

Risks and Constraints Faced by Solo Female Travelers: A Conceptual Overview¹

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Abstract

The study aims to provide a conceptual framework for considering the risks and constraints encountered by solo female travelers. This study reviewed and synthesized relevant literature to identify and categorize the various types of risks and constraints that influence solo travel behavior among females. The studies were selected by convenience purposive sampling method. Firstly, the studies were scanned with the keywords related to risks and constraints in solo female travels. Secondly, 43 studies, conducted between 2000 and 2024 and included related keywords in their titles and abstracts, were included in the review. The review was accomplished by thematic content analysis on two main themes. In this line, the authors defined ten sub-themes regarding risks and constraints in solo female travels. The seven sub-themes for risks were explained as sexual-related, cultural and social, gender-related, physical and financial, political unrest and terro-

rism, performance, and psychological. The three sub-themes for constraints were examined as personal, interpersonal, and structural. The findings revealed that solo female travelers most commonly encounter sexual-related, physical and financial, performance, cultural and social risks. Additionally, these travelers primarily experience personal and interpersonal constraints. By focusing specifically on gender-based differences in solo travel patterns, this study makes a valuable contribution to the literature on risks and constraints, paving the way for future research in the field of solo travel.

Keywords: Solo Female Travelers, Travel Risks, Travel Constraints, Solo Travel Behavior, Women Traveling Alone .

JEL Codes: L83, D6

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Introduction

Reflecting its growth and evolution with the tourism sector, solo travelling behavior has become a prominent topic in recent tourism literature (Aslan, 2023; Karagöz, Işık, Dogru, & Zhang, 2021; Mâni & Jose, 2020; Tükenmez, 2019; Yang, Khoo-Lattimore, & Arcodia, 2018a; 2018b). Several international travel reports, such as the Klook Travel Report (2023) and the MMGY Global Travel Report (2022), have noted that solo travel is increasingly preferred across age groups due to changing living standards and habits (klook.com; mmgyglobal.com). However, while solo travel offers a sense of spiritual, physical, and mental relaxation, it creates certain challenges. In addressing these, several studies have taken a gender-focused perspective, specifically on females' travel behaviors (Mâni & Jose, 2020; Tavakoli & Mura, 2021; Zahedi, 2023) due to the greater risks and constraints that females face when traveling alone (Breda, Santos, Kliček, & Dinis, 2020; Karagöz, Işık, Dogru, & Zhang, 2021; Yang, Khoo-Lattimore, & Arcodia, 2018a; 2018b; Valaja, 2018).

Although these two concepts—risks and constraints—appear similar, they differ contextually. Risk refers to the likelihood of a situation occurring and the potential negative consequences associated with it (Furedi, 2017), for example, the possibility of a solo female traveler being attacked in a dangerous area. Constraints, on the other hand, refer to any obstacle, prohibition, or limitation that restricts a person's freedom, movement, or preferences (Kerstetter, Yen, & Yarnal, 2005), such as restrictions on females travelling alone at night in certain countries or social norms that discourage them from being in specific places. By restricting their freedom, these constraints significantly hinder individuals from achieving their goals. Constraints can arise from both internal (personal) factors and external ones (interpersonal and situational) that females must consider when planning their travels (Crawford & Godbey, 1987).

Conceptualized in this way, risks refer to situations with potentially negative consequences or dangers for individuals. These can have direct impacts, such as physical, emotional, or financial harm, that threaten a female traveler's safety, health, or well-being. Constraints, on the other hand, are shaped by an individual's perceptions and psychological states, whether from actual circumstances or societal expectations, norms, and cultural influences. These constraints manifest as psychological barriers that affect females' travel behaviors and preferences. The two concepts are semantically different in that risks are more tangible and arise from external factors, whereas constraints are more perceptual and emerge on a psychological level.

Previous studies have emphasized the need for fur-

ther research on the risks and constraints faced by solo female travelers (Aslan, 2023; Aslantürk & Unur, 2019; Tükenmez, 2019; Hosseini, Macias, & Garcia, 2022; Kaba & Emekli, 2018). Accordingly, the present study offers a conceptual perspective on the risks and constraints encountered by females while travelling alone. By synthesizing the findings from previous studies, it aims to enhance the understanding of solo female travel behavior. To do so, the study addresses the following two research questions:

RQ1: What are the risks faced by solo female travelers?

RQ2: What are the constraints faced by solo female travelers?

Theoretical Background

This section addresses the following headings: the concept of risk, risk theories, the concept of constraint, constraint theories, solo travel behavior, reasons for solo travel and females' solo travel behavior.

What means of risk?

Risk can be defined as the possibility of an adverse effect occurring under conditions of uncertainty or when faced with an undesirable situation (Yang & Nair, 2014). While the earliest recorded use of the term risk is believed to date back to the early 1600s (Breakwell, 2014), the concept has evolved significantly in meaning and usage since ancient civilizations, where it was often linked to fate, luck, destiny, and fortune (oed.com), particularly in maritime ventures (Ewald, 1993). Although the precise origin is uncertain, the word is thought to derive from the Italian word *risco*, meaning peril, or the Greek word *rhiza*, meaning precipice (Mythen, 2008). In the Middle Ages, risk was linked to courage and adventure rather than the potential for self-destruction (Beck, 1992) and used in marine insurance for the dangers of sea voyages (Ewald, 1993). The insurance industry's growth during the Industrial Revolution necessitated a better understanding of risk through actuarial science. Hence, during the 19th century, "the meaning of risk broadened to include natural events, society, and individual behaviors, freedoms, social relations and was used in both positive and negative contexts" (Ewald, 1993, p. 226). Following World War II, there was increasing awareness of technological and environmental risks, leading to Ulrich Beck's concept of the risk society in the 1980s, which examined how modern societies produce and manage risks. In parallel, the term's meaning shifted to have exclusively negative connotations. Furthermore, Beck's (1992) conceptualization emphasized that, due to globalization, the risks associated with industrialization in contemporary society differ fun-

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damentally from traditional dangers in previous eras in that they are more global, particularly nuclear fission and radioactive waste (Beck, 1992). Hence, these risks pose a significant threat to the survival of all living organisms on Earth (Beck, 1992).

Overall, the concept of risk has been used to manage the dangers that arise in various contexts. While its semantic nuances may differ across societies, it has primarily a negative connotation (Valaja, 2018). Hence, Furedi (2017) defines risk as “the probability of occurrence of negativities such as damage, illness, and death that occur with a certain danger” (p. 45). However, because resistance to risks can depend on individual differences, the concept of perceived risk has gained prominence in literature. For example, perceived risk is “the nature and rate of risk that a consumer perceives when considering a particular purchase decision” (Cox & Rich 1964, p. 33). Within this framework, perceived risk is understood as the subjective assessment made by an individual (Deniz & Erciş, 2008), influenced by various interpersonal, individual (e.g., age, income, education, job position, personality, attitudes toward risk), and cultural factors present in the individual’s environment (Kotler, 2002).

Risk Theories

The risk theories underlined that the risks have different dimensions. In defining the concept, the risk theories offer various frameworks for understanding how individuals, groups, or organizations manage risks, and various perspectives for understanding the economic, individual, social, cultural, and psychological dimensions of risk. This explains that any factor can be perceived as a potential risk. For example, Von Neumann & Morgenstern’s (1944) expected utility theory posits that individuals evaluate each possibility, risk, and its effects and select the option with the highest expected utility. Kahneman & Tversky’s (1979) prospect utility theory refers to the decision-making process when individuals are at risk. The construction of the theory involves some simple expectations. These are exemplified by monetary outcomes and stated probabilities. Nevertheless, the theory can be extended to more complex choices. Prospect theory consists of two steps: the regulation stage and the evaluation stage. First, the regulation stage consists of a preliminary analysis of customers. In the second stage, the regulated expectations are evaluated, and the expectation of the highest value is selected. Then, the organization stage is outlined, and the model of the evaluation stage is developed.

In addition to these theories, Douglas’ (1966) cultural theory posits that individuals’ attitudes and reactions to risks vary according to the cultural groups and social structures to which they belong. This the-

ory suggests that risk perception differs according to cultural background and social context. The social theory of risk (Douglas & Wildavsky, 1982) posits that risk is not solely an individual evaluation process; it must also be evaluated in social and cultural contexts. This theory emphasizes that risk is shaped by cultural symbols, norms and values and that the risk perceptions of different communities vary.

In his theory of risk society, Ulrich Beck argued that modern industrial societies have been replaced by reflexive modernization and that industrial developments have consequences under risk. He stated that the concept of risk is not a modern phenomenon and that those who went on voyages of discovery in the past, such as Columbus, traveled with the awareness of the personal risks involved in the journey. However, these were not global dangers that would affect all of humanity, such as nuclear fission or radioactive waste that emerged with industrialization. In medieval times, the term risk was associated with notions of courage and adventure rather than the threat of self-destruction of all life on earth. According to Beck, these global risks pose a threat to all life on earth. The reason for this is that they are a direct result of industrialization and intensify as they become more globalized (Beck, 1992). Beck stated that risks, unlike the old dangers, are a threatening force of modernization and have consequences related to the globalization of suspicion. These theories offer different perspectives for understanding the economic, individual, social, cultural and psychological dimensions of risk and reveal the potential for any factor to emerge as a risk.

What means of constraint?

The concept of constraint was first defined by Iso-Ahola & Mannell (1985), who argued that constraints arise within a framework of social-personal, social-cultural, and physical factors. They also claimed that there is a negative relationship between perceived constraints and the frequency of satisfying leisure experiences. That is, individuals are happier and more satisfied when they are less constrained or not constrained at all (Wilson, 2004). Jackson’s (1991) theory of leisure defines constraints as “factors that limit the formation of leisure preferences and prevent or prohibit the enjoyment of leisure” (Nyaupane, McCabe, & Anderson, 2008, p.342). Harrington, Dawson, & Bolla’s (1992) theory of constraints in travel and tourism identifies two types: subjective and objective. Subjective constraints are internal obstacles to travel experienced by individuals (e.g., psychological problems); objective constraints are external obstacles (e.g., climate, social problems) (Harrington, Dawson, & Bolla, 1992). Crawford & Godbey (1987) classified constraints regarding leisure into three main types: personal, interpersonal, and stru-

ctural. Personal/intrapersonal constraints stem from individual psychological conditions, including stress, depression, anxiety, and perceived self-efficacy; interpersonal constraints arise from social interactions and communications within reference groups such as family, relatives, and friends; structural constraints refer to external factors like climate, transportation, and financial resources, which prevent individuals from realizing their leisure preferences.

Constraint Theories

Constraint theories are conceptualized from social, economic, psychological, physical, spatial, cultural, political, and gender perspectives. Regarding social constraints, Durkheim's (1952) normative order theory and Parsons' (1951) social system theory elucidate how social control mechanisms curtail individual actions. Goffman's (1959) role theory addresses how the roles individuals adopt based on their social positions shape and restrict their behaviors, while Bourdieu's (1986) social capital theory explains how individuals' social networks can limit their access to resources and opportunities.

Economic constraint theories primarily focus on cost, benefit, and resource limitations. For example, Becker's (1976) theory of rational choice posits that individuals make decisions by weighing costs and benefits, suggesting that economic constraints can restrict decision-making. Likewise, Sen's (1999) Capabilities Approach Theory asserts that economic constraints contribute to inequalities in opportunities among individuals.

Psychological constraint theories examine factors like self-efficacy, self-confidence, fear, and anxiety. Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory explains how individuals' beliefs regarding their capabilities influence their decisions to engage in specific actions. Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) stress and coping theory suggests that emotional and cognitive factors can restrict individuals' abilities to cope with various situations.

Regarding physical and spatial constraints, Soja's (1989) spatial theory explains how geographical and spatial factors shape and limit individual actions. Regarding cultural and political constraints, Geertz's (1973) cultural interpretation theory argues that cultural norms and traditions impose limitations on individuals' actions, while Foucault's (1977) theories of power and authority posit that legal and political structures play a crucial role in restricting individual behaviors.

Finally, among feminist and gender theories, Butler's (1990) gender theory examines how societal gender roles and expectations constrain individual actions and freedoms, while MacKinnon's (1989) feminist legal theory asserts that gender-based violence and harassment significantly limit females' freedoms. Ta-

ken together, these theories enable a multifaceted understanding of the varied sources of constraints that individuals face across different domains of life.

Solo Travel Behavior

The concept of solo travelling emerged in the 1990s (Tükenmez, 2019). Since then, various definitions have emerged without reaching a consensus, reflecting the dynamic and evolving nature of tourism. Otegui-Carles, Araújo-Vila, & Fraiz-Brea. (2022) categorize solo travelers into two types: those who travel alone by default and those who do so by choice. Discussion has mainly focused on the arrival status of an individual. Thus, Laesser, Beritelli, & Bieger. (2009) identify four categories of solo travelers: (i) individuals who live alone and travel independently; (ii) individuals who live alone but choose to join a group or an organized trip; (iii) individuals who do not live alone yet travel solo; and (iv) individuals who do not live alone, travel independently, but participate in a group or organized tour. In line with this variety, Bianchi (2016), for example, defines solo travelers as married or single people who choose to travel on their own for a holiday (p. 197). This definition emphasizes marital status and specifically pertains to leisure travel, excluding business trips or essential travel, such as family visits or health-related journeys. Foo (1999) defines a solo traveler as someone who journeys to a destination independently (as cited in McNamara & Prideaux 2010). Similarly, Wilson (2004) focuses on independent travelers, "referring to a diverse and growing tourism segment with distinct needs and motivations compared to mass and organized tourists" (p. 8). Wilson (2004) characterizes independent travelers as individuals who follow their personal preferences without being tied to any specific tour group. That is, they arrive at their destination alone. Similarly, defines a solo traveler as someone who predominantly spends their time alone on trips without acquaintances, including family or friends (Nguyen, 2018).

Reasons for Solo Travel

Solo travel can offer various benefits, including personal development (Wilson & Harris, 2006), relaxation and experiential learning (Chiang & Jogaratnam, 2006), self-discovery (Mâni & Jose, 2020), adventure (McNamara & Prideaux, 2010), sense of independence (Laesser, Beritelli, & Bieger, 2009; McNamara & Prideaux, 2010; Mehmetoglu, Dann, & Larsen, 2001) as well as liberation and the experience of crossing borders (Pekiner, 2019). Travelling alone has increased its appeal, particularly considering evolving social lifestyles (Chung, Baik, & Lee, 2017). Accordingly, the phenomenon has attracted growing interest in tourism studies in recent years (Karagöz, Işık, Dogru, & Zhang, 2021; Mâni & Jose, 2020; Yang,

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Khoo-Lattimore, & Arcodia, 2018a; 2018b).

Although solo travel is generally done as a preference, in some cases, it is a necessity. Those who travel alone out of necessity usually do so for reasons like business (Breda, Santos, Kliček, & Dinis, 2020) or inability to find a travel companion (Mehmetoglu, Dann, & Larsen, 2001). One reason for the growth in solo travel is changes in the preferences of individuals in particular demographic groups (Bianchi, 2016). For example, young people want to stay single longer, while older people want to continue a more active life. Therefore, the changing demographics and lifestyles of modern society (Laesser, Beritelli, & Bieger, 2009) affect individuals' travel decisions and desires. There are various motivations for solo travel. According to Zhang, Zhang, Li, & Shen (2024), solo travel encompasses pleasure-seeking, social, exploratory, and escape-oriented types based on personal values. Nirkow & Abbasian (2024) argue that solo travelers often prioritize the ability to make spontaneous decisions and explore at their own pace. Wachyuni, Wahyuni, & Wiweka (2023) identified Generation Z's primary motivation for solo travel as enjoying tourist attractions, along with factors like value for money, inspiration, local interaction, healing, social media influence, and self-actualization. According to Ejupi & Medarić (2022), solo travelers

are often searching for knowledge about other cultures, new ways of life, and new experiences.

Females' Solo Travel Behavior

Travelers such as Marco Polo and Ibn Battuta, known as adventurers and explorers in the earlier period, were generally males (Wilson & Little, 2005), whereas few females had the privilege or social status to travel. The modern interest in solo travel began in the 18th and 19th centuries due to increasing curiosity about the world. During the 19th century, some females did manage to travel alone, especially during the period seen as the golden age of travel (Robinson, 1994, as cited in Seow & Brown, 2018). In the 20th century, tourism marketers failed to recognize females' solo travelling, although it had gained an important place in the travel market (Bartos, 1982 cited in Seow & Brown, 2018). Currently, despite previous difficulties, solo female travelers are now part of the travel market. This has attracted the attention of researchers, leading to various definitions of female travelers. For example, Chai (1996, as cited in McNamara & Prideaux, 2010) defines solo female travelers as females who travel alone to a destination without being part of a package tour or a group.



Figure 1. Antecedents of Solo Female Travel Behavior
Source: Authors' elaboration.

The main antecedents of solo female travel behavior are presented in Figure 1. Females who travel alone may be prone to risk-taking because they are motivated by personal development and increased self-confidence (Pekiner, 2019). In addition, the sense of independence and spontaneity from solo travelling can increase their willingness to take risks (Bianchi, 2016; Hyde & Lawson, 2003). Other factors explaining the increase in females travelling alone include higher education levels (Dereli, 2021), later marriage age, and lower birth rates (Breda, Santos, Kliček, & Dinis, 2020), and greater social acceptance of gender equality (Wilson & Little, 2008).

Ejupi & Medarić (2022) classify females' motivations for solo travel into three categories based on the literature: psychological, cultural, and personal. Psychological motives include a desire for adventure, an escape from routine, a change of environment,

and the pursuit of independence and self-confidence. Cultural motives include activities such as sight-seeing, attending events, visiting museums and galleries, trying local cuisines, and learning about local cultures. Personal motives involve visiting relatives and friends, meeting new people, acquiring new skills, personal growth, and searching for one's identity. According to Chiang and Jogaratnam (2006), the major motivational factors for females travelling solo are the desire for experiences, relaxation, escape, social interaction, and self-esteem.

However, in contrast to these motivations, females also have fears about travelling alone concerning others' perceptions, vulnerability, a sense of limited access, and feeling conspicuous (Wilson & Little, 2008). Furthermore, females face various risks and constraints (Aslan, 2023; Brugulat & Coromina, 2021; Wantono & McKercher, 2020; Yang, Khoo-Lattimore,

& Arcodia, 2018a; 2018b). Therefore, it is essential to examine more closely the risks and constraints that females face while travelling solo.

Method

This study adopted a literature review based on a thematic perspective. A review was developed to identify risks and constraints for females travelling alone from previous studies. To eliminate these studies, the authors followed a two-phase process. First, they scanned the keywords *solo female travel-

ers and *women travelling alone in the title. We defined 100 studies. Second, they scanned them using keywords as *constraint AND *solo female traveler, *risk AND *solo female traveler, *constraint AND *women travelling alone, *risk AND *women travelling alone in their abstracts. As illustrated in Table 1, 43 studies conducted between 2000 and 2024 were identified. In this line, the selection criterion is that they addressed the aforementioned keywords in their titles and abstracts. The studies were selected through the convenience purposive sampling method.

Table 1. Reviewed Studies

<p>Risks (n:25)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bianchi (2016) 2. Breda, Santos, Kliček, & Dinis (2020)* 3. Brown & Osman (2017) 4. Carr (2000) 5. Carvalho, Baptista, & Costa (2015) 6. Jordan & Gibson (2005) * 7. Kaba (2021) 8. Karagöz, Işık, Dogru, & Zhang. (2021) 9. Kour & Gupta (2019) * 10. Maiurro & Brandão (2024) 11. McNamara & Prideaux (2010) * 12. Nguyen & Hsu (2022) 13. O’Neill, Abdul-Razak, Anastasova, & O’Callaghan (2022) 14. Pekiner (2019) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 15. Qi, Gibson, & Zhang (2009) 16. Singh & Aier (2024) 17. Shukor & Kattiyapornpong (2024) 18. Sujood, Siddiqui, & Bano (2023) * 19. Valaja (2018) 20. Wantono & McKercher (2020) 21. Wilson & Little (2008) 22. Yang (2016) 23. Yang, Khoo-Lattimore, & Arcodia (2018a) 24. Yang, Khoo-Lattimore, & Arcodia (2018b) 25. Yang, Yang, & Khoo-Lattimore (2019)
<p>Constraints (n:23)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Aslan (2023) 2. Bernard, Rahman, & McGehee (2022) 3. Breda, Santos, Kliček, & Dinis (2020) * 4. Brugulat & Coromina (2021) 5. Cesur (2014) 6. Hosseini, Macias, & Garcia (2022) 7. Gao & Kerstetter (2016) 8. Jordan & Gibson (2005)* 9. Kour & Gupta (2019)* 10. Mani & Jose (2020) 11. McNamara & Prideaux (2010)* 12. Nguyen (2018) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. Ngwira, Tse, & Vongvisitsin (2020) 14. Özgürel (2022) 15. Seow & Brown (2018) 16. Sujood, Siddiqui, & Bano (2023)* 17. Tavakoli & Mura (2021) 18. Tükenmez (2019) 19. Wilson (2004) 20. Wilson & Little (2005) 21. Xie & Ritchie (2019) 22. Yang, Khoo-Lattimore, & Arcodia, (2017) 23. Zahedi (2023)

*Studies consider both risks and constraints (n:5).

Source: Authors’ elaboration.

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These studies were retrieved in August 2024 from Google Scholar, the Scopus database, and the Web of Science database. To identify the risks and constraints affecting solo female travelers, the review was conducted using a thematic content analysis, focusing on two main themes: risks and constraints faced by solo female travelers. Risks were retrieved from the studies by the authors, but Crawford & Godbey's (1987) classification was used in the identification of constraints.

Qualitative content analysis of 43 studies was conducted to reveal risks and constraints by solo female travelers through the inductive method. To ensure data readiness, the studies were first carefully transcribed and reviewed. The content analysis followed three steps: reduction, display, and conclusion verification (Miles & Huberman, 1994), and the three-phase process (open-coding, axial coding, and selective coding) recommended by Corbin and Strauss (2015). First, open coding was completed by thorough line-by-line coding to describe sentences. Second, axial coding was conducted to identify sub-themes and establish relationships between codes. Finally, selective coding assigned initial codes to the main themes and categories to create a comprehensive

codebook. There were two coders to enhance validity. As the intra-coder, the author assigned sub-themes to the corresponding main themes, while an independent coder acted as the inter-coder. The coders then discussed the coding to finalize the two main themes and 10 sub-themes. Cohen's (1960) kappa coefficient (κ) indicated a coder agreement of 0.920.

Findings

The findings were presented under two main themes: risks faced by solo female travelers and constraints faced by solo female travelers. For risks, seven sub-themes were identified; for constraints, three sub-themes were identified.

Risks Faced by Solo Female Travelers

The seven sub-themes identified under the main theme of risks faced by solo female travelers (RQ1) were sexual-related risks, cultural and societal risks, gender-related risks, physical and financial risks, political unrest and terrorism, performance risks, and psychological risks (Figure 2).

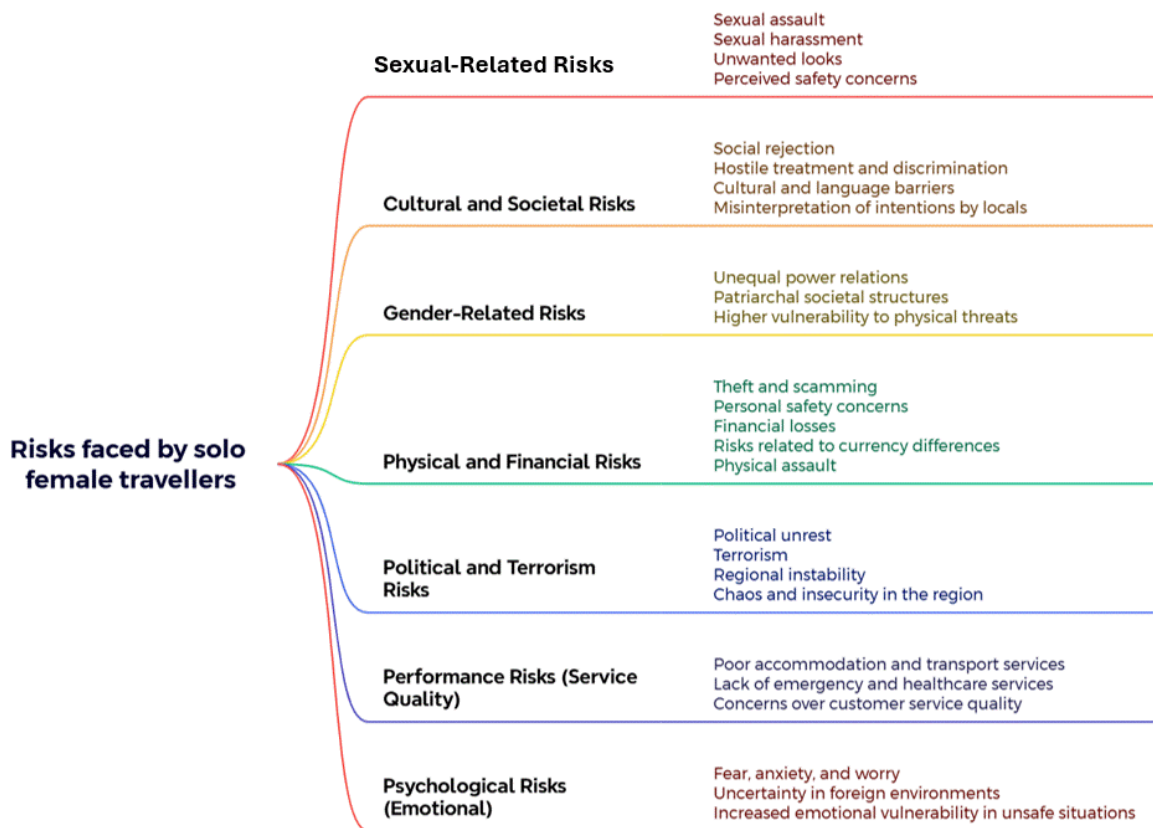


Figure 2. Risks Faced by Solo Female Travelers

Source: Authors' elaboration.

Sexual-Related Risks

Solo female travelers face sex-related risks when traveling alone (Breda, Santos, Kliček, & Dinis, 2020; Karagöz, Işık, Dogru, & Zhang, 2021; Nguyen & Hsu, 2022; Valaja, 2018; Yang, Khoo-Lattimore, & Arcodia, 2018b), including sexual assault, sexual harassment, unwanted looks, and perceived safety concerns (Yang, Khoo-Lattimore, & Arcodia, 2018a). This sense of insecurity stems from some unwanted stares and occasional sexual harassment (Wilson & Little, 2005, 2008). Female solo travelers face a higher risk of sexual violence and harassment, especially in areas perceived as unsafe, such as India (Singh & Aier, 2024). Moreover, unwanted stares can make solo female travelers uncomfortable (Jordan & Gibson, 2005; Shukor & Kattiyapornpong, 2024).

According to Maiurro & Brandão (2024), many women prioritize safety in their travel decisions and often choose destinations that they consider safe in terms of gender-related risks. However, solo female travellers continue to participate in the travel market through self-transformation, empowerment and resisting gendered risks (Wilson & Little, 2005). Accordingly, Yang, Khoo-Lattimore, & Arcodia (2018a) argue that in solo travel, the risk is an essential element of travel and is accepted by solo travellers.

Like Beck's (1992) notion of risk community, risk awareness in contemporary societies entails acknowledging the positive and negative aspects of travel and coping with the uncertainty of not knowing exactly what to expect. At the same time, although sexual-related risks continue to increase, female travellers have developed various risk-reduction strategies (Yang, Khoo-Lattimore, & Arcodia, 2018a; 2018b). These include that female travelers often use strategies to minimize sexual-related risks, such as dressing modestly, avoiding going out late at night, being polite, ignoring unwanted attention from men, avoiding eye contact with men, and wearing fake wedding rings (Kaba, 2021).

Cultural and Social Risks

Another important type of risk is related to the attitudes of local communities towards solo women travelers. These attitudes can increase the risk of social rejection (Karagöz, Işık, Dogru, & Zhang, 2021; Yang, Khoo-Lattimore, & Arcodia, 2018a), hostile treatment and discrimination, as well as cultural and language barriers (Karagöz, Işık, Dogru, & Zhang, 2021; Nguyen, 2018; Nguyen & Hsu, 2022; Sujood, Siddiqui, & Bano, 2023). Yang, Khoo-Lattimore, & Arcodia (2018a), who researched Asian women, found that Asian women are at risk of discrimination and hostile treatment simply because of their appearance and because they are of a different nationality in the West. However, Qi, Gibson, & Zhang (2009), examining travelers' intentions to visit China for the Olympics, found that cultural risk did not have a significant impact on intentions.

Solo female travelers often face social disapproval, especially in conservative societies where traditional gender roles are prevalent. This disapproval can manifest as hostile treatment from residents, which can discourage women from traveling alone or exploring certain regions (Kour, 2020). Furthermore, cultural misunderstandings can lead to discrimination because locals may misinterpret the intentions of solo female travelers, thus further complicating their experience (O'Neill, Abdul-Razak, Anastasova, & O'Callaghan, 2022).

In another example, Tsai, Wu, Wall, & Linliu, (2016) conducted a study on three communities located in Taiwan's national scenic areas and exposed to natural disasters. In the study, both tourism and disaster perceptions of local people exposed to natural disasters were examined. They evaluated the perceived impacts of tourism in three categories: economic, socio-cultural and environmental. The results of the study revealed that most local people were more concerned about socio-cultural impacts, such as conflicts between locals and tourists and damage to cultural assets, than economic impacts. Studies show that women traveling alone often experience more difficulties (Breda, Santos, Kliček, & Dinis, 2020). In addition, when traveling alone, women are socially and culturally defined as an entity in need of constant protection in many cultures. Therefore, this situation can affect women negatively by making them feel powerless. For this reason, the approach of the local people in the traveling community is important and an approach that sees women and men equally should be adopted rather than sexist prejudices.

Gender-Related Risks

A significant gendered risk that can affect females' solo travel experiences is the unequal power dynamics between females and males within a patriarchal structure (Brown & Osman, 2017; Gustafson, 1998; Heimtun & Abelsen, 2013; Qi, Gibson, & Zhang, 2009; Valaja, 2018; Yang, 2016; Yang, Yang, & Khoo-Lattimore, 2019; Wantono & McKercher, 2020). Gender plays a crucial role in shaping females' perceptions of risk (Heimtun & Abelsen, 2013; Karagöz, Işık, Dogru, & Zhang, 2021; Valaja, 2018; Yang, 2016; Wilson & Little, 2008), with females often viewing themselves as more physically vulnerable than males and perceiving males as potential threats (Valaja, 2018; Yang, Yang, & Khoo-Lattimore, 2019).

From their study of the gender-specific aspects of solo travel, Heimtun & Abelsen (2013) found that females tend to find the experience more daunting than their male counterparts. While males can more easily select destinations that cater to their interests, such as sports and entertainment, females are more inclined to seek safer locations (Brown & Osman, 2017; Qi, Gibson, & Zhang, 2009). This underscores how gender-related perceived risks significantly

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impact individuals' motivations to travel alone and limit their choices.

In addition, the reasons for gender inequality for female solo travellers include cultural constraints. In this context, some traditional stereotypes lead to gender segregation and inequality for women. Among the studies, when compared to non-Muslim women, Muslim women's leisure participation is limited by their religion (Walseth & Amara, 2017). Similarly, in Indonesia, there are still significant inequalities in gender equality for Muslim women (Nguyen & Hsu, 2024). In related studies, it has been argued that religious values should focus on a specific country and its cultural ideologies to gain insight into the relationship between an individual's behaviour and travel intention.

(Ratthinan & Selamat, 2019). Thus, culture and tradition play decisive roles in shaping women's lives worldwide (Hosseini, Macias, & Garcia, 2022; Popova, Malcheva, & Mari-nov, 2019), influencing women's mobility and subsequent behaviour (Bernard, Rahman, & McGehee, 2022). In contrast, cultural norms and practices, including traditions, beliefs and social behaviours, nevertheless perpetuate gender inequality, significantly affecting gender equality (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2005).

Physical and Financial Risks

Females face significant physical and financial risks when traveling alone. These two risks operate both separately and together. These include theft and fraud (Breda, Santos, Kliček, & Dinis, 2020; Kour & Gupta, 2019; Nguyen & Hsu, 2022; Sujood, Siddiqui, & Bano, 2023), personal safety concerns (Karagöz, Işık, Dogru, & Zhang, 2021), and currency differences in the destination country (Breda, Santos, Kliček, & Dinis, 2020). Physical risks such as violence can reduce an individual's intention to revisit a destination after a previous solo travel experience (Chew & Jahari, 2014; Noh & Vogt, 2013; Qi, Gibson, & Zhang, 2009). However, Chew & Jahari (2014) found a negative relationship between perceived physical risk and revisit intention. Similarly, Noh & Vogt (2013) found similar results in the context of traveling to East Asian countries. Kour & Gupta's (2019) analysis on Kashmir revealed that physical risk and financial risk negatively affect travel intentions among solo female travelers. In addition, the study stated that the most common danger for women travelling alone is physical assault (Kour & Gupta, 2019).

Sujood, Siddiqui, & Bano (2023) reported that women who travel alone are at increased risk of violence or crimes such as extortion, especially at night or in isolated areas. Female solo travelers are more susceptible to dangers such as theft and robbery, as well as financial losses and unexpected expenses, especially in crowded or tourist-dense areas (Breda, Santos, Kliček, & Dinis, 2020; Nguyen & Hsu, 2022).

A general conclusion across studies is that women are more concerned about their physical safety and security while traveling than men (Brown & Osman, 2017; Qi, Gibson, & Zhang, 2009). To mitigate these risks, women travelers may incur extra costs for additional safety measures in emergency situations. Such unforeseen financial burdens can strain travel budgets (Sujood, Siddiqui, & Bano, 2023).

Although the negative effects of physical risk for solo female travelers have been reported in many studies, Khan, Chelliah, Khan, & Amin, (2019) found that female university students, young female travelers with high travel motivation had a higher intention to travel to the destination despite having a high perception of physical risk. This may suggest that factors such as age and education level should be compared with risks in studies.

Political Unrest and Terrorism

Political unrest, terrorism and regional instability in destinations can pose significant risks for women solo travelers (Kour & Gupta, 2019; McNamara & Prideaux, 2010; Sujood, Siddiqui, & Bano, 2023). Kour & Gupta (2019) found that political uncertainty negatively affects the travel intentions of female solo travelers and that political unrest in regions where women travel alone significantly affects their perceptions of travel safety. It should also be noted that terrorism is perceived as a significant threat for tourists traveling to various countries. According to McNamara & Prideaux (2010), travelers, especially women traveling alone, perceive the threat of terrorism as a major security concern. Kour & Gupta's (2019) analysis on the destination of Kashmir also revealed that risk perception and travel intentions among solo female travelers declined due to reasons such as political and cultural uncertainty. In another study, Wang & Choi (2024), examined the impact of political crisis events between countries on the number of tourists visiting China and the impact on tourism in the country. Among the results, various types of political events were compared, and it was found that national security-centered disputes had a more pronounced impact than regional disputes.

Conversely, past crises or the image of the destination may lead women to choose different destinations or shorten their length of stay. Moreover, chaotic situations may increase the security concerns of women traveling alone, leading them to take measures to reduce their security concerns while in unstable areas, such as purchasing private travel insurance (Sujood, Siddiqui, & Bano, 2023). However, in the face of all these adversities, Charfeddine & Dawd (2022) examined the resilience of the Turkish tourism sector to exogenous shocks over some time. Among the findings, it was revealed that terrorist attacks did not have any negative impact on tourism revenues and the number of tourist arrivals. This may provide

a sense of confidence to individuals who have traveled or will travel to the country by paying attention to the country's success in foreign policy and showing a successful situation in combating the adversities that arise in the country.

Performance Risk

Women traveling alone face significant risks related to the quality of basic services such as accommodation, transportation, emergency services, and healthcare (Bianchi, 2016; Kour & Gupta, 2019; Nguyen & Hsu, 2022; Sujood, Siddiqui, & Bano, 2023; Wantono & McKercher, 2020). Both Bianchi (2016) and Kour & Gupta (2019) state that women traveling alone have serious concerns about service quality. Inadequate accommodation, unsafe transportation options and poor customer service are perceived as significant risks by women travelers (Kour & Gupta, 2019). According to Nguyen & Hsu (2022), women solo travelers are particularly concerned about the quality of local healthcare services, as some areas may provide inadequate healthcare due to insufficient equipment or specialists. Consequently, women travelers may not receive the necessary support in case of emergencies or illness. At the same time, factors such as concerns about unsafe or unknown areas, worries about accessing health services in a foreign country, and stress about planning will reduce individuals' motivation to travel alone. However, Qi, Gibson, & Zhang (2009), reported that health risk did not have a significant effect on travelers' intentions to visit China for the Olympics. This may be confusing as health risk often has a negative impact on the destination to which one is or will be traveling.

Psychological (Emotional) Risk

Emotional risks such as fear, worry, and anxiety are common among female solo travelers (Breda, Santos, Kliček, & Dinis, 2020; Karagöz, Işık, Dogru, & Zhang, 2021; Sujood, Siddiqui, & Bano, 2023; Wantono & McKercher, 2020). These emotions often arise in response to other risks and can be triggered by safety concerns, uncertainty of navigating unfamiliar environments, cultural differences, and po-

tential dangers encountered during travel. Fear is the most mentioned concept in studies. It is often felt by individuals when traveling alone, but women feel it to a higher degree. There are reasons for this; Valentine's (1989: 385) concept of "the geography of women's fear" suggests that violent behavior by men has an impact on women's public spaces and that frightening incidents that occur in these spaces, experienced by others, are detailed in the media, either visually or in writing, creating fear and negativity for women (Valentine, 1989). Such tragicization of ongoing events in society and the infliction of psychological violence on women for the sake of greater impact may only generate a few more views or ratings for the media (Kour & Gupta, 2019; Yang, Khoo-Lattimore, & Arcodia, 2018a), but it can have a profound impact on women, causing damage that can last for years.

The resulting fear scenarios will create a need to keep women under control and thus to inform women about their plans, activities, where to go, when to arrive, etc. (Wilson & Little, 2008). The information published by official Portuguese organizations also confirms that there is information that discourages women from traveling to the destinations of their choice, creating fear in general, but not at the destination (Breda, Santos, Kliček, & Dinis, 2020). Because of this phenomenon, it is a situation of restriction through intimidation, which seems to be beneficial for women, but in fact, does nothing but instill fear in women in society. In this case, women travelers are advised to conduct research through reliable sources of information before their travels. In addition, Sujood, Siddiqui, & Bano (2023) explain that such emotional reactions, which are common among women solo travelers, stem from a lack of social and environmental security. Despite all the fears and anxieties felt by solo female travelers, women travelers regularly experience these emotional risks and see them as a normal part of the travel experience (Carr, 2000; Carvalho, Baptista, & Costa, 2015; Wilson & Little, 2008; Yang, Khoo-Lattimore, & Arcodia, 2018a).

Table 2. Some Studies on the Risks Faced by Solo Female Travelers

Source	Research Subject	Methodology	Identified Risks
Breda, Santos, Kliček, & Dinis (2020)	Motivations of females travelling alone and challenges encountered during the journey	Qualitative, Interview	Loneliness, sexual harassment, fear of walking alone at night, theft
Karagöz, Işık, Dogru, & Zhang (2021)	Risks, anxiety, travel intentions, and the role of online psychosocial support in females' solo travel	Quantitative, Survey	Food safety, hygiene, natural disasters, disease, culture, language barriers, gender-based risk and social-psychological risks

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Mc Namara & Prideaux (2010)	Profiles of solo female travelers in tropical North Queensland and key motivations influencing their travel and behavior	Quantitative, Survey	High crime rate, poor water quality, poor transport, unreliable public health system, risk of disease, unreliable police force, inefficient emergency services, reputation for corruption
Nguyen & Hsu (2022)	Relationship between electronic word-of-mouth communication (eWOM), destination image, and visit intention of solo female travelers from Southeast Asia to India	Quantitative, Survey	Local health services, food safety, language barrier, epidemics, unwanted looks, violence, sexual harassment, theft, socio-cultural risks
Sujood, Siddiqui, & Bano (2023)	Factors affecting Indian Muslim females' intention to travel alone	Quantitative, Survey	Functional, financial, health, physical, political, psychological, satisfaction, social, time
Valaja (2018)	Risk perceptions and risk reduction strategies of females travelling alone	Qualitative, Travel blogs	Gender-based risks, health risks, financial risks, psychological risks, and satisfaction risks
Wantono & McKercher (2020)	Perceptions of risk faced by Asian solo female backpackers	Qualitative, Interview	Physical risks, social and psychological risks, satisfaction risk
Yang, Khoo-Lattimore, & Arcodia (2018a)	Asian females' perceived risks, negotiation strategies and sense of empowerment when travelling alone	Qualitative, Interview	Sexual assault, street harassment, discrimination and social disapproval

Source: Authors' elaboration.

Constraints Faced by Solo Female Travelers

Three sub-themes were identified regarding the constraints faced by solo female travelers, based on Crawford & Godbey's (1987) leisure constraints

(RQ2): personal constraints, interpersonal constraints, and structural constraints (Figure 3).

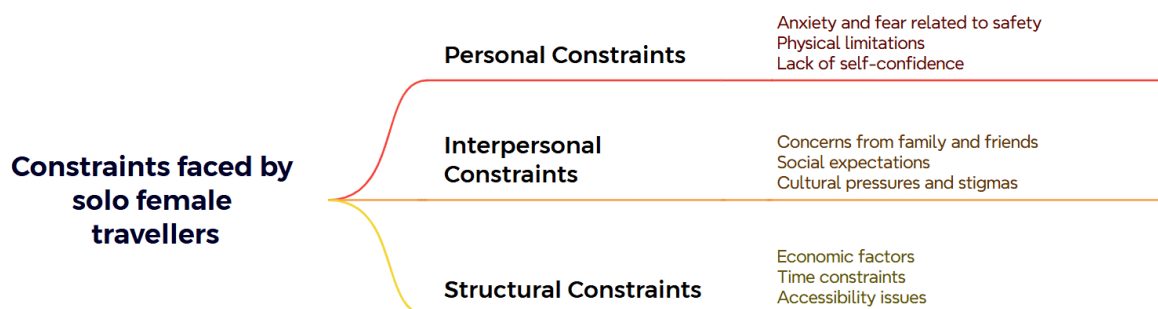


Figure 3. Constraints Faced By Solo Female Travelers

Source: Authors' elaboration.

Personal Constraints

Psychological states, such as stress, fear, anxiety, religiosity, and perceived self-sufficiency, contribute to the constraints faced by solo female travelers. Of these, fear and anxiety are the most prominent (Aslan, 2023; Hosseini, Macias, & Garcia, 2022; Mani & Jose, 2020; Ngwira, Tse, & Vongvisitsin, 2020; Tükenmez, 2019). Other states are self-doubt, vulnerability

and loneliness (Brugulat & Coromina, 2021; Wilson & Little, 2005). These personal constraints significantly impact the intention to travel (Xie & Ritchie, 2019). For example, Bernard, Rahman, & McGehee (2022) found that Bangladeshi Muslim solo female travelers were restricted by personal barriers like communication difficulties in foreign environments. Similarly, studies on Turkish females travelling alone

revealed that personal constraints influence solo travel intentions (Aslan, 2023; Tükenmez, 2019). These constraints are further intensified by patriarchal structures (Tükenmez, 2019). Because personal constraints are rooted in intrinsic factors, they are seen as the most influential barriers for solo female travelers (Nguyen, 2018).

Interpersonal Constraints

Interpersonal constraints on solo female travelers arise from social factors, including family, reference groups like friends and colleagues, and societal norms. Family members' protective and sometimes restrictive attitudes toward females travelling alone can influence their travel decisions. Yang, Khoo-Lattimore, & Arcodia (2018b) reported that solo female travelers may limit their travels due to their families' concerns about travel safety. Similarly, Ngwira, Tse, & Vongvisitsin (2020) found that females bloggers travelling alone to Africa were often constrained by the influence of spouses, relatives, and close friends. Within certain cultural contexts, families tend to be more protective, which reduces the likelihood of females travelling alone (Aslan, 2023; Hosseini, Macias, & Garcia, 2022; Jordan & Gibson, 2005; Wilson & Little, 2008).

Seow & Brown (2018) find that the opinions and suggestions of friends can either strengthen or weaken a female's courage to travel solo. The most prominent of these constraints stems from social norms and expectations, especially those rooted in cultural and patriarchal values. General societal perceptions and gender norms often label solo travel for females as "dangerous" or "inappropriate," which can affect their travel decisions (Yang, Khoo-Lattimore, & Arcodia, 2017). Similarly, Wilson & Little (2008) argued that these social norms can limit female travel.

From their study of Asian Muslim female travelers, Tavakoli & Mura (2021) revealed that social barriers, such as the expectation for females to remain at home and care for the family, reduce their willingness to travel solo. Similarly, Wilson (2004) reported that Australian solo female travelers are subjected to role expectations and pressure from their social

environments. In Iran, Zahedi (2023) found that socio-cultural norms significantly affect Muslim females' intentions to travel alone. Likewise, Indian females face various restrictions on solo travel due to the social roles imposed on them by society (Mâni & Jose, 2020). Overall, social norms, concerns, and pressures from friends, family, and work environments greatly influence the decision-making of solo female travelers when considering independent travel (Cesur, 2014; Jordan & Gibson, 2005; Wilson & Little, 2008).

Structural Constraints

The limited number of studies investigating external constraints indicate that solo female travelers are significantly affected by factors like poor transportation, limited financial resources, unsuitable climate, and safety issues. Inadequate, low-quality, or unsafe transportation infrastructure or limited transport options can restrict the mobility of solo female travelers (McNamara & Prideaux, 2010).

Financial resources are also a key factor in implementing travel plans. Kour & Gupta (2019) explain that financial constraints, including limited economic means, significantly limit females' travel preferences and routes. Similarly, both Özgürel (2022) and Wilson (2004) report that financial limitations are crucial factors restricting solo female travel. Travel costs, accommodation, and other expenses can limit travel decisions and the duration of trips.

Climatic conditions and environmental factors also shape travel experiences for solo female travelers. These factors can be perceived as structured constraints because they affect both the safety and comfort of travel (Breda, Santos, Kliček, & Dinis, 2020). Another structural constraint is health conditions. Inadequate local healthcare services can pose significant challenges for female travelers (Sujood, Siddiqui, & Bano, 2023). Similarly, Ngwira, Tse, & Vongvisitsin (2020) and Gao & Kerstetter (2016) also categorize health-related problems as external constraints, while security (Gao & Kerstetter, 2016) and gender-related constraints (Ngwira, Tse, & Vongvisitsin, 2020) can also be defined as structural.

Table 3. Some Studies on the Constraints Faced by Solo Female Travelers

Source	Research Subject	Methodology	Identified Constraints
Aslan (2023)	Effect of constraints experienced by Generation X, Y, and Z females living in Turkey on their travel intentions when travelling alone	Quantitative, Survey	Personal, interpersonal, and structural constraints
Brugulat & Coromina (2021)	Constraints of solo female backpackers in Southeast Asia	Qualitative, Interview	Precedent and in situ constraints: Socio-cultural, practical, personal and spatial constraints

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Cesur (2014)	Travel constraints of female tourists travelling alone	Qualitative, Interview	Individual level, community level, social level
Hosseini, Macias, & Garcia (2022)	Experiences of Iranian solo female travelers	Qualitative, Interview	Cultural barriers, personal constraints, and interpersonal constraints
Mâni & Jose (2020)	Reasons why females choose to travel alone; push and pull factors affecting solo travel; constraints and transformations females face when travelling alone	Qualitative, Interview	Gender-related and safety risk, family resistance, need for financial support, work permit status
Ngwira, Tse, & Vongvisitsin (2020)	Pre- and intra-travel constraints and negotiation strategies of females travelling alone to Africa	Qualitative, ethnographic	Internal/personal, interpersonal, and external constraints
Tükenmez (2019)	Motivations of females travelling alone and challenges encountered during the journey	Qualitative, Interview	Personal, interpersonal, and structural constraints
Wilson & Little (2005)	How constraints affect females' experiences when travelling alone	Qualitative, Interview	Sociocultural, personal, practical, and spatial

Source: Authors' elaboration.

Discussion

Research on female solo travel has revealed that gender and risk perception significantly influence women's travel behaviour (Heimtun & Abelsen, 2014; Karagöz, Işık, Doğru, & Zhang, 2021; Valaja, 2018; Yang, 2016; Wilson & Little, 2008). These studies suggest that females' physical vulnerability compared to males increases their gender-based risk perceptions, leading them to perceive males as potential threats (Valaja, 2018; Yang, Yang, & Kho-Lattimore, 2019).

A study by Heimtun and Abelsen (2014) on students found that females perceive solo travel as more intimidating than males. The research also concluded that males are more willing to participate alone in sports and entertainment-based vacations, whereas females express greater concerns about physical safety and security during travel (Brown & Osman, 2017; Qi, Gibson, & Zhang, 2009). These findings indicate that perceived risks related to solo travel may influence individuals' motivations, especially when demographic factors are considered.

Additionally, the differences in how males and females perceive risks can be explained by their varying perspectives. Studies have highlighted that experiencing fear during solo travel is a normal phenomenon (Carr, 2000; Carvalho, Baptista, & Costa, 2015; Wilson & Little, 2008). However, this fear is cul-

turally and socially acquired rather than stemming from past experiences (Wilson & Little, 2008). Fear is often conveyed through different channels before travel, creating a perception that females should feel afraid. Females are also informed that they are taking risks and are unsafe in unfamiliar countries (Breda, Santos, Kliček, & Dinis, 2020; Carr, 2000).

It is noteworthy that females often experience fear and anxiety about harassment (Breda, Santos, Kliček, & Dinis, 2020). Moreover, another study on female solo travellers indicated an increase in gender-based risks, such as assault and harassment, prompting females to develop risk mitigation strategies (Yang, Khoo-Lattimore, & Arcodia, 2018a; Yang, Khoo-Lattimore, & Arcodia, 2018b).

Some studies reveal that despite the risks they face, females remain motivated to travel solo. Pekiner (2019) explained that females possess high motivation to continue traveling alone despite negative experiences, such as harassment, which can be distressing. Similarly, Ngu-yen & Hsu (2022) suggested that perceived risks might serve as a motivation for females traveling solo in Southeast Asia.

Constraints imposed on females are also a significant focus in research (Hosseini, Macias, & Garcia, 2022; Jordan & Gibson, 2005; Mani & Jose, 2020; Wilson & Little, 2008). These restrictions include unwanted male attention (Brown & Osman, 2017),

sexual limitations (Ngwira, Tse, & Vongvisitsin, 2020), negative behaviours from locals (Aslantürk & Unur, 2019), spatial restrictions (Wilson, 2004), prevention of travel by family, relatives, or friends (Aslan, 2023), safety concerns (Aslantürk & Unur, 2019), fear of judgment (Shah-vali, Shahvali, & Kerstetter, 2016), financial constraints, or lack of time (Özgürel, 2022; Wilson, 2004).

Studies conducted in patriarchal societies indicate that females experience more personal and interpersonal restrictions (Aslan, 2023; Zahedi, 2023; Tükenmez, 2019; Tükenmez, 2022). This is often seen because of patriarchal social structures. For instance, it is common for families or societies to disallow females from traveling alone (Zahedi, 2023; Mani & Jose, 2020; Tavakoli & Mura, 2021).

Özgürel (2022) notes that Turkish females traveling alone often face structural constraints such as time limitations and economic conditions. Additionally, perceived types of constraints vary depending on factors like education, age, gender, culture, physical disabilities, and economic status (Gao & Kerstetter, 2016; Hosseini, Macias, & Garcia, 2022; Nguyen & Hsu, 2022; Özgürel, 2022). These factors influence individuals' travel decisions, leading them to either participate or refrain from traveling (Zahedi, 2023), and can diminish enjoyment and satisfaction during travel or activities (Bianchi, 2016; Yang, 2021).

Conclusion

This study presented a conceptual framework for understanding the risks and constraints encountered by females in solo travel, emphasizing their importance as key determinants of travel decisions. While the diverse social, cultural, and economic backgrounds of females participating in solo travel contribute to various constraints and risks, this study focused on a specific set of risks and constraints. Risks were classified into seven types: physical and financial risks, performance risks, psychological risks, political unrest, terrorism, sexual-related risks, and cultural and social risks. Constraints were categorized into three main types: personal, interpersonal, and structural. These findings make a valuable contribution to the existing literature on risks and constraints, paving the way for future research in the field of solo travel.

Theoretical Contributions

This study contributes to the existing literature on solo female travelers by providing a nuanced understanding of the risks and constraints they face. It also demonstrates that females' solo travel behavior can be examined from two primary perspectives.

The first emphasizes the significant role of risks as determinants of solo travel, indicating that factors such as demographics, cultural background, and social structure differentiate the restrictions experien-

ced by solo female travelers. Many scholars advocate for exploring these risks and constraints within a cultural framework, recognizing that the behaviors of solo female travelers vary according to their demographic characteristics (Gao & Kerstetter, 2016; Hosseini, Macias, & Garcia, 2022; Nguyen & Hsu, 2022; Özgürel, 2022). For instance, Özgürel (2022) finds that Turkish solo female travelers often face structural constraints related to time and economic factors, which may deter them from pursuing their travel intentions. Moreover, solo female travelers may encounter risks and constraints such as physical vulnerability, cultural pressures, the social and individual implications of religious values, safety concerns in destinations, and difficulties in managing unexpected situations (Breda, Santos, Kliček, & Dinis, 2020; Karagöz, Işık, Dogru, & Zhang, 2021; Mâni & Jose, 2020; Tavakoli & Mura, 2021; Zahedi, 2023). Similarly, cultural factors emerged in the present study as particularly decisive in shaping the experiences of solo female travelers. This is often explained by the patriarchal social structures prevalent in many societies, which impose greater personal and interpersonal constraints on females (Aslan, 2023; Bernard, Rahman, & McGehee, 2022; Mâni & Jose, 2020; Tavakoli & Mura, 2021; Tükenmez, 2019; Zahedi, 2023). Such constraints may manifest as personal challenges, including anxiety and fear (Tükenmez, 2019), and interpersonal challenges, such as disapproval from family or society regarding solo travel (Mâni & Jose, 2020; Tavakoli & Mura, 2021; Zahedi, 2023).

The second perspective emphasizes solo female travelers' resilience in the face of risks and constraints. Jordan & Gibson (2005), for example, find that female travelers are not deterred by negative experiences during solo travel but continue their journeys with determination. Similarly, Pekiner (2019) notes that many females remain highly motivated to pursue solo travel even after unpleasant experiences. This suggests that while risks and constraints may influence the travel decisions of solo female travelers, they do not diminish their overall motivation to explore (Carvalho, Baptista, & Costa, 2015; Nguyen & Hsu, 2022; Pekiner, 2019; Yang, Khoo-Lattimore, & Arcodia, 2018a; Zahedi, 2023). Although the impact of negative situations encountered during solo travels is often associated with feelings of fear, some studies argue that experiencing fear is a normal aspect of the solo travel experience (Carr, 2000; Carvalho, Baptista, & Costa, 2015; Wilson & Little, 2008). Focusing on those females who actively resist risks and constraints, Yang, Khoo-Lattimore, & Arcodia (2018a) report that Asian solo female travelers challenge traditional gender norms by embarking on solo journeys, a process that ultimately empowers them. They characterize this phenomenon as a form of voluntary risk-taking behavior. Our findings also emphasize the complex dynamics of motivation and risk perception among solo female travelers, which

suggests that future research should delve deeper into the motivations that drive solo female travelers to confront risks and constraints, further exploring how cultural, social, and individual factors influence their travel behaviors. Understanding this resilience can provide valuable insights into empowering solo female travelers and promoting safe travel practices that acknowledge their unique experiences.

Practical Implications

This study presents six practical implications. First, tourism stakeholders, including destination managers and policymakers, should tailor their offerings to address the specific needs and concerns of solo female travellers. This includes developing safety protocols, providing clear and accessible information about safety concerns, and ensuring that destinations are welcoming and supportive of female travellers. Additionally, promoting inclusive and safe travel experiences through targeted marketing campaigns and community engagement will attract more solo female travellers. Second, since cultural norms and societal attitudes towards solo female travel vary significantly across regions, there is a need for awareness programs that educate both local communities and travellers. These programs can aim to break down stereotypes and challenge societal biases, fostering environments where female travellers can feel secure and empowered. Furthermore, encouraging a more gender-sensitive approach in travel guides, marketing materials, and online platforms will help to normalize solo female travel. Third, travel agencies should provide more customized services for solo female travellers, such as offering female-only tours or creating resources to help women prepare for safe travel experiences. These agencies can also collaborate with local partners to create safe spaces for women and provide emergency contact information to ensure a sense of security throughout their travels.

Fourth, establishing online and offline communities for solo female travellers can serve as a source of support and inspiration. These communities can offer practical tips, shared experiences, and emotional reassurance, helping to mitigate feelings of isolation or fear. Peer networks could also facilitate the exchange of safety strategies and advice on navigating travel challenges. Fifth, as suggested in the study, providing educational training that focuses on self-protection and awareness is crucial. These programs can teach women how to recognize and respond to potential risks, use technology for safety, and make informed decisions about their travel destinations. Workshops and seminars focused on empowering women with practical safety skills would go a long way in reducing perceived risks and encouraging more women to pursue solo travel. Last-

ly, showcasing inspiring stories of female travellers who have successfully navigated solo journeys can help to shift societal perceptions and inspire other women to travel alone. Exhibiting statues, stories, or exhibitions of prominent female travellers in museums or at key cultural sites would also contribute to this process, promoting women's agency in tourism and travel. By focusing on these practical implications, the tourism industry can support solo female travellers in overcoming the risks and constraints they face while also helping to cultivate a more inclusive and empowering travel environment for women worldwide.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This study has three limitations. First, while addressing the constraints and risks of solo female travel, it excluded their motivations, negotiations, and re-travel intentions. Second, the study was limited to considering constraints and risks for solo female travelers only. Finally, the study adopted a conceptual approach to provide a comprehensive framework based on the existing literature concerning the risks and constraints encountered by solo female travelers; however, it did not assess the relative significance of these identified risks and constraints. Furthermore, because the study primarily draws on literature for its findings, it may have failed to adequately address recent developments in the field. Therefore, the impact of the risks and constraints faced by solo female travelers—highlighted in this study—on variables such as travel motivation and travel intention should be supported by empirical research.

To address these limitations, three suggestions are offered for future research. First, future studies should employ both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to evaluate the significance of the identified risks and constraints. Second, research could facilitate a comparative analysis of the importance of these risks and constraints within specific cultural and social contexts related to solo travel. Finally, research is needed to remedy the notable lack of studies examining the constraints and risks perceived by male solo travelers (Aziz & Long, 2022; Bianchi, 2016; Chung, Baik, & Lee, 2017; Lepp & Gibson, 2003; Yang & Tung, 2018; Yang, 2021; Yang, Nimri, & Lai, 2022). Consequently, conducting similar studies on male solo travelers would provide valuable insights and a gender-focused comparative perspective.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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