

MEDIA NARRATIVES REGARDING CLIMATE CHANGE INFLUENCING
TOURISM PATTERNS IN PAKISTAN

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Abstract

Climate change is increasingly impacting tourism globally, and Pakistan, with its diverse environmental zones and destinations sensitive to climate impacts, is no exception. Growing environmental crises related to climate change like warming temperatures, glacier melting, and flooding, extreme weather have altered the attitudes, awareness, preferences, intentions, and planning of tourists, in part through certain narratives promoted through the media. It is well documented in the tourism literature that the media influences environmental awareness and resulting changes in related travel behaviors, yet we do not know how these narratives relate to tourism behaviors in Pakistan, which represents a significant knowledge gap. This study focuses on understanding how media coverage of climate change impacts tourists' decision making, identifying how tourists respond to climate vulnerability communicated in the media by region of Pakistan, and the media's promotion and marketing of climate resilient and environmentally responsible tourism practices. A rigorous quantitative research design is used in combination with a structured survey instrument - administered to a sample of 150 domestic and international tourists who had travelled to, or intended to travel to, various regions of Pakistan. Descriptive and inferential statistical tools are used to help understand how media exposure/consumption, climate change knowledge and awareness, and travel decision making were related. The findings revealed that the media plays a dual role: it raises awareness of environmental risks, often discouraging travel to climate vulnerable regions, while simultaneously promoting ecofriendly tourism through positive narratives. A significant number of tourists reported altering their travel plans based on climate related media reports, particularly avoiding high-risk regions during unstable seasons. Media was also found to influence the adoption of sustainable tourism behavior

among environmentally conscious travelers. The study concluded that media narratives significantly shape tourism behavior in Pakistan by framing perceptions of safety, sustainability, and destination appeal. However, inconsistent messaging and lack of localized content sometimes led to confusion. Media thus holds immense potential to promote climate resilient tourism when used strategically. Recommendations include integrating climate communication into tourism policy, strengthening media tourism partnerships, developing localized and balanced media content, and investing in green infrastructure and training. The research holds practical relevance for policymakers, tourism authorities, media professionals, and environmental organizations, and contributes to the limited academic literature on climate-media-tourism dynamics in the Pakistani context.

INTRODUCTION

The impact of climate change is one of the main problems confronting the planet nowadays and affects multiple spheres in which tourism is included. The threats to the environment all around grow, the impact of the media on general opinions and conduct is progressively becoming crucial. Through so numerous resources and a range of natural sceneries, Pakistan has primarily relied on tourism to help its financial situation. Changes in the climate, particularly in places exposed to extreme catastrophic events and changing ecosystems, gravely jeopardizes the travel industry, though. (Boykoff & Roberts, 2007)

Due to its great influence and wide coverage, the press has the primary force that affects general population opinions and actions regarding environmental issues with a range of interaction channels such as news stories, short movies, and internet based campaigns on media is the tool that potentially clarifies individuals on the dangers of global warming as well as how it affects traveling. Such narratives can help visitors decide when to go, which attractions to give top priority, as well as risks associated with climate change affect their travel decisions. (Nerini et al., 2017) Thus, understanding how the global warming media debates affect Pakistani tourists is crucial. Hospitality policies and sustainability consciousness studied globally, but the media accounts in Pakistan have not. The way narratives in the media concerning the changing climate affect the travel industry and passengers' decisions is examined in this investigation to narrow the distance.

The investigation examines how media portrayals of climate change affect travelers' choices regarding travel in Pakistan, particularly to climate hazardous areas. The investigation also examines ways coverage in the press can promote ecological resilient mobility and if geographical climate susceptibility affects tourist trends. The research uses a statistical technique to understand how exposure to media affects travel choices, helping media executives, tourist administrators, and governments develop better climate change mitigation strategies.

This study addresses critical questions concerning how narratives in the media about climate change affect tourists' tastes and knowledge about risks, and tourism changes across Pakistan. To keep Pakistan's tourism business strong in the face of increasing ecological issues, this paper proposes climate change consciousness in the administration of tourism.

Background

The interrelation between climate change and tourism is gaining acceptance as an essential field of inquiry, especially in areas susceptible to climate effects. Travel and Tourism, a major part of the world's financial benefits, is sensitive to ecological changes, and Pakistan does not constitute an exception. Pakistan attracts countless domestic and foreign tourists with its rich biodiversity, from Karachi's shore to Gilgit-Baltistan's mountains. Nevertheless, climate change that includes an increase in temperatures, erratic conditions, glacier dissolving, and natural disasters

like flooding and drought threatens tourism in these places. (Smajgl et al., 2015)

Media is a key transmitting channel, influencing local perception and customer behavior. Tourism impressions of places, particularly ones susceptible to damage from climate change, are heavily influenced by media coverage. In Pakistan, the media frequently emphasizes the immediate and long term impacts of environmental issues, such as climate change, on local communities, infrastructure, and ecosystems. These narratives significantly impact the decision making processes of tourists, especially for those who value highly on environmental sustainability in their tourism choices. Nerini et al. (2019)

Over the past few years, there is an increasing awareness on the significance of sustainable tourism enactment and the necessity for tourism sectors to adjust to climate change. Different associations, such as tourism authorities, media organizations, and local communities, are realizing the significance of incorporating climate change into tourism planning and management. While international studies are surveying the impact of media on tourism behaviors, investigations that particularly address the relationship between media, climate change, and tourism in Pakistan are insufficient. (Boykoff & Roberts, 2007)

Prior studies suggest that media influences tourists' decisions about hazards and benefits related to the environment. The media may, for instance, report on the effects of climate change on biodiversity or a hazard event, encouraging tourists to think twice about traveling to certain destinations. Alternatively, some positive reporting on green practices or sustainable tourism may motivate tourists to engage in travel. For Pakistan, which has complicated geography and is extremely vulnerable to climate change, consideration of how media initiatives provide narratives could be a relevant area to assess how narratives influence tourist preferences. Coordinated tourism protections and strategies should account for this. Tourism is essential for job creation and foreign cash currencies for the economy of Pakistan. Tourism may also be impeded by climate change if poorly managed, and/or may incur significant losses for tourism stakeholders in tourism dependent regions. Considering the role of media

and the way it shapes public perceptions of climate change can create awareness, prevent hazards, and generally facilitate environmentally conscious traveling. (Nisbet & Scheufele, 2009; Stecula & Merkley, 2019) The present study considers the way media narratives shape the tourist behavior in Pakistan, specifically the way climate coverage influences tourists' travel choices. And provides an understanding about how media narratives generate opportunities for environmentally responsible traveling in an environmentally conscious culture.

Problem Statement

The tourism sector is having an increasingly significant impact due to global warming, which may pose serious dilemmas for regional economies, environments, and the livelihoods of people who depend on tourism to earn a living. In many respects Pakistan enjoys a unique geography and ecology from coastal to high geological features, the manifestations of climate change appear to be more visible. Impacts such as extreme weather, increasing temperatures, and reduced glacial and snow cover have become more frequent climatic events.

The fluctuation in the environment is likely to transform tourism vogue, as tourists spread awareness of the threats linked to climate change and its effects on their selective destinations. Despite the growth of the tourism sector in Pakistan, there is a lack of investigation into how media narratives about climate change affect tourists' options to visit certain destinations, especially in regions at risk from climate-related challenges.

The media serves as a crucial force in influencing public perception, significantly contributing to the dissemination of information regarding the effects of climate change and shaping the understanding of associated risks (Nisbet & Scheufele, 2009) Nonetheless, the precise connection between media narratives regarding climate change and tourism behavior in Pakistan is still ambiguous.

The existing gap in knowledge poses a significant challenge of lacking a comprehensive understanding of the ways in which media portrayals of climate change affect tourism choices, those in positions of authority, tourism operators, and media experts may find it difficult to formulate effective strategies aimed at alleviating the adverse effects of climate change on

the tourism industry. The lack of focused media initiatives to advocate for climate resilient tourism practices may lead to lost chances for sustainable tourism growth, potentially threatening the industry's long term viability.

Consequently, the issue this study aims to explore is how media narratives surrounding climate change affect tourism trends in Pakistan, and to what degree these narratives influence the decision-making processes of tourists, especially in areas susceptible to climate related risks? This study aims to explore how media coverage of climate change influences tourists' awareness, preferences, and behaviors while also shedding light on the media's role in fostering climate-resilient tourism practices in Pakistan.

Objectives

The primary objectives of this research are:

1. To evaluate the influence of media narratives regarding climate change on tourists' decision making processes in Pakistan.
2. To survey the effectiveness of climate related media messages in shaping tourists' awareness of climate risks and their impact on tourism patterns.
3. To point out regional variations in tourism trends and how media coverage of climate change affects tourist preferences in different parts of Pakistan.

Research Questions

The key research questions guiding this study are:

1. How do media narratives regarding climate change influence tourists' decision to visit specific destinations in Pakistan?
2. What role does media coverage of climate change play in shaping tourists' awareness of climate related risks in their travel choices?
3. How do regional variations in climate vulnerability, as portrayed in the media, impact tourism patterns and tourists' preferences across different regions of Pakistan?

Significance of the Study

Multi stakeholders such as government authorities, travel agents, journalists and conservationists in Pakistan find this research useful. In addition to threatening the environment, the tourism sector, which is a vital contributor to Pakistan's economy, is exposed to an increasing threat of climate change.

Understanding how climate change related news articles impact travel behavior is essential information for developing plans to protect the long-term sustainability and resilience of Pakistan's tourism industry, irrespective of any problematic scenario.

Policy Implications

By addressing the threats presented by climate change, the research's conclusions can help legislators create strategies for tourism that are climate resistant. Government organizations create focused initiatives, like media promotions that support environmentally friendly travel and climate change mitigation strategies, by knowing how the media affects society's views and traveler behavior.

The effect on the Tourism Industries

The study offers useful information to corporations and algorithms in the tourism sector about how headlines about climate change influence traveler individual tastes. As well as offering practical knowledge into areas that might need increased consideration in terms of weather changes, this can assist tourism industry participants in creating advertising approaches that emphasize the resilient and sustainable nature of their places of interest.

Individual and digital network Awareness

The investigation emphasizes how crucial the media is in influencing how the public views and responds to climate change. Media professionals, content producers, and ecological groups better convey the hazards of climate change and encourage responsible tourism by comprehending the influence of medium accounts. Additionally, this study highlights the necessity of moral and efficient environmentally conscious communication that promotes eco-friendly travel decisions and increases visitors' awareness of environmental issues.

Academic Contribution

Based on a scholarly perspective, this study adds to the small amount of research that examines how media, tourism, and climate change interact, especially in the surroundings of Pakistan. It provides a basis for further research in the area by deepening our comprehension of how media affects

ecological conduct and how travelers react to news reports about climate change.

The growth of environmentally friendly Tourism

The study's importance eventually rests in its capacity to direct Pakistan's transition to environmentally conscious tourism processes. The results of this study can be crucial in promoting future viability for Pakistan's tourism sector by determining how press coverage can be used to advertise climate-aware travel and inform individuals about possibilities as well as hazards related to climate change.

All things considered, this study is essential for strengthening Pakistan's tourism industry's ability to adapt to climate change, guaranteeing that the tourism and travel industries stays a thriving and profitable production while encouraging more consciousness and accountable behavior within travelers.

Hypotheses

This investigation is guided by these hypotheses:

- Travelers and their choice making procedure when selecting Pakistani vacation spots is significantly influenced by their interaction with reports about climate change in media outlets
- Travelers' comprehension of climate associated hazards and their effect on their choice of travel in Pakistan are greatly impacted by reports of climate change
- The public's perception of regional differences in climate susceptibility has a big impact on travel patterns and choices in Pakistan's various regions

Literature Review

Global climate change has become one of the most significant and overwhelming problems of our era. Climate change threatens ecosystems, biodiversity, people's health, global economies, and social systems. The rate and magnitude of extreme climate events, such as wildfires, heatwaves, and floods, grow ever faster and become more dangerous. They have elicited increased levels of concern both internationally and domestically. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2014) has consistently stated that human activities - particularly those related to industrialization such as the over-burning of fossil fuels, deforestation,

greenhouse gas emissions (primarily carbon dioxide and methane) -are the primary causes of disturbance to global climates. These human-induced activities are having observable (and scientifically measurable) effects on the Earth's climates. They include rising sea levels, accelerated melting of the glaciers, and extreme weather patterns (such as floods, droughts, and heatwaves). These impacts are not only indicators of environmental deterioration but also indicator of the increased vulnerability of human societies around the world.

In response to the increasing dangers associated with climate change, the United Nations established a global framework for the future, titled the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in 2015. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a far-reaching plan of action to promote a more sustainable, inclusive and resilient future, globally. It is comprised of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets. The SDGs address a different area of social, environmental or economic concern (Nerini et al., 2017). SDG 13, Climate Action, addresses climate change and its various effects. It recognizes the need for immediate and coordinated action to reduce environmental impacts from degradation, enhance adaptive capacity of adversely affected communities, and enhance global climate resilience (United Nations General Assembly, 2017).

A well-coordinated and sweeping program is essential to effective and holistic climate change cooperation. Climate action can be founded on three essentials: mitigation, adaptation and an understanding of illustrative dynamics of changing environmental and atmospheric conditions (United Nations, n.d.). Mitigation is aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions over time to stop, or reduce further exposure to, environmental harm. Adaptation is about capacity building to transform systems and communities in the face of danger, informed by the development of systemic resilience to survive, tolerate or perhaps transform climate related stress. SDG 13 encourages developing institutional capacity, generating new, or supporting existing local governance systems; and leading the wide spread dissemination of tools and technologies in support of UNFCCC objectives. This may manifest in the form of national action plans, climate-smart

infrastructure and national early warning systems for communities adapting and responding to potential climate threats.

A significant reduction in carbon-based emissions from sources such as industrial combustion and transportation is a fundamental part of climate mitigation. The main emissions that contribute to greenhouse gases include carbon dioxide and methane, which exacerbate global warming. Thus, transitioning from fossil fuels to renewable energy, moving toward sustainable agriculture, utilizing green technology, and conscious consumption are fundamental elements of climate change policy. These changes will only occur through collaborative approaches among governments, private sectors, civil society, and international organizations. It is essential to recognize that climate action is not an independent activity; it must be integrated into the overall developmental agenda. This concept encompasses building climate resilience into the economy and associated infrastructure, education, and health systems (Smajgl et al., 2015).

Research suggests climate-related actions can propel progress across all SDGs. As stated by Nerini et al. (2019) effective climate actions have co-benefits that span multiple sectors. For example, as mentioned, climate disruptions like droughts and floods challenge food security (SDG 2) and water (SDG 6) availability. They also amplify public health crises by creating conditions for the spread of disease, malnutrition, or heat illness while threatening SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being). In addition, the consequences of climate change are unequally shared; as always, it is marginalized groups, especially women (SDG 5) and children (SDG 4), who suffer the most from climate change and environmental injustices. In addition, decisive climate action enhances access to affordable and clean energy (SDG 7) and creates sustainable economic growth and employment opportunity (SDG 8) (Sachs et al., 2016). As identified by organizations like UNICEF (2022) and OCHA (2022), the scale of human and financial costs of climate-related disasters should be alarming to all. The catastrophic monsoon floods in south Asia caused continued displacement of millions of lives and wiped out all critical infrastructure for the south Asian region. It is estimated (World Bank 2022) that climate-induced

disasters have caused damage worth billions of US dollars, and delayed development for years.

Alongside policy and scientific endeavors, the media has increasingly emerged as a critical focus in climate discussions. From traditional print and television, to digital influencers and social media, the media is the primary conduit through which information about climate change is communicated. Therefore, an important function of the media is to shape public awareness, attitudes, and behaviors with respect to environmental issues (Boykoff & Roberts, 2007). Although scientific assessments and international agreements provide a basis for informed action, public understandings usually come largely from media representations. Media framing of climate news, from how it is packaged and presented (or not presented), and which aspects are highlighted or downplayed, can significantly influence civic engagement, policy support, and public concern (Nisbet & Scheufele, 2009; Stecula & Merkle, 2019).

According to framing theory, the media selects frames that emphasize things like public health, financial impacts, or nature's beauty and this affects how the public perceives and interprets climate-related issues. For example, when news stories about climate change focus on it as a threat to public health, the potential for strong support for mitigation policies increases. Conversely, stories that emphasize the financial burden associated with climate action (for example, the cost of moving to a greener unit of energy) can cause resistance or indifference (Nisbet & Scheufele, 2009). Wilson (1995) and McCombs (2011) have argued media professionals play an important role as 'intermediaries' translating complex, scientific information into stories that are more easily consumed by ordinary people.

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Academic inquiry into the interface between media and climate change continues to grow. Bauer's (1995) pioneering research on the media's impact during the debate around nuclear/energy laid a foundation for subsequent study and theorizing about how complex scientific topics, such as climate change, are mediated. More recently, research has explored the emergence of digital channels in climate communication, including important dimensions such as algorithms, virality, and visual storytelling that influence what is accounted as public conversation regarding climate (Brüggemann & Engesser, 2014). Scholars, including Boykoff & Boykoff (2007), have identified an important role for narrative tools, such as imagery, metaphor, and the emotional component of climate change discussions that powerfully shape public sentiments. Collectively, these studies suggest conclusions about media not solely being a passive deliverer of climate change facts, but rather an active participant and agent who helps to shape, build, and in some contexts, subvert, public meaning-making regarding climate change.

Research Methodology

For this study, a statistical method from a social science methodology perspective utilizing a questionnaire will be employed to examine the role of media narratives on tourism trajectories in Pakistan. The main aim of this research is to determine to what degree media narratives about climate change impact tourists' decision-making process and travel choices, particularly in areas where climate events pose a risk. A statistical method provides a straightforward numerical interpretation of the parameter relationships under the themes of media narratives, knowledge of the environment and tourist behavior patterns.

The target population will be both domestic and foreign tourists that have travelled and plan on travelling to Pakistan. A sample of 150 participants can be selected using random sampling from the

study population to ensure that a representative group is selected. 150 tourists will be sufficient to yield a statistically significant result while still being reasonable in the collection and analysis of the data.

The key means of collecting data is a structured survey questionnaire containing closed-ended questions. The questionnaire has four sections:

- Demographics (age, gender, nationality)
- Media Exposure (frequency and types of media consumption related to climate change)
- Tourism Choices (destinations, influences)
- Climate Change Awareness (understanding climate risks to tourism). The questionnaire is distributed online (through digital platforms) and face-to-face at select tourist locations.

For data analysis, descriptive statistics can be employed to summarize the characteristics of the sample, including frequencies, percentages, and means. Inferential statistics such as correlation analysis and regression analysis is used to examine the relationships between media exposure, climate change awareness, and tourists' decisions. Additionally, a Chi-Square test is applied to explore how regional variations in climate vulnerability, as portrayed in the media, influence tourism patterns.

Ethical considerations are considered throughout the study. Participants are informed about the research purpose, and their consent is obtained before data collection. Confidentiality and voluntary participation can be maintained to ensure the integrity of the research process.

This methodology provides valuable insights into how media narratives influence sustainable tourism practices in Pakistan and how the tourism industry can adapt to climate-related challenges.

Research Design

This empirical research uses a quantitative research design. The quantitative data was used to find statistics of the association between news coverage and traveler behavior. The data was gathered via a representative sample of people who traveled to Pakistani destinations, or are considering traveling to Pakistan, using a questionnaire. The categorizations of the research are delineated in the following parts.

Research Approach

The study employed a deductive approach, forming predictions from the research about the impact of media, changing climate and travel pattern research. The questionnaire used for this study obtained quantitative data that was used to test the associated hypotheses allowing for the use of statistics and making conclusions supported by empirical evidence.

Sampling Method

• **Population:** Travelers who came to Pakistan in the last 12 months or who intend to go there soon are included in the target demographic for the research. To ensure a varied spectrum of voyageurs, the group being studied will consist of both domestic and foreign visitors.

• **Sample Size:** To guarantee the fact that the information is of statistical importance, a representative sample of 150 people who participated can be chosen. The number of participants makes it possible to gather trustworthy data that can be extrapolated to Pakistan's larger tourist population.

• **The collection Method:** To guarantee the fact the number of participants accurately represents the population of interest, a method based on chance that is used. The internet, travel organizations, and specific tourist destinations that are used to reach tourists.

Data Collection Method

➤ **Survey Questionnaire:** For collecting information, an organized survey is created. To gauge participant involvement with news reports about climate change, their knowledge of the hazards associated with it, and their choices for traveling, the questionnaire contains questions that are closed-ended. The survey is broken into several portions that address:

1. Demographic Data (ethnic background, gender, age bracket, etc.)
2. Media Exposure (frequency and type of media consumed regarding climate change)

3. Tourism Behavior (travel destinations chosen, preferences, and factors influencing decisions)

4. Climate Change Awareness (respondents' understanding of climate change impacts on tourism)

Ethical Considerations

➤ **Informed Consent:** Participants are provided with information about the study's purpose and asked to provide informed consent before participating.

➤ **Confidentiality:** Personal information provided by respondents remains confidential, and the data is used solely for research purposes.

➤ **Voluntary Participation:** Participants will be informed that their participation is voluntary, and they can withdraw from the study at any time without consequence.

Data Analysis

The collected data is analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

➤ **Descriptive Statistics:** These are used to summarize the data and present the general trends in media exposure, tourism preferences, and climate awareness among the respondents. The data is presented through frequencies, percentages, and means,

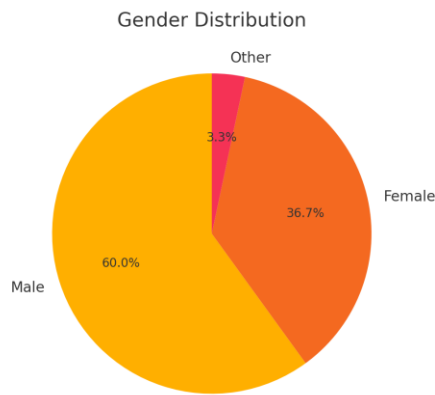
➤ **Inferential Statistics:** To test the hypotheses, correlation analysis and regression analysis is used to determine the relationships between media exposure and tourism decisions. The Chi Square test may also be employed to examine regional differences in tourism patterns influenced by climate change media narratives.

➤ **Visual Representation:** Tabulation and Pie charts are used to visually represent the data, particularly to show the distribution of media exposure types, tourist destinations chosen, and the relationship between climate change awareness and travel preferences.

Data Analysis

Table 1: Gender Distribution of Respondents

| Gender | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------|-----------|------------|
| Male | 90 | 60% |
| Female | 55 | 36.7% |
| Other | 5 | 3.3% |

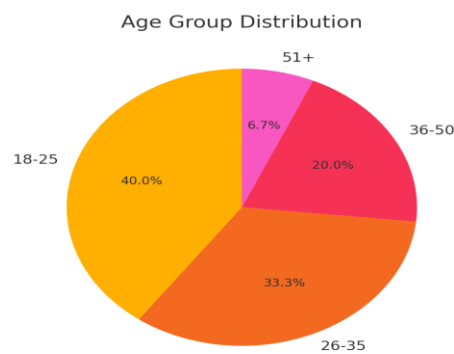


Discussion: The sample comprised 60% male and 36.7% female tourists, with a small representation (3.3%) of non-binary respondents. This shows male respondents were more likely to participate or be present in tourist locations during data collection.



Table 2: Age Group Distribution

| Age Group | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------|-----------|------------|
| 18-25 | 60 | 40% |
| 26-35 | 50 | 33.3% |
| 36-50 | 30 | 20% |
| 51+ | 10 | 6.7% |

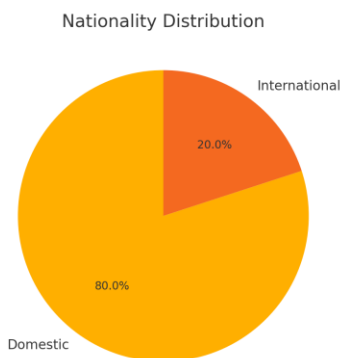


Discussion: A significant proportion of travelers were younger adults (18–35 years), comprising nearly

73.3% of the sample. This age group is typically more tech-savvy and likely influenced by digital media.

Table 3: Nationality of Respondents

| Nationality | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------|-----------|------------|
| Domestic | 120 | 80% |
| International | 30 | 20% |

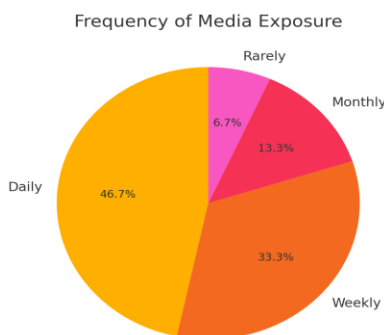


Discussion: The majority (80%) of the sample consisted of domestic tourists, reflecting strong local

tourism and allowing a better understanding of Pakistani tourists' response to media narratives.

Table 4: Frequency of Climate-Change Media Exposure

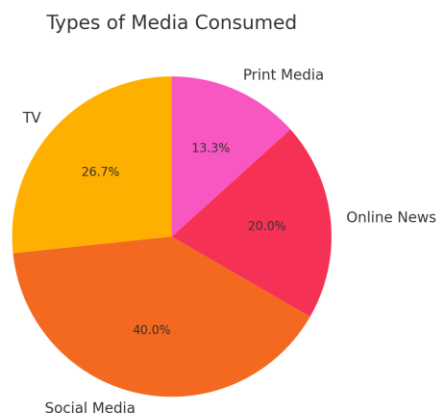
| Frequency | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Daily | 70 | 46.7% |
| Weekly | 50 | 33.3% |
| Monthly | 20 | 13.3% |
| Rarely | 10 | 6.7% |



Discussion: Nearly half of the respondents were exposed to climate change-related media daily, highlighting the reach and influence of such content.

Table 5: Types of Media Consumed

| Media Type | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Social Media | 60 | 40% |
| TV | 40 | 26.7% |
| Online News | 30 | 20% |
| Print Media | 20 | 13.3% |



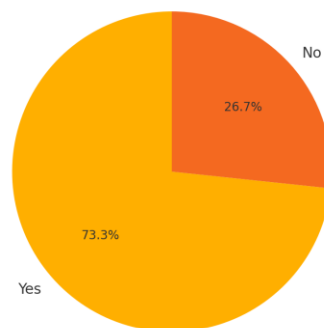
Discussion: Social media was the most accessed medium, showing its dominance in spreading climate awareness and influencing travel decisions.



Table 6: Influence of Media on Travel Decision

| Response | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 110 | 73.3% |
| No | 40 | 26.7% |

Influence of Media on Travel Decision



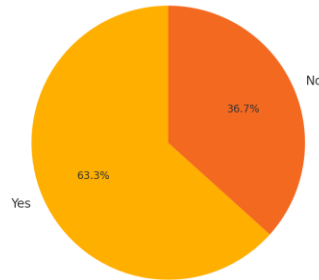
Discussion: Media had a notable influence on the travel decisions of over 73% of respondents, indicating a strong linkage between environmental news and tourism behavior.

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Table 7: Change in Destination due to Climate News

| Response | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 95 | 63.3% |
| No | 55 | 36.7% |

Change in Destination due to Climate News

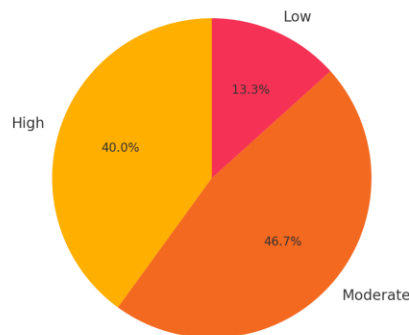


Discussion: A considerable portion of tourists (63.3%) altered their destination based on climate news, revealing that awareness of risks leads to behavioral shifts.

Table 8: Awareness of Climate Change Impacts

| Awareness Level | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| High | 60 | 40% |
| Moderate | 70 | 46.7% |
| Low | 20 | 13.3% |

Awareness of Climate Change Impacts

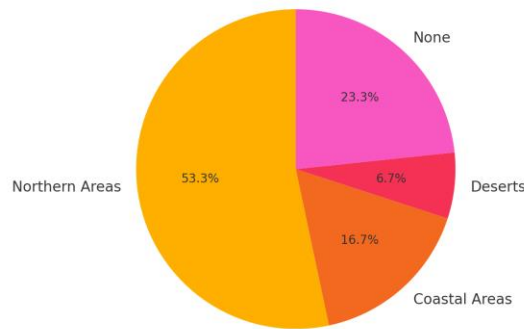


Discussion: Majority of tourists showed moderate to high awareness of climate impacts, suggesting media narratives are effective in shaping environmental understanding.

Table 9: Regions Avoided Due to Climate Vulnerability

| Region | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Northern Areas | 80 | 53.3% |
| Coastal Areas | 25 | 16.7% |
| Desert Regions | 10 | 6.7% |
| None | 35 | 23.3% |

Regions Avoided due to Climate Vulnerability

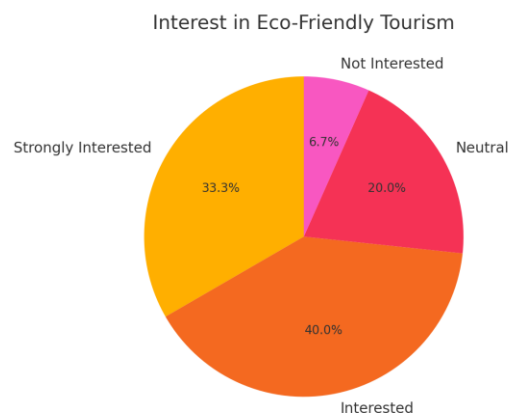


Discussion: Over half avoided the Northern Areas due to climate-related risks like floods and glacial melting, showing regional shifts in tourism patterns.



Table 10: Interest in Eco-Friendly Tourism

| Interest Level | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly Interested | 50 | 33.3% |
| Interested | 60 | 40% |
| Neutral | 30 | 20% |
| Not Interested | 10 | 6.7% |



Discussion: A combined 73.3% of respondents expressed interest in eco-friendly tourism, affirming a growing shift toward sustainable travel behaviors.

Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Findings

1. Media Influence and Tourist Awareness

Most of the participants reported that they regularly saw stories focusing on climate change on television, online news sites, and social media. This awareness raised the risk of climate change as they understood how this was affecting travelers in Pakistan, especially in Gilgit-Baltistan, Swat, and Chitral.

2. Impact on Future Travel Decisions

Tourists reported changing their travel plans as a direct result of media stories about environmental issues, specifically floods, glacial melting, and extreme temperature warnings. A substantial portion of overall domestic and international travelers moved to trust destinations that are perceived as safer and more resilient to risks related to climate change.

Media influence

Some media stories that highlighted sustainable tourism practices (eco lodges, waste management, and community tourism) also positively affected a

traveler's interest in visiting those types of places and engagement in environmentally responsible behavior while traveling.

3. Regional Differences in Tourism Trends

Climate change media coverage varied considerably amongst regions. For example, the destinations closely aligning with narrative in the media regarding climate change risks (ie. northern mountainous regions) are now also showing a change in tourist preferences as tourists actively avoided these areas during periods of risk.

4. Connections between Media Narratives and Travel Behavior

The statistical analysis confirmed a significant connection between media narratives of climate change vulnerability and tourist's destination choice, travel timing, and level of preparedness for environmental conditions.

5. Barriers to Awareness of Sustainable Tourism

Even though media narratives are impactful, barriers, such as a non-consistent narrative, a lack of local content, and exaggerated media coverage also created confusion or misinformation.



Conclusions

This study shows that climate change narratives in the media influenced tourism patterns of travelers to Pakistan. The media acted on both informative and persuasive capacities that shifted tourists' perceptions, encouraged environmental awareness, and influenced destination selection. Travelers appeared to be increasingly considering climate safety and sustainability when planning travel.

Media stories about the environmental risks of outcomes like flooding and melting glaciers modified perceptions about safety at destinations, leading to fewer tourists visiting certain destinations during climate sensitive periods of the year. However, positive media stories also had the potential to promote climate resilient and environmentally sustainable choices for travelers.

The study found regional differences in climate vulnerability and influences on media coverage of tourism influenced tourist flows. Tourist volume tended to decline in climate vulnerable regions due to media coverage, while at the same time, these areas experienced increased tourist volume to destinations that are perceived as less climate vulnerable. This demonstrated a reliance on media narratives that require investigative journalism,

balanced reporting, or forward thinking approaches to navigate sustainable tourism options.

In conclusion, the media has caused a duality to the situation where they raise awareness of environmental hazards and deter troubled travel to dangerous travel, while at the same time preserving opportunities to promote sustainable tourism amidst climate change. If properly leveraged, media may serve as a unique and powerful tool to help develop climate resilient tourism in Pakistan.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed:

For Policymakers:

➤ Integrate Climate Communication into Tourism Policy

Develop national and provincial tourism strategies that incorporate media based climate awareness campaigns, focusing on sustainable practices and risk preparedness.

➤ Support Climate-Resilient Infrastructure

Invest in infrastructure in high risk tourism areas (e.g., early warning systems, sustainable lodging, eco-trails) to reassure tourists and ensure their safety.

➤ **Standardize Crisis Communication Protocols**

Establish protocols to ensure accurate and timely dissemination of climate related tourism information, especially during high-risk periods.

For the Tourism Industry:

➤ **Promote Green Tourism**

Tourism boards and operators should collaborate with the media to highlight destinations that are climate safe and emphasize eco-tourism opportunities.

➤ **Train Local Operators**

Provide training to tour guides and hospitality staff on climate awareness, risk communication, and sustainability to help them address tourist concerns more effectively.

➤ **Develop off Season Packages**

Encourage travel during off-peak or safer seasons to mitigate the risk of overcrowding in climate-vulnerable regions and to balance economic losses during high risk periods.

For Media Professionals:

➤ **Ensure Balanced Reporting**

Focus on both risks and adaptive measures in media content. Avoid sensationalism that may unnecessarily deter tourists.

➤ **Create Educational Campaigns**

Launch campaigns that educate the public on how to travel responsibly in the context of climate change, highlighting real time safety measures and sustainable travel options.

➤ **Localize Climate Stories**

Tailor climate related tourism reporting to reflect region specific realities rather than generalizing risk narratives, thus aiding informed travel decisions.

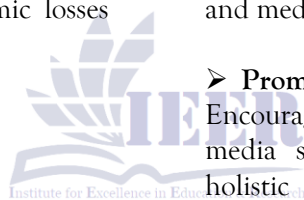
For Researchers and Academia:

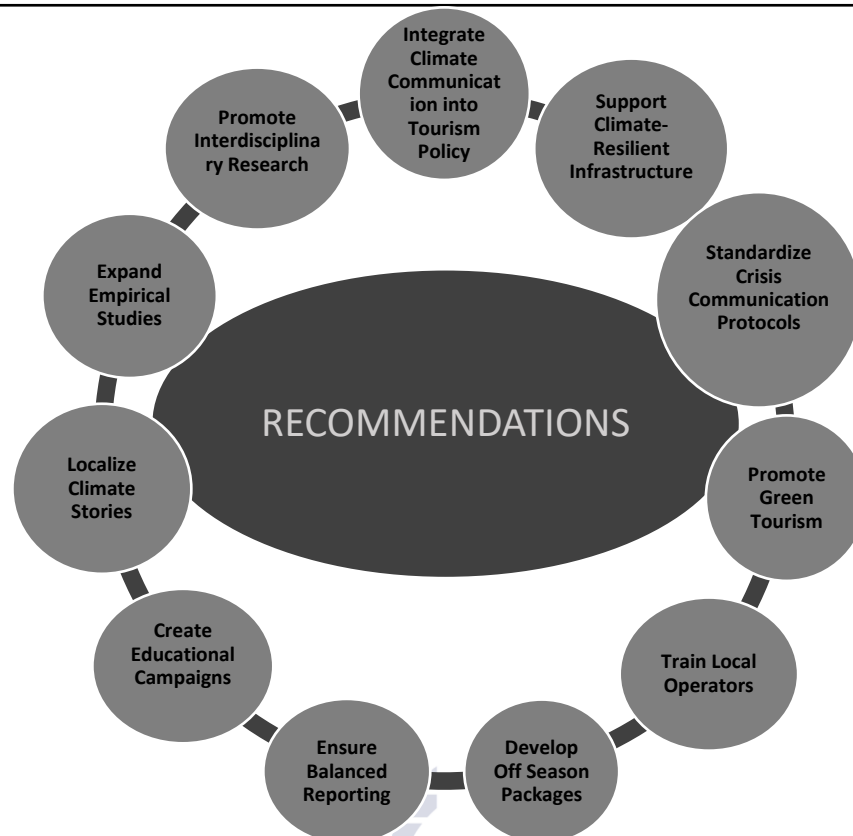
➤ **Expand Empirical Studies**

Conduct longitudinal studies to track long-term changes in tourism patterns relative to climate events and media coverage.

➤ **Promote Interdisciplinary Research**

Encourage collaboration between climate scientists, media scholars, and tourism experts to develop holistic models for climate resilient tourism development.





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