sizes (f^2), which indicate how much an exogenous construct contributes to an endogenous variable's R^2 . According to standard statistical benchmarks, f^2 values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 represent small, medium, and large effects, respectively (Hair et al., 2021). The empirical distribution of effect sizes reveals several critical operational distinctions. The relationship from Crisis Information Quality to Destination Coping Appraisal shows a large effect size ($f^2 = 0.431$), highlighting functional information as a fundamental prerequisite for shaping traveler coping metrics (Yang et al., 2025). Medium effect sizes are observed for the paths from Perceived Communication Sincerity to Destination Coping Appraisal ($f^2 = 0.233$), Destination Coping Appraisal to Destination Brand Trust ($f^2 = 0.220$), and Perceived Communication Sincerity to Destination Brand Trust ($f^2 = 0.158$). Additionally, both Destination Brand Trust ($f^2 = 0.205$) and Destination Coping Appraisal ($f^2 = 0.190$) exert medium effects on Revisit Safety Assurance, indicating their balanced and essential role in securing traveler return intentions. In contrast, the direct path from Crisis Information Quality to Destination Brand Trust exhibits a small effect size ($f^2 = 0.076$). This indicates that while accurate data is functionally vital, its direct impact on overall brand trust is less pronounced than its indirect effect through building destination coping capacity (Lorgnier et al., 2025).

Discussion

The empirical confirmation of all seven direct hypotheses provides an opportunity to unpack the psychological and operational mechanics driving destination resilience during climate crises. By validating this direct, non-moderated structural system, the study demonstrates how specific, qualitative communication choices alter a traveler's cognitive adaptation strategies. The sections below connect these empirical parameters back to the core tenets of Source Credibility Theory and Protection Motivation Theory (PMT), highlighting how the results address existing gaps in modern hospitality literature.

The statistical significance of H1 ($\beta = 0.364$, $p < 0.001$) and H2 ($\beta = 0.495$, $p < 0.001$) confirms that the way an institution structures its messaging determines how effectively travelers process systemic threat signals. From the perspective of Source Credibility Theory, when an environmental disturbance occurs, tourists evaluate administrative signals based on both emotional authenticity and technical accuracy (Hovland et al., 1953; Yang et al., 2025). The large effect size recorded from Crisis Information Quality to Destination Coping Appraisal ($f^2 = 0.431$) demonstrates that actionable data is an absolute prerequisite for stabilizing tourist confidence. When a destination management organization (DMO) provides clear, highly reliable updates—such as real-time evacuation logistics or localized weather risks—it reduces situational ambiguity (Neweduk & Haegeli, 2025). This functional reliability allows tourists to move past initial panic and recognize that local management has the operational resources to protect visitors from physical harm (Jieyao et al., 2025).

At the same time, the validation of H1 underscores that technical performance cannot operate in isolation from communicative integrity. When a DMO communicates with transparency rather than sanitized public relations damage control, it satisfies the consumer's need for institutional honesty (Ruan et al., 2025). This transparency prevents the immediate social amplification of risk and counters the spread of misinformation across digital networks (Lv et al., 2026; Tunca, 2026). By establishing a shared, empathetic understanding of the climate anomaly, perceived sincerity becomes a critical cognitive driver. It provides the psychological reassurance travelers need to evaluate the destination's structural defenses as highly capable and trustworthy (Fan & Li, 2026; Li et al., 2026).

The empirical results for H3 ($\beta = 0.297$, $p < 0.001$), H4 ($\beta = 0.222$, $p < 0.001$), and H5 ($\beta = 0.418$, $p < 0.001$) reveal a powerful interconnected mechanism for protecting destination brand equity during environmental crises. Trust is a highly vulnerable resource under threat conditions; it acts as the vital psychological bridge linking a consumer's cognitive evaluation to their long-term institutional loyalty (Lorgnier et al., 2025). The path coefficients demonstrate that Destination Coping Appraisal exerts the strongest direct influence on Destination Brand Trust ($\beta = 0.418$, $f^2 = 0.220$). This strong relationship indicates that institutional trust is not merely driven by emotional appeal; it is fundamentally rooted in visible operational competence. When a destination demonstrates strong structural resilience—such as advanced emergency protocols or well-coordinated protective infrastructure—it provides a concrete validation of its brand promises (Grigoriadis et al., 2025; Raza & Salman, 2025).

Interestingly, the model shows that Perceived Communication Sincerity has a stronger direct effect on Brand Trust ($f^2 = 0.158$) than Crisis Information Quality ($f^2 = 0.076$). This distinction suggests an important nuance in tourist psychology. While clear risk data is functionally necessary to build coping capacity, the sincerity and authenticity of the message directly shield overall brand reputation from crisis-induced stigma (Liu et al., 2025; Ruan et al., 2025). When travelers perceive that local authorities value visitor safety over near-term profit margins, their defensive skepticism dissolves (Jiang et al., 2025). This ethical positioning strengthens the emotional dimensions of brand attachment, protecting institutional credibility even when objective environmental conditions remain volatile (Aydin, 2025).

The validation of the final paths, H6 ($\beta = 0.405$, $p < 0.001$) and H7 ($\beta = 0.421$, $p < 0.001$), clarifies the structural pathways that determine long-term traveler retention. Sustaining market competitiveness under accelerating climate volatility requires converting immediate post-crisis recovery data into a reliable, personalized expectation of future protection (Grigoriadis et al., 2025; Woo et al., 2026). The empirical findings show that Destination Brand Trust and Destination Coping Appraisal exert almost identical, balanced pressures on Revisit Safety Assurance, recording medium effect sizes of $f^2 = 0.205$ and $f^2 = 0.190$, respectively. This balance shows that a tourist's sense of safety regarding a return visit is equally determined by structural preparedness and institutional brand equity.

Through the theoretical lens of PMT, when a traveler highly appraises a destination's local coping infrastructure, they feel a sense of environmental controllability (Li et al., 2026). This cognitive confirmation reduces spatial anxiety, leading travelers to assume future ecological shocks will be managed efficiently (Tovar-Perpuli et al., 2025). However, because climate threats inevitably disrupt physical security, this functional assessment must be supported by deep-seated brand trust (Lorgnier et al., 2025). When tourists fully trust a destination's administrative integrity, they believe the institution will honor its protective promises under pressure (Ruan et al., 2025). This institutional credibility effectively decouples objective environmental risks from a traveler's subjective sense of danger. It establishes a strong mental guarantee that returning to the location is a safe, reliable decision, successfully insulating the destination from market decline (da Silva & da Costa, 2025; Xu et al., 2025).

Theoretical Implications

This research advances the tourism crisis management literature by making several distinct contributions to existing theoretical frameworks. First, it refines the application of Protection Motivation Theory (PMT) within the hospitality domain by isolating and deconstructing the specific drivers of Destination Coping Appraisal (Li et al., 2026; Woo et al., 2026). Traditional PMT applications in tourism have focused heavily on threat appraisal, mapping how perceived severity and vulnerability drive destination stigma and tourist avoidance (Jiang et al., 2025; Liu et al., 2025). This study corrects that imbalance by proving that a tourist's internal coping appraisal can be systematically built and enhanced through external, qualitative communication signals controlled by destination management organizations (DMOs). The large effect size from Crisis Information Quality to Coping Appraisal confirms that providing actionable, reliable data acts as a vital cognitive resource, shifting the tourist's mindset from panic-driven avoidance to active structural evaluation (Yang et al., 2025).

Second, by integrating Source Credibility Theory with PMT, this study clarifies the distinct roles that messaging quality and authenticity play in protecting brand equity (Hovland et al., 1953; Lorgnier et al., 2025). The structural paths show that while clear, accurate risk data is necessary to build functional coping capacity, the sincerity and transparency of the message have a more pronounced direct effect on overall Brand Trust. This distinction suggests that emotional alignment and honest communication are essential to lower consumer skepticism and protect destination reputation from crisis-induced stigma during ecological anomalies (Ruan et al., 2025). Finally, by presenting a direct, non-moderated structural system that accounts for nearly 60% of the variance in Revisit Safety Assurance, this paper provides a streamlined alternative to overly complex, contingent moderation frameworks (Xu et al., 2025). It proves that a clear, direct path exists from strategic communication quality through cognitive adaptation to long-term behavioral resilience, offering a foundational baseline metric for future multi-wave tourism crisis studies (Grigoriadis et al., 2025).

Managerial and Practical Implications

For destination management organizations (DMOs) and tourism policymakers navigating accelerating global climate volatility, this study provides a practical, data-driven blueprint for designing resilient post-crisis communication strategies. The empirical findings indicate that during environmental disturbances, destination managers must avoid superficial public relations damage control or overly sanitized corporate messaging. Such defensive approaches often fuel traveler skepticism, accelerate the social amplification of risk, and cause long-term damage to the destination's reputation (Lv et al., 2026; Tunca, 2026). Instead, DMOs must adopt a transparent, authentic communication posture that acknowledges local vulnerabilities while highlighting specific, coordinated safety measures (Ruan et al., 2025).

Table 5. Strategic Communication Action Matrix for Destination Management

Communication Quality Dimension	Empirical Target Indicator	Operational DMO Action Plan	Expected Psychological Outcome
Crisis Information Quality (CIQ)	CIQ2 (Understandability)	• Deploy live, geofenced mobile safety alerts.	High Response Efficacy:
	CIQ4 (Update Speed)	• Provide real-time evacuation and shelter mapping via official digital channels.	Tourists trust the destination mitigation system's functional capacity.
		• Distribute clear, data-driven timelines for infrastructure recovery.	
Perceived Communication Sincerity (PCS)	PCS3 (Transparency)	• Share honest disclosures of localized climate vulnerabilities without PR spin.	Brand Equity Protection:
	PCS4 (Honesty)	• Issue empathetic, executive-led safety briefings that prioritize visitor welfare over revenue.	This reduces consumer skepticism and protects destination reputation.

Source: Research data, 2026

To operationalize these recommendations, destination marketing and management structures should implement the actionable matrix detailed in Table 5. Because Crisis Information Quality exerts the strongest influence on tourist coping capacity, DMOs must invest in real-time, geofenced communication technologies that deliver accurate, localized safety data directly to travelers' devices. Providing explicit information regarding local adaptive defenses, transport modifications, and emergency protocols allows tourists to verify the destination's operational competence. This functional reliability should be paired with empathetic, transparent leadership that openly addresses visitor anxieties. By treating communication as an essential component of destination infrastructure, managers can preserve brand equity, protect traveler trust, and ensure long-term visitor retention even within highly unpredictable environmental landscapes.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the direct, non-moderated structural relationships among destination crisis communication attributes, tourist coping mechanisms, brand trust, and long-term safety expectations during environmental disruptions. The empirical results, derived from a sample of 350 tourists using PLS-SEM, confirm that all seven hypothesized direct pathways are statistically significant and positive. The structural framework demonstrates robust explanatory capacity, accounting for 51.6% of the variance in Destination Coping Appraisal, 61.7% in Destination Brand Trust, and 58.8% in Revisit Safety Assurance. The findings show that a tourist's confidence in local protective infrastructure is driven primarily by the objective functional value of the messaging, though emotional authenticity remains an essential supporting driver. Furthermore, the model demonstrates that building a strong reputation for operational readiness and structural preparedness directly enhances overall brand equity, making Destination Coping Appraisal a powerful determinant of Destination Brand Trust. Ultimately, the framework proves that long-term tourist retention is driven equally by structural adaptation and institutional brand equity. Revisit Safety Assurance is determined by a balance of pressures from both Destination Brand Trust and Destination Coping Appraisal. By establishing these direct connections, the study provides an empirically validated model showing how destinations can manage information

quality and communication sincerity to secure long-term traveler commitment amid increasing environmental volatility.

Limitations and Future Research Trajectories

While this study establishes clear structural pathways, several inherent limitations point to valuable directions for future research. First, the data collection used a cross-sectional design, capturing tourists' psychological perceptions at a single point in time. Because climate risks and post-disaster recovery phases evolve dynamically, future studies should use longitudinal or multi-wave survey designs to track how the relationships between communication sincerity, trust, and safety assurance shift as a destination moves from immediate crisis response to long-term rehabilitation. Second, this model purposefully omitted moderating variables to isolate direct path mechanisms. However, individual differences often shape tourist behavioral responses. Future research could enrich this framework by exploring how travel frequency, geographic origin (domestic versus international travelers), or specific psychographic risk thresholds moderate these pathways. Finally, the measurement instruments in this study focused generally on traditional institutional communication channels. Given the rapid digital transformation of the tourism sector, future research should examine how emerging, AI-driven information technologies, predictive weather applications, and real-time social media influencer networks alter the perceived quality and authenticity of crisis messages during environmental emergencies.

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