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Post-COVID-19 travel intentions to Kenya from Hong Kong by applying the extended theory of planned behavior (ETPB)

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper examines the post-COVID-19 travel intentions to Kenya among Hong Kong outbound travelers using the theory of planned behavior (TPB) over three different time horizons of 1, 5, and 10 years.

Design/methodology/approach – An extension was made by including two new constructs of perceived destination image and travel constraints. A cross-sectional sample of Hongkongers was surveyed. Data were collected using a self-administrated bilingual (English and Chinese) online survey. Exploratory factor analysis, linear regression and mediation analysis were conducted to test the research model.

Findings – The findings from 216 Hongkongers reveal that different combinations of the four constructs, namely, perceived behavioral control, attitude, subjective norms, and destination image, share a positive effect on individuals' travel intention to Kenya over the three different time horizons. Travel constraints act as a significant negative mediator on the four constructs in predicting travel intention to Kenya among Hongkongers.

Practical implications – The results provide useful insight to Kenya's destination marketing organization (DMO) and Hong Kong outbound travel agencies to integrate prominent elements into marketing strategies to arouse travel intention and expand their business prospects, which will also accelerate tourism recovery in the post-pandemic era.

Originality/value – By integrating two extended variables into the TPB model, this study makes a contribution by overcoming the deficiency of the original theory.

Keywords Hong Kong, Kenya, Theory of planned behavior, Travel intention, Travel constraints, Destination image

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

As the pandemic crisis appears to subside, there has been an ongoing discussion about post-Covid tourism rebound globally as well as in East Africa (Zhang *et al.*, 2021; Yeh, 2021; Ezra *et al.*, 2021). Destination marketing organizations (DMOs) and travel companies around the world have begun to launch their post-pandemic tourism recovery plan to prepare for the long-awaited resumption of international leisure travel, including Kenya. From a global perspective, international tourism is a prominent facilitator of socio-economic development that represented 7% of international trade. In some countries, the industry contributed over 20% of their GDP, and it is the world's third largest export industry before the coronavirus outbreaks (UNWTO, 2022a). It is anticipated that global tourism could reach to pre-pandemic

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levels by 2024 (UNWTO, 2022b). As an emerging tourist destination in Eastern Africa, Kenya's rich biological resources, a vast array of wildlife and safaris, and great migration are the focus of attention (Manrai *et al.*, 2019). Tourism is the second largest source of foreign exchange in Kenya. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Kenya ranked third in Sub-Saharan Africa behind South Africa and Nigeria (Balala, 2019). Despite the impressive performance among sub-Saharan African tourist destinations, Kenya's numbers of international tourist arrivals trails behind other Asian, European, and North American tourism destinations (UNWTO, 2019a), which may be due to concerns associated with quality of life, medical care, literacy rate, health, pollution (Manrai *et al.*, 2019), safety and visa concerns (Deichmann and Frempong, 2016), terrorism, incidence or casualties (Buigut and Amendah, 2016), vaccination concerns (Adongo *et al.*, 2021), and tourist transport provision and infrastructure (Choy and Kamoche, 2022). Since travelers tend to conflate countries in the African continent with other African countries, pandemic outbreaks such as Ebola and Covid have also weakened image of Africa as a safe travel destination. Unaffected countries, such as Kenya, have also been dragged down by other affected African nations, undermining people's confidence in travel (Wasike, 2021; Novelli *et al.*, 2018).

The Kenya Tourism Board (KTB) incorporates visitor arrivals from Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Macau in the same tourist arrivals statistics. China (including Hong Kong and Macau) ranked the 4th largest source market, accounting for 4% of Kenya's total inbound international arrival (Balala, 2019). However, the number of tourists from Hong Kong remains unrevealed (Choy and Kamoche, 2022). Benefitting from soaring China–Kenya bilateral ties, the number of holidaymakers from China to Kenya increased exponentially by 280%, from 29,774 in 2015 to over 84,000 in 2019 (Xinhua, 2019; KTB, various years) (see Figure 1). While Kenya treats Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Macau as an ethnically homogenous country, the Chinese tourism market is more segmented with diverse travel preferences and behavior. Heterogeneity remains, especially among Chinese travelers from various socio-geographic contexts (APA News, 2019). The existing literature maintained that most long-haul leisure travelers are well-educated and mature with rich travel experience; are high-income couples with no children; or backpackers with relatively

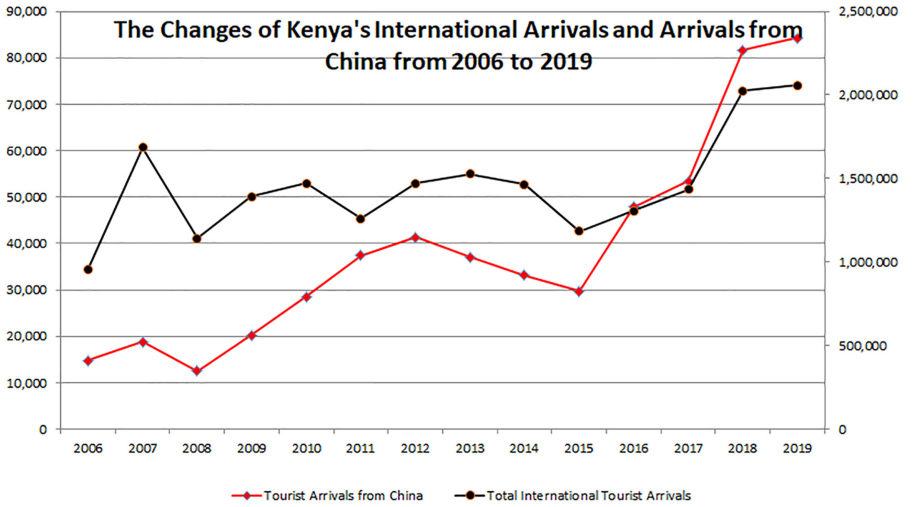

Figure 1.
International tourist arrivals in Kenya and tourist arrivals from China

Source(s): Compiled from KTB (various years) (Author's own work)

longer travel times and higher flexibility in travel arrangements (McKercher and Mak, 2019). These tourists' cultural backgrounds influence their international destination choice (Pestana *et al.*, 2020; Bi and Lehto, 2018). Given Hong Kong travelers are fond of visiting new and exotic destinations (Zhang *et al.*, 2012; Guillet *et al.*, 2011; ITE, 2021), it leaves great room for growth in sub-Saharan African destinations, like Kenya, who are ready to receive overseas tourists in a post-pandemic world (Choy and Kamoche, 2022). To accelerate the international tourism market's growth momentum, it is crucial for both Hong Kong (as a source market) and Kenya (as a tourist destination) to understand how different psychological factors influence tourists' post-COVID travel intentions. Particularly as a separate tourist generating market to formulate bespoke post-COVID-19 tourism revival and regenerate plans. Avraham and Ketter (2017) called for further investigation into the scantly researched areas of tourist segments and cross-cultural matters in emerging travel markets. There are limited empirical studies about the Hong Kong–Kenya tourism market, with one exception revealed that Hong Kong travel agents recognize the value of Kenyan market opportunities, but several obstacles prevent them from fully embracing it, such as travel constraints and inadequate familiarity with the destination (Choy and Kamoche, 2022). This study addresses this gap by examining travel intentions to Kenya from Hong Kong as a tourist-generating market across 1-, 5-, and 10-year time horizons based on the theory of planned behavior (TPB) and incorporating destination image and travel constraints as additional constructs. Studies revealed that the risk acceptance levels of individuals might change along with the temporal distance of an upcoming event (Liberman *et al.*, 2002). Specifically, individuals are more willing to take risks for distant-future events than near-future ones (Gilovich *et al.*, 1993). With dramatic changes in the travel restrictions implemented between tourism destinations and generating countries, Jordan *et al.* (2017) examined the intention of American travelers to visit Cuba across 3-time horizons (i.e. within 1, 5, and 10 years). Considering that most global travel destinations have been imposing travel restrictions and border controls amid COVID-19, the international tourism industry is more likely to rebound from its pandemic-related losses at different paces (UNWTO, 2022b). Kenya may take comparatively longer to rebuild its tourism sector due to its heavy dependence on long-haul travelers from North American, European, and Asian markets that have suffered economic contractions (Rogerson and Baum, 2020). It is appropriate to use three travel time horizons to identify possible divergences amongst those who intend to visit Kenya, as uncertainty and turbulence are unavoidable.

The main goal of this study is to examine how certain psychological and socio-demographic factors influence the intentions of outbound travelers in Hong Kong to visit Kenya by utilizing the extended theory of planned Behavior (ETPB) model. The extended model incorporates two additional variables (i.e. destination image and travel constraints) into the core TPB components (i.e. perceived behavioral control, attitudes, and subjective norms). The contribution of the study is fourfold. First, the findings will enrich existing literature about the application of the TPB on travelers' destination choice to the emerging Sub-Saharan African destination. Second, the study takes an initial step in laying the groundwork for an expansive China–Africa tourism study and provides more comprehensive explanations about travel intentions to Kenya across multiple travel time horizons in a Hong Kong context. Third, this paper proposes a shift away from the traditional, European colonial-inspired Africa-West research paradigm toward an emerging Africa–Asia nexus. Finally, our findings are conducive to tourism industry practitioners and policymakers for incorporating the core determinants into marketing strategies to improve destination attractiveness and restore travel intentions post-COVID-19.

2. Literature review

2.1 The Kenya and Hong Kong tourism market

Kenya welcomed 2 million international tourists in 2019 and generated US$1.6 billion, which accounted for 8.8% of Kenya's GDP (Nyasuguta, 2019). Kenya enjoys increasing popularity among Asian tourists and visitors from the United States, western European countries, and the bordering nations of Uganda and Tanzania continue to dominate its tourism market. Despite a small population of 7.2 million, Hong Kong stands out in the outbound source travel market, where over 60% of Hongkongers traveled overseas for leisure at least three times in 2019 before the COVID-19 outbreak (ITE Hong Kong, 2021). Hong Kong ranked 12th in the list of biggest tourism spenders in the world, outstripping various European (e.g. Germany and the United Kingdom) and Asian (e.g. Mainland China) source markets in per capita outbound spending (US$3,500) (UNWTO, 2019b). It is reported that Chinese tourists stays in Kenya for 6–10 days on average and spend between US$5,000 and $100,000 for a unique travel experience (KTB, n.d., Liu *et al.*, 2015). Mckercher and Lew (2003) mentioned that tourism destinations at a substantial distance (e.g. Australia, United States, and the United Kingdom) appeal to Hongkongers, partly owing to more comprehensive destination branding and marketing programs launched by developed countries (Cherifi *et al.*, 2014; McKercher and Lew, 2003). Safety is the primary concern among Hong Kong outbound travelers, regardless of the pandemic (TIC, 2021; Zhang *et al.*, 2004). An early study found that Hong Kong residents ranked epidemics as the most vital concern when choosing a leisure travel destination, followed by safety, socio-political environment, value for money and disaster (Zhang *et al.*, 2004). Factors influencing travel destination preferences vary by demographic characteristics such as gender (Zhang *et al.*, 2004). Meanwhile, later studies suggested determining factors of destination choice among Hong Kong travelers include travel cost, length of stay, travel group size, accommodation arrangement and quality, new travel destinations, and itinerary (Zhang *et al.*, 2012; Guillet *et al.*, 2011).

In a study on post-COVID-19 international travel plans, TIC (2021) found that over 50% of Hong Kong residents plan to travel abroad in the next 4–12 months after travel restrictions are lifted, with an unchanged or even increased travel budget (TIC, 2021). An upsurge in demand for longer trips of over ten nights is anticipated when compulsory quarantine requirements for arrivals from overseas are eased (TTG, 2021; TIC, 2021). Most travelers from Hong Kong are interested visiting new and exotic destinations that delve into local culture, landscape, and cuisine (ITE, 2021). Regarding the sociodemographic characteristics of Hong Kong outbound travelers, middle-aged adults (46–55 years old) with higher household incomes and education attainment have more travel experience, and are keen on traveling farther and discovering new exotic travel destinations (Wong *et al.*, 2016; Guillet *et al.*, 2011). These studies examined the aggregative pictures with regards to outbound travel behaviors among Hong Kong residents. There has been little research into the determinants of Hongkongers' travel intentions to specific destinations, hence the rationale of the present study. Based on the above discussion, the following hypothesis is postulated.

H1. Sociodemographic factors (i.e. gender, age, household income, occupation, and education) have a significant relationship with travel intention to Kenya.

2.2 Theory of planned behavior (TPB)

Proposed by Ajzen in 1991, TPB is descended from the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Ajzen, 1985). TPB is a psychological framework for measuring and understanding one's behavior and beliefs in specific circumstances. TPB suggested that human behavioral intentions and behaviors are shaped by their subjective norms, attitudes, and perceived

behavioral control towards a specific behavior based on their controllable resources and rational judgment. Attitude is considered as one's positive (favorable) or negative (unfavorable) disposition toward behavioral performance. Subjective norms are defined as acceptance/pressure from society/significant to individuals that influence one's decision-making. Perceived behavioral control refers to the external difficulties and irrational factors (e.g. time and money) perceived by individuals that either enable or prevent them from demonstrating a certain behavior (Jordon *et al.*, 2017). TPB has been widely used in previous studies to predict travel and leisure behavioral intention/choices, such as for restaurants (Liao and Fang, 2019), social media (Raza *et al.*, 2020), and travel intentions from or to a designated tourist generating market/destination, such as from the United States to Cuba (Boley *et al.*, 2018; Jordan *et al.*, 2017) and from Tanzania to Korea (Kim and Kwon, 2018). Recent studies have utilized this theory to examine tourists' general post-COVID international travel intentions in China and Korea (Liu *et al.*, 2021; Shin *et al.*, 2022). While TPB continues to be a well-accepted theory to predict travel intentions, researchers incorporated additional diverse constructs into the original TPB, such as risk perception, past travel experience (Hsieh *et al.*, 2016), and destination familiarity (Soliman, 2019). TPB to dovetail specific research purposes and enhance its explanation and prediction power (see Table 1). Tourism and leisure studies have widely used travel constraints (including perceived risks) and destination image as an additional variable to investigate the travelers' intentions to visit various destinations, especially amid pandemic outbreaks (Shin *et al.*, 2022; Neuburger and Egger, 2020; Park *et al.*, 2017; Khan *et al.*, 2017) (also see Table 1).

Author(s)	Sampled population	Tourism destination/ Travel behavioral intention	Additional variable(s)
Hsu and Huang (2010)	Mainland Chinese	Hong Kong	Travel motivation
Han *et al.* (2011)	Mainland Chinese	Korea	Expectation of tourist visa exemption
Jalilvand and Samiei (2012)	Iranian	Isfahan	e-Word-of-Mouth
Hsieh *et al.* (2016)	Taiwanese	Japan	Perceived risk, Past visit experience
Park *et al.* (2017)	Mainland Chinese	Japan	Destination image and travel constraints
Jordon *et al.* (2017)	American	Cuba	Different time horizons
Boley *et al.* (2018)	American	Cuba	Social return
Kim and Kwon (2018)	Tanzanian	Korea	Cognitive image and affective image
Soliman (2019)	International inbound tourists visited Egypt	Revisiting Egypt	Travel motivation, eWOM, destination image and destination familiarity
Liu *et al.* (2021)	Mainland Chinese	Post-pandemic outbound travel intention	Non-pharmaceutical interventions Perception of COVID-19, Past outbound travel behavior, Risk tolerance
Shin *et al.* (2022)	Korean	Pandemic and Post-pandemic travel decision	Tourist trust, travel constraint, perceived health risk, past travel experience

Source(s): Author's own work

Table 1. Tourism research examining travel intention adopting the ETPB

This study incorporated perceived destination image and travel constraints to form the extended TPB model to understand how these constructs and the components of TPB jointly influence the intention of Hong Kong travelers to visit Kenya across 1-, 5-, and 10-year time frames. The proposed conceptual framework is presented in Figure 2.

2.2.1 Core components of TPB. Previous Mainland Chinese, Tanzanian, American, and Taiwanese studies confirmed that a high perceived behavioral control, positive attitude, and positive subjective norms increase the travel intention of individuals (Liu *et al.*, 2021; Kim and Kwon, 2018; Jordan *et al.*, 2017; Hsieh *et al.*, 2016). A study from the United States suggested that the impacts of the main TPB components on travel intention to Cuba varied across different time horizons. Within a one-year period, negative attitudes toward Cuba were significantly correlated with travel intention to Cuba, while subjective norms were significantly correlated with travel intention across all time frames of 1, 5, and 10 years. There was a significant positive correlation between perceived behavioral control and travel intention to Cuba within 1 and 5 years, but not within 10 years (Jordan *et al.*, 2017). A Korean study revealed that among all TPB core components, only subjective norms significantly affect post-pandemic travel intention (Shin *et al.*, 2022). Based on the above, we generate the following hypothesis:

H2a. Travel intention to Kenya within a year is directly related to positive attitudes.

H2b. Travel intention to Kenya within five years is directly related to positive attitudes.

H2c. Travel intention to Kenya within ten years is directly related to positive attitudes.

H3a. Travel intention to Kenya within a year is directly related to positive subjective norms.

H3b. Travel intention to Kenya within five years is directly related to positive subjective norms.

H3c. Travel intention to Kenya within ten years is directly related to positive subjective norms.

H4a. Travel intention to Kenya within a year is directly related to positive perceived behavioral control.

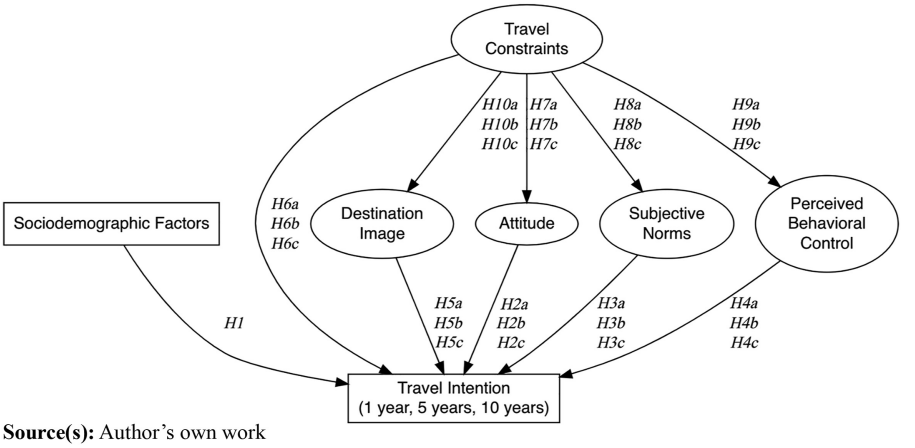

Figure 2.
Proposed conceptual framework

Source(s): Author's own work

H4b. Travel intention to Kenya within five years is directly related to positive perceived behavioral control.

H4c. Travel intention to Kenya within ten years is directly related to positive perceived behavioral control.

2.2.2 Destination image. Destination image is the aggregation of individuals' ideas, impressions, and beliefs towards a destination (Iarmolenko and Kerstetter, 2015). Both first-time and repeat tourists are strongly influenced by destination image when choosing a long-haul destination (Kim and Kwon, 2018; Zou and Petrick, 2017). Prior studies have highlighted the strong positive influence of destination image on the three original constructs of TPB (Park *et al.*, 2017) and its positive correlation with travel intention (Whang *et al.*, 2016; Chew and Jahari, 2014). One study adopting the ETPB have shown the effect of perceived cognitive image on the affective image that converts into a favorable attitude towards Korea as a country at large, as well as its products and cuisine, and ultimately lead to positive intentions to travel to Korea (Kim and Kwon, 2018). Based on the discussion, the following hypotheses are developed:

H5a. Travel intention to Kenya within a year is directly related to positive destination image.

H5b. Travel intention to Kenya within five years is directly related to positive destination image.

H5c. Travel intention to Kenya within ten years is directly related to positive destination image.

2.2.3 Travel constraints. Travel constraints are obstacles limiting one's ability to initiate and continue a journey, which wields profound influence in early travel decision-making and can ruin the travel experience on a trip (Hung and Petrick, 2012). Travel constraints could be structural (e.g. accessibility, distance, and lack of money or time), intrapersonal (e.g. reference group attitudes), and interpersonal (e.g. attitudes of travel companions) (Crawford *et al.*, 1991). Extant studies have shown that the relationship between attitude/subjective norms/destination image and travel intention is negatively mediated by travel constraints (Park *et al.*, 2017; Khan *et al.*, 2017). Structural constraints such as infrastructure development, climate, ambient environment, and provision of destination information would interrupt the destination image formation process (Kim *et al.*, 2021).

Safety and security, location, and costs are universal travel constraints of leisure travel destinations (Almeida and Garrod, 2018). Other Africa-specific travel constraints influencing international travelers' destination choice include visa application (Deichmann and Frempong, 2016), tourist transportation provision and infrastructure (Choy and Kamoche, 2022), health issues, including vaccines and diseases (Novelli *et al.*, 2018), political stability (Okello and Novelli, 2014), food service (Obonyo *et al.*, 2012), tourism dimension (i.e. attractions, basics, and context) (Manrai *et al.*, 2019), and institutional support (Smart, 2018). Kenya provides visa exemption to most countries in Africa and the Indian Ocean, but Asian countries, including Hong Kong, are excluded (iVisa, 2019). Interestingly, travelers compromise and overcome certain travel constraints when push factors (e.g. new experiences and a feeling of prestige) are overwhelming (Dale and Ritche, 2020). However, a Mainland Chinese study found that travel constraints did not emerge as a significant effect on visiting intention (Zou and Petrick, 2017). To our knowledge, only a few studies reported the role of travel constraints and destination image in visiting propensity to Sub-Saharan Africa (Khan *et al.*, 2020; Avraham and Ketter, 2017; Maingi *et al.*, 2015; Muhohominni and Lubbe, 2017). There is no previous study focusing on the Hong Kong tourism market in particular when examining the relationship between travel intentions to Kenya, destination image, and travel constraints. In choosing long-haul destinations such as

Kenya, it would be particularly interesting to know whether Hong Kong, which is part of Mainland China, followed the same trend. Based on the above discussion, the following hypotheses are set out:

H6a. Travel intention to Kenya within a year is negatively associated with travel constraints.

H6b. Travel intention to Kenya within five years is negatively associated with travel constraints.

H6c. Travel intention to Kenya within ten years is negatively associated with travel constraints.

H7a. Attitude and travel intention to Kenya within a year is mediated by travel constraints.

H7b. Attitude and travel intention to Kenya within five years is mediated by travel constraints.

H7c. Attitude and travel intention to Kenya within ten years is mediated by travel constraints.

H8a. Subjective norms and travel intention to Kenya within a year is mediated by travel constraints.

H8b. Subjective norms and travel intention to Kenya within five years is mediated by travel constraints.

H8c. Subjective norms and travel intention to Kenya within ten years is mediated by travel constraints.

H9a. Perceived behavioral control and travel intention to Kenya within a year is mediated by travel constraints.

H9b. Perceived behavioral control and travel intention to Kenya within five years is mediated by travel constraints.

H9c. Perceived behavioral control and travel intention to Kenya within five years is mediated by travel constraints.

H10a. Destination image and travel intention to Kenya within a year is mediated by travel constraints.

H10b. Destination image and travel intention to Kenya within five years is mediated by travel constraints.

H10c. Destination image and travel intention to Kenya within ten years is mediated by travel constraints.

3. Methodology

The overall purpose of this study is to examine the post-COVID-19 travel intention to Kenya among Hong Kong outbound travelers using the TPB over three different time horizons of 1, 5, and 10 years. To comply with the social-distancing policy amid the pandemic outbreak, data were collected using a self-administrated bilingual (English and Chinese) online survey between January and April 2020. A purposive sampling approach was used to recruit eligible participants who can help achieve the study purposes based on authors' judgement. This non-probabilistic research approach enables researchers to gain greater insight into attitudes

and perceptions of the study sample across the broad sociodemographic spectrum (Etikan *et al.*, 2016).

Following university ethics procedures, we obtained consent from participants before collecting data. We emailed invitations to potential participants who were identified through the professional contacts of the authors. Each of these invites contained a direct hyperlink to the online survey, along with the information sheet of the study. A reminder was sent every month after the initial invitation until the closing of the survey. To ensure that the respondent meets the study's requirements (i.e. permanent Hong Kong Chinese residents aged 18 years and above), two filter questions were included at the beginning of the survey. A pilot test was conducted online among respondents who satisfied the selection criteria, and their responses were used to fine-tune the instrument before the formal survey. The survey included 6 constructs and 39 items measured by a 5-point Likert scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Based on existing TPB measurement scales and previous research, a total of 9 items that tested the basic components of the TPB model (i.e. perceived behavioral control, attitude, and subjective norms) were adapted from Ajzen (1991), Boley *et al.* (2018) and Park *et al.* (2017). Three items from Jordan *et al.* (2017) were adapted to measure the travel intention of the respondents with adjustment of the tourism destination. A sample item is "I plan to travel to Kenya within 1 year after the pandemic" (see Table 7). Five items from Kim and Kwon (2018) were also adapted to measure the perceived destination image of the respondents, and six items were adapted from Chen *et al.* (2013) and Park *et al.* (2017) to measure the perceptions of respondents toward travel constraints.

Of the 900 email invitations, 48 emails were undeliverable, and 216 valid responses were collected, representing a response rate of 24%. The sample size corroborates previous studies that suggested a sample of 100–150 could still yield a convergent and reliable result if each variable has three or more items (de Winter *et al.*, 2009; Anderson and Gerbing, 1984). This criterion indicates that the sample size of 216 in our study is adequate for estimation. Descriptive statistics and reliability analysis were utilized in the preliminary analysis. R packages lavaan and semTools were used for exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and structural equation model (SEM), respectively, to check the relationship between the observed factors and the latent constructs that underlie them (Rosseel, 2012). A mediation analysis was also performed to test the mediating factor (travel constraints) and ETPB. Linear regression and mediation analysis were eventually conducted to test the research model.

4. Results

4.1 Profile of respondents

A total of 220 respondents completed the online survey. Among the collected responses, 4 had been discarded due to invalid data entries meaning there were 216 valid responses. As shown in Table 2, among all valid respondents (n = 216), female respondents (54.2%) slightly outweighed male respondents (45.8%). In terms of age, 34.7% of the respondents were aged between 18 years and 25 years, and 32.4% were aged between 46 years and 55 years. Over 60% of respondents hold a tertiary education degree. The greatest portion of respondents (56.5%) have a monthly household income between HK$40,001 and over HK$100,000 (US$5,120 to 12,800).

4.2 Data analysis and results

Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was used to measure the hypothetical model. In PLS-SEM, data are efficiently analyzed with fewer restrictive assumptions, smaller sample sizes, and a more complex model, where exploration is more important than confirmation (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Using PLS-SEM is recommended when testing a theoretical framework with key target constructs from both a prediction and explanation perspective (Hair

Variable		Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	117	54.2
	Male	99	45.8
Age Group	18–25	75	34.7
	26–35	29	13.4
	36–45	29	13.4
	46–55	70	32.4
	56–65	11	5.1
	66 or above	2	0.9
Educational Attainment	Primary and below	1	0.5
	Secondary	19	8.8
	Post-secondary	63	29.2
	Bachelor's degree	114	52.8
	Master's degree or above	19	8.8
Occupation	Associate professionals/Professional/Managers/ Administrators	69	31.9
	Clerical support workers	39	18.1
	Craft and related workers	5	2.3
	Retired	5	2.3
	Self-employed or freelance	14	6.5
	Service and sales workers	21	9.7
	Student	57	26.4
	Unemployed	6	2.8
Monthly Household Income	Less than HK$ 20,000	46	21.3
	HK$ 20,001–40,000	48	22.2
	HK$ 40,001–60,000	41	19.0
	HK$ 60,001–80,000	41	19.0
	HK$ 80,001–90,000	25	11.6
	HK$ 90,001–100,000	5	2.3
	HK$ 100,001 or above	10	4.6

Table 2. Respondents' profile (N = 216)

Source(s): Author's own work

et al., 2010, 2019). It has been widely used in tourism studies to investigate tourists' travel intentions using PLS-SEM (Liu *et al.*, 2021; Soliman, 2019; Jordon *et al.*, 2017). Hence, it is appropriate for the present study to use PLS-SEM to examine the post-COVID-19 travel intention to Kenya among Hong Kong outbound travelers by exploring the predictive power of attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control based on TPB; and investigating and explaining the influence of two additional constructs of destination image and travel constraint on travel intention. Testing of the proposed model was performed in two stages. We assessed the reliability and validity of the measurement model and then evaluated the structural model.

4.2.1 Measurement model. EFA was conducted to evaluate the independent constructs: perceived behavioral control, attitude, destination image, subjective norms, and travel constraints. Results from the scree plot confirmed that the ETPB model has five factors. Travel intention was operationalized as dependent variable. Eight items under destination image, travel constraints and perceived behavioral control were removed due to poor factor loadings (≤ 0.60) (Awang, 2015). Hair *et al.* (2019) suggested that the constructs are valid if the Composite Reliability and Average Variance Extracted are achieved. While there have been varying suggestions of how many items per factor to represent each factor, ranging from three to five (MacCallum *et al.*, 1999; Raubenheimer, 2004), there were scales that contain only two items for each factor (Gosling *et al.*, 2003). To assess the proposed measurement model, Cronbach's alpha, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted were analyzed for each individual item (Raza *et al.*, 2021). The internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha value,

which is assumed to be greater than 0.70 for acceptable (Nunnally, 1978). In Tables 3 and 4, the variables are organized by thematic categories that apply across elements. Given travel intention was considered as a dependent variable, only independent variables were included as rows in Table 3 and as rows/columns in the matrix of Table 4. In Table 3, the Cronbach's alphas of the present study ranged between 0.677 and 0.896 across six constructs, suggesting a reasonable internal consistency for each factor. The composite reliability values shown in Table 3 also suggest the reliability of the model is acceptable, as all the values was greater than 0.60 (Raza *et al.*, 2021). The average variance extracted (AVE) of the constructs were all greater than 0.50, as indicated in Table 3, confirming the scale's convergent validity by fulfilling the criteria listed by Fornell and Larcker (1981). Factor loadings for each of the six constructs were statistically significant, ranging from 0.61 to 0.80. Hence, we concluded that removing the items would not weaken the content validity. All latent factor correlations were smaller than 1, indicating that they were distinct from each other (see Table 3).

Cross-loadings analysis (i.e. AVE and HTMT) was used to test the discriminant validity. A correlation between latent constructs and the square root of the AVE was calculated. The variance of a latent construct should be explained better by its own indicator than by the variance of other latent constructs. Hence, the square root of each construct's AVE should be greater than its correlations with other latent constructs (Hair *et al.*, 2012). It is recommended that HTMT is less than 0.85 (Hair *et al.*, 2012). In our present study, discriminant validity was achieved because HTMT ratio scores were all less than the criterion stated (see Table 4).

The goodness of model fit was assessed by a list of statistics, as summarized in Table 4. To reduce the possibility of Type I and Type II errors, we used the criteria of CFI >0.9, TLI >0.9, RMSEA <0.07, and SRMR <0.07 (Chen *et al.*, 2008; Hu and Bentler, 1999). All statistics met the aforementioned criteria meaning the EFA fitting is reasonable. To achieve discriminant validity, Hair *et al.* (2010) recommended that the AVE of the model should exceed the squared correlation between constructs. Meanwhile, for scales having nomological validity, a significant correlation should be established among other constructs. As shown in Table 5, all model constructs satisfied such requirements, and travel constraints showed negative correlations with all other constructs concurred with what has been understood.

4.2.2 ANOVA test to analyze the relationship between sociodemographic characteristics and travel intention to Kenya. To test H1, by taking an average on the scores of travel intention to Kenya within a year, 5 years, and 10 years, a score for measuring the travel intention to Kenya was obtained for each respondent. Results from ANOVA confirmed that gender ($p < 0.01$), age ($p < 0.01$), household income ($p < 0.01$), occupation ($p < 0.05$), and education ($p < 0.05$) were the most important determinants of travel destination decision to Kenya (see Table 6).

4.2.3 Structural equation modelling. Descriptive statistics on three different time horizons on intention to travel to Kenya are listed in Table 7. The results show a growing interest in traveling to Kenya as time horizons widened. The relatively small standard deviation values (less than 1) highlight a strong agreement on this trend among the survey respondents. To test H2 to H10, an ETPB model was created via structural equation modeling, as illustrated in Figure 2 for each time horizon. To remove the repetitive counting of respondents having a travel intention to Kenya within a year, 5 years, and 10 years, those who gave a score of 4 or above for the question "intention to travel to Kenya within 1 year" were excluded from the ETPB model for the 5-year time horizon. This approach reduced the number of respondents from 216 to 199. By the same token, respondents answering 4 or above on intention within 1 year and 5 years would be removed from the model for intention to travel to Kenya within 10 years, thereby further reducing the number of respondents to 150. The results showed that positive attitudes did not significantly predict travel intention to Kenya within 1 or 5 years. However, it was significant in predicting travel intention to Kenya within 10 years. Among those planning to travel to Kenya within a year, subject norms were a significant positive predictor. Perceived behavioral control was significantly positive across

	Standardized factor loadings	Cronbach's alpha	AVE	Composite reliability	Travel intention 1-year	Travel intention 5-year	Travel intention 10-year
Destination image (DI)		0.844	0.741	0.850	0.214	0.119	0.332*
A safe place for travel	0.89						
Stable political and social environment	0.61						
Travel constraints (TC)		0.677^	0.545	0.699	0.781	0.231	1.689
Difficult to apply visa	0.66						
Vaccination	0.65						
Attitude (AT)		0.896	0.746	0.898	0.184	0.176	0.652*
Traveling to Kenya is valuable	0.74						
Traveling to Kenya is interesting	0.80						
Traveling to Kenya is pleasant	0.72						
Subjective norms (SNs)		0.877	0.717	0.883	0.242*	0.112	0.297
My family/ friends would encourage me to travel Kenya	0.80						
My family/ friends would support me to travel Kenya	0.80						
Kenya had been recommended by my family/ friends	0.71						
Perceived behavioral control (PBC)		0.784	0.666	0.797	0.352**	0.281**	0.517*
I have enough time to travel Kenya in future	0.70						
I have enough money to travel to Kenya in future	0.65						

Table 3.
Result of exploratory factor analysis

Note(s): ^slightly below 0.7; $\chi^2[44] = 88.043(p < 0.000)$; *$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$
Source(s): Author's own work

HTMT	Destination image	Travel constraint	Attitude	Subjective norms	Perceived behavioral control
Destination Image	*0.741*				
Travel Constraint	0.293	*0.545*			
Attitude	0.657	0.331	*0.746*		
Subjective Norms	0.627	0.374	0.655	*0.717*	
Perceived Behavioral Control	0.487	0.246	0.659	0.429	*0.666*

Statistics for measuring goodness of fit	Values
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.969
Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI)	0.954
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMESA)	0.068
Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR)	0.035

Source(s): Author's own work

Table 4. Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) criterion and Goodness of Fit statistics

	DI	TC	AT	SN	PBC
DI	74%	0.06	0.39	0.39	0.24
TC	−0.252*	55%	0.09	0.14	0.05
AT	0.627*	−0.296*	75%	0.41	0.43
SN	0.628*	−0.376*	0.641*	72%	0.16
PBC	0.494*	−0.229*	0.655*	0.404*	67%

Note(s): All correlations are with $p < 0.05$. Average variance explained (AVE) of each construct is on the diagonal line. Numbers below the diagonal line are correlations and numbers above the line are squared correlations

Source(s): Author's own work

Table 5. Correlations and squared correlations between model constructs

Sociodemographic factors	df	Sum square	Mean square	F value	*p*
Gender	1	6.354	6.354	14.72	0.000**
Age range	5	13.340	2.668	6.18	0.000**
Marriage status	2	0.700	0.350	0.810	0.446
Education attainment	4	5.165	1.291	2.991	0.020*
Occupation status	9	8.496	0.944	2.187	0.025*
Monthly household income	6	18.720	3.121	7.229	0.000**
Number of traveled destinations	1	0.004	0.004	0.009	0.924
Residuals	187	80.730	0.432	–	–

Note(s): *$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$

Source(s): Author's own work

Table 6. Results of the ANOVA on sociodemographic factors (H1)

all three travel time horizons in predicting travel intention to Kenya. Despite the direct influence of travel constraint on travel intention to Kenya, it was not significant, the findings show that travel constraint has a significant negative mediating effect on travel intention to Kenya through four constructs: attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and destination image across the three travel time horizons. Travel intention to Kenya within 10 years was significantly influenced by destination image only. The results are summarized in Tables 7, 8, and Figure 3.

5. Discussion and conclusions

5.1 Conclusions

The study sought to broaden our understanding of the application of the TPB incorporated with extended variables of destination image and travel constraints to explain Hongkongers' post-COVID travel intention to Kenya. Based on the results from 216 travelers from Hong Kong, different combinations of three TPB core components (i.e. perceived behavioral control, attitude, and subjective norms) and an additional variable of destination image have been found to positively affect individuals' intentions to visit Kenya over the three year time frames. In predicting Hongkongers' travel intentions to Kenya, travel constraints act as a significant negative mediator. This study also concludes that gender, household income, occupation, and education are important determinants of travel destination decisions to Kenya.

In specific, findings support H1, which indicate that sociodemographic factors have significant relationships with travel intention to Kenya. Our findings are consistent with previous findings by McKercher and Mak (2019), Wong *et al.* (2016), Guillet *et al.* (2011) and Zhang *et al.* (2004) wherein travelers' demographic characteristics have a significant impact on travel destination choice. This study concludes that while the impact of perceived behavioral control, attitude, and subjective norms vary over the three different time horizons, they all share a positive effect on Hongkongers' visit intentions to Kenya. Therefore, H2, H3, and H4 for all three time horizons are supported. The results of this study are in line with those of previous studies conducted before and during the COVID-19 outbreak, which suggested that positive attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control generate higher international travel propensity (Liu *et al.*, 2021; Kim and Kwon, 2018; Jordan *et al.*, 2017; Hsieh *et al.*, 2016). More specifically, our results indicated that post-COVID travel intention to Kenya was significantly influenced by perceived behavioral control only in all three travel time horizons. Our findings thus contradict a recent Korean study suggesting that only subjective norms have a significant impact on international travel intention after the pandemic (Shin *et al.*, 2022). The results also go beyond an earlier study suggesting that perceived behavioral control has a positive relationship with travel intention to Cuba within 1 and 5 years among U.S. residents (Jordan *et al.*, 2017). The divergent findings suggest that cultural difference influences travelers' behavioral intention (Pestana *et al.*, 2020; Bi and Lehto, 2018). It may be that cost, distance, length of travel, destination risk and safety perception and familiarity greatly influence Hong Kong holidaymakers' destination choices, especially for a long-haul destination like Kenya (Choy and Kamoche, 2022; Zhang *et al.*, 2012; Guillet *et al.*, 2011; Mckercher and Lew, 2003).

Inconsistent with the studies of Kim and Kwon (2018) and Whang *et al.* (2016), who found a positive correlation between destination image and travel intention, our results illustrated that destination image was significantly positive in predicting travel intention to Kenya within 10 years only. Therefore, our findings support H5c and do not support H5a and H5b. The lag in impact of destination image in the current study may be caused by a "wait and see" attitude adopted by travelers that creates major hysteresis because safety and stabilized travel environment become a common concern regardless of tourism destination amid the ongoing pandemic outbreak (TIC, 2021; Zhang *et al.*, 2004). Our findings highlight the importance for Kenya to improve its destination image when the pandemic is over.

Table 7. Descriptive statistics of intention to travel by time horizon

Intentions	Mean	SD
Travel to Kenya within 1 year	2.19	0.83
Travel to Kenya within 5 years	2.86	0.96
Travel to Kenya within 10 years	3.40	0.91

Source(s): Author's own work

Hypothesis	Path	Intention to travel horizon (year)	Standardize regression coefficient	p	Remarks
H2a	Attitude → Intention to travel to Kenya	1[i]	0.184	0.284	Not supported
H2b		5[ii]	0.176	0.146	Not supported
H2c		10[iii]	0.652*	0.010	Supported
H3a	Subjective norms →	1	0.242*	0.043	Supported
H3b	Intention to travel to Kenya	5	0.112	0.260	Not supported
H3c		10	0.297	0.082	Not supported
H4a	Perceived behavioral	1	0.352**	0.002	Supported
H4b	control → Intention to travel	5	0.281**	0.009	Supported
H4c	to Kenya	10	0.517*	0.015	Supported
H5a	Destination image →	1	0.214	0.097	Not supported
H5b	Intention to travel to Kenya	5	0.119	0.268	Not supported
H5c		10	0.332*	0.046	Supported
H6a	Travel Constraints →	1	0.781	0.305	Not supported
H6b	Intention to travel to Kenya	5	0.231	0.658	Not supported
H6c		10	1.689	0.076	Not supported
H7a	Travel constraints mediate:	1	−1.734**	0.000	Supported
H7b	Attitude → Intention to	5	−1.605**	0.000	Supported
H7c	travel to Kenya	10	−1.261**	0.000	Supported
H8a	Travel constraints mediate:	1	−1.122**	0.000	Supported
H8b	Subjective norms →	5	−1.100**	0.000	Supported
H8c	Intention to travel to Kenya	10	−0.773**	0.000	Supported
H9a	Travel constraints mediate:	1	−0.926**	0.000	Supported
H9b	Perceived behavioral	5	−0.824**	0.000	Supported
H9c	control → Intention to travel to Kenya	10	−0.834**	0.000	Supported
H10a	Travel constraints mediate:	1	−1.166**	0.000	Supported
H10b	Destination image →	5	−1.047**	0.000	Supported
H10c	Intention to travel to Kenya	10	−0.827**	0.000	Supported

Note(s): *$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$; CFI = comparative fit index; TLI = Tucker–Lewis Index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; SRMR = standardized root mean square residual
[i]Model 1 Year (n = 216): χ^2(df) = 165.919(57); CFI = 0.930; TLI = 0.904; RMSEA = 0.094; SRMR = 0.058
[ii]Model 5 Years (n = 199): χ^2(df) = 154.039(57); CFI = 0.928.; TLI = 0.901; RMSEA = 0.092; SRMR = 0.057
[iii]Model 10 Years (n = 150): χ^2(df) = 137.791(57); CFI = 0.892; TLI = 0.852; RMSEA = 0.097; SRMR = 0.063
Source(s): Author's own work

Table 8. Results of the Path analysis

Moreover, our results support H6a to H10c, which indicate that travel constraints act as a significant negative mediator on the rest of the four constructs (i.e. perceived behavioral control, attitudes, subjective norms, and destination image) in predicting travel intention to Kenya among Hongkongers across all three travel time horizons. These findings partially support previous studies (e.g. Park *et al.*, 2017; Khan *et al.*, 2017), suggesting that travel constraints are a mediating factor in the relation between attitude, subjective norms, destination image and travel intention, but goes beyond a Chinese study that identified travel

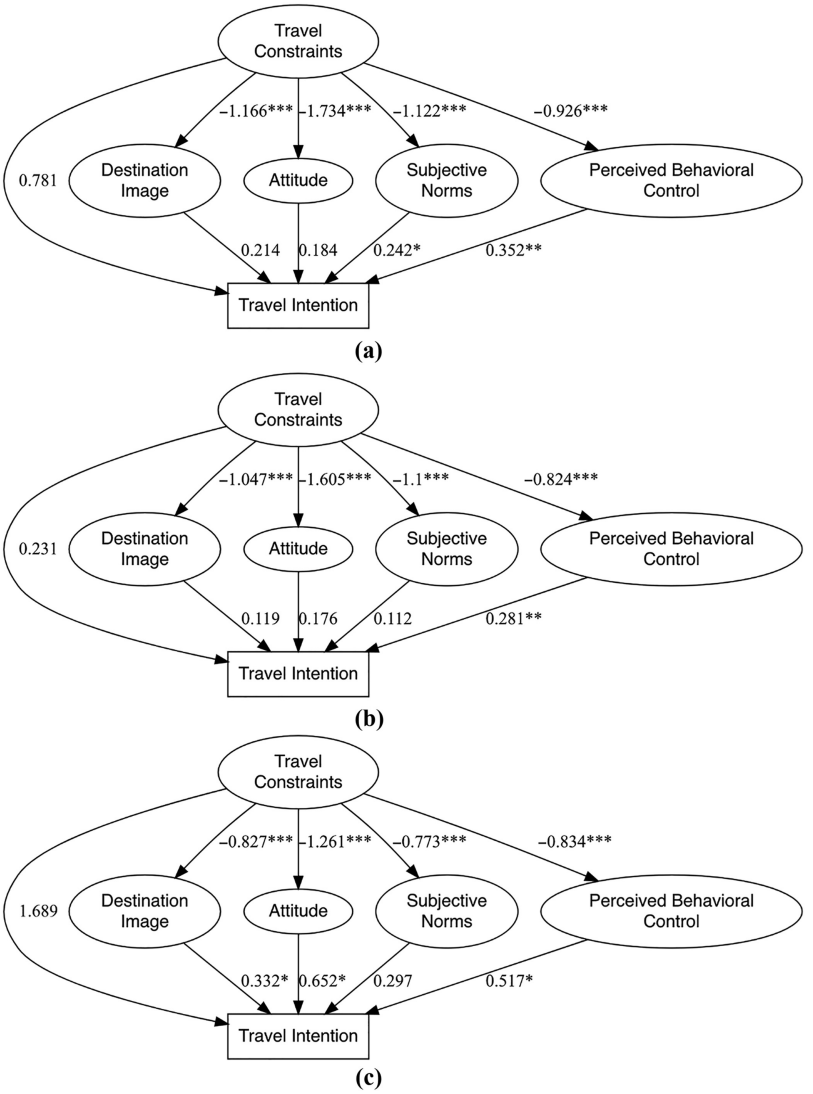

Figure 3.
Hypotheses testing results (H2–H10)
(a) Results of one year travel intention;
(b) Results of five year travel intention;
(c) Results of ten year travel intention

Source(s): Author's own work

intention is not significantly influenced by travel constraints (Zou and Petrick, 2017). Notably, the standardized regression coefficients indicate that the mediating effect of travel constraints on attitude, subjective norms, and destination image in predicting travel intention to Kenya is weakened over longer time frames. The diminishing impact could be due to Hong Kong tourists expecting an extended amount of time, which allows Kenya to improve from the current travel constraints and weaknesses. These findings may have implications for KTB to identify and overcome the travel constraints that may exist in the Hong Kong market.

5.2 Theoretical implications

Given the lack of research on Hong Kong–Kenya tourism from tourist perspective, the results of this study contribute to a growing body of literature on post-COVID 19 travel intentions using the TPB framework and shed new light on future research about sub-Saharan Africa tourism marketing in Hong Kong. An emerging Africa–Asia nexus is proposed as an alternative to the traditional African-West research paradigm. The present study addresses the need for more empirical studies on tourist segments in emerging markets and cross-cultural issues (Avraham and Ketter, 2017).

5.3 Practical implications

This study offers numerous implications for policymakers and industry practitioners in designing marketing strategies that can effectively revitalize the demand for travel after the COVID-19 pandemic. Firstly, extant studies suggested that long-haul travelers who are more adventurous, and willing to seek new experiences and exotic travel destinations could be the more mature and seasoned travelers, well-educated and high-income couples with no children, or backpackers who have fewer time constraints (McKercher and Mak, 2019). KTB should optimize finite resources by allocating more marketing efforts to target these segments. Secondly, to reduce flight time between Hong Kong and Kenya, it is recommended to reduce layover time by launching nonstop flights or tightening flight connections (Choy and Kamoche, 2022). Thirdly, KTB should employ pull marketing strategies by enhancing the destination image and competitiveness of Kenya and position itself as a safe, accessible, and affordable travel destination with unique cultural and natural tourist attractions (Şengel *et al.*, 2022; TIC, 2021; Cherifi *et al.*, 2014; Zhang *et al.*, 2004). Fourth, Hong Kong travel agencies could employ push strategies to increase the market appeal of Kenya by promoting it as a once for a lifetime travel destination (Dale and Ritche, 2020). Lastly, policymakers in Kenya are suggested to rectify travel constraints (e.g. visa application) for Hongkongers. It is more likely that travelers will consider the destination once perceived constraints have been overcome (Choy and Kamoche, 2022).

5.4 Limitations and future research

To our knowledge, this study is the first empirical study examining how the original TPB components and the extended constructs affect travel intentions to Kenya among Hongkongers and how the predictability of these determinants change over a horizon of 1–10 years. The findings in this study provide useful insights that can aid both the demand (outbound travel agencies in Hong Kong) and supply sides (DMOs in Sub-Saharan Africa in general and Kenya in specific) in designing marketing strategies that can effectively revitalize the demand for travel after the COVID-19 pandemic. However, there were a few limitations to this study. We acknowledge the limitations of a quantitative and cross-sectional study design in failing to explore details about individuals' attitudes/emotions and measure change in a particular context, which will require a qualitative and longitudinal study approach. These limitations should be addressed in future studies. While filtering questions and theoretical framework were in place when eliciting samples, the sampling procedure and a skewed distribution to younger respondents could make the conclusions less generalizable. Being limited by the number of valid items for some of the factors, the results of the analysis need to be interpreted prudently. Future work should also observe caution when interpreting the findings of this work given the small sample size. Researchers may consider adopting a larger sample and conducting stratified random sampling to enhance generalizability and external validity of their results. Since the ramifications of tighter Covid travel restrictions have damaged tourism-related industries, both KTB and the Hong Kong travel trade industry would have to take these findings and recommendations into account with caution, given the continuing uncertainties surrounding global travel in general. Despite combining the tourist arrival statistics of Hong Kong, Macau,

and Mainland China to Kenya, tourists from diverse cultural backgrounds may have different expectations and preferences in international destination choices. The findings in the present study may not generalize well to the demographically heterogeneous samples in China and sub-Saharan Africa at large. Given China could emerge as a major tourist generating market for Kenya post-COVID-19 (Xinhua, 2020), a future line of inquiry would be to examine whether these initial findings from Hong Kong hold true in selected Chinese provinces or other Asia source markets. In addition, future research should look for tourist behavioral intentions in choosing other sub-Saharan Africa travel destinations in the context of expanding Africa–China relations.

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