

Portrayal of Jeju Air Flight 2216 Incident in Thai News Media and Its Influence on Risk Perception in Air Travel Intention on Thai Audiences

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Abstract

This study investigates the portrayal of the Jeju Air Flight 2216 incident in Thai news media and its influence on Thai audiences' perception of air travel risk and travel intentions. Employing a mixed-method approach, the research first utilized content analysis to identify emerging themes in news articles from major Thai news agencies following the December 29, 2024 incident. Secondly, a survey of 155 participants explored the impact of media portrayal on perceived risk factors and the influence of these factors on air travel intention. The content analysis revealed seven key themes. Findings from the quantitative analysis strongly indicate that the Thai news media's portrayal of the incident significantly influenced Thai audiences' perceived risk of air travel across risk perception factors. Furthermore, all three perceived risk factors were found to negatively influence air travel intention (B ranging from -0.370 to -0.520, $p < .001$). These findings underscore the significant role of news media in shaping public risk perception during aviation crises and its direct impact on travel behavior. The study suggests that news media, governments, and the aviation industry should consider these dynamics when developing crisis communication strategies to mitigate negative impacts and rebuild public trust in air travel.

Keywords: *media portrayal, risk perception, travel intention, news coverage, aviation*

Introduction

In an era defined by rapid globalization and digital interconnectedness, media platforms have become the primary conduit for individuals to understand their social world beyond immediate experience. Scholars recognize that mass media do not merely transmit information but actively construct social realities and public images of places and events, which profoundly influence societal perceptions and behaviors (Treesuwan, 2010). This underscores the critical role of media as a powerful agent in shaping collective cognition, especially when direct experience is limited or absent, raising important questions about the nature and consequences of mediated knowledge.

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The agenda-setting function of news media is a well-established mechanism through which media guide public attention and prioritize issues (Kiousis & McCombs, 2004; McCombs & Ghanem, 2001). However, while agenda-setting theory emphasizes the transfer of salience from media to public agendas, less is known about how this process functions in specific cultural or national contexts, particularly in relation to crisis events that intersect with sectors such as tourism. As tourism marketing heavily relies on media coverage to construct destination images, understanding media patterns during crucial events such as disasters reveals the complex interplay between media representation, public perception, and economic interests (Ajagunna, 2006; Graber, 1989). Yet, research has often overlooked the nuanced ways media frames disasters and how these frames affect audience risk perception and behaviors in different sociocultural settings.

Disasters, both natural and human-caused, are pivotal moments where media coverage can profoundly shape public consciousness and risk imaginaries (Alhemoud & Armstrong, 1996; Sönmez & Sirakaya, 2002). Despite the extensive literature on media effects during crises, there remains a significant gap in understanding how specific aviation disasters are portrayed in non-Western media systems and the subsequent impact on local audiences' travel-related attitudes and intentions. The Jeju Air Flight 2216 crash on December 29, 2024, a catastrophic event with direct relevance to Thai nationals, offers a unique context to investigate these dynamics. Given the heightened emotional and safety concerns such incidents provoke, examining Thai news media narratives provides a critical opportunity to uncover how risk is communicated and potentially internalized in Thailand's distinct media and cultural environment.

This study addresses this gap by systematically analyzing Thai news media coverage of the Jeju Air Flight 2216 disaster, with a specific focus on the thematic narratives employed and their potential influence on Thai audiences' perceptions of air travel risk and travel intentions. Such an inquiry not only contributes to the theoretical understanding of media framing and agenda-setting in crisis contexts but also offers practical insights for aviation safety communication and tourism marketing in Southeast Asia, a region where air travel is both economically significant and socially pervasive.

Literature Review

Media Portrayal

Media portrayal is defined as the ways in which particular persons, groups, communities, experiences, ideas, or topics are portrayed by the mass media from a particular ideological perspective (Punnahitanond, 2018). Media portrayal serves as a pivotal mechanism in shaping and framing public perception and understanding, particularly in the aftermath of significant events. It is fundamentally characterized by the intentional presentation of information, strategically employing specific angles,

perspectives, and language to influence audience interpretations and construct dominant narratives (Wahab & Abdullah, 2025). Moreover, media portrayal in turn produces and reproduces power relations by constructing knowledge, values, conceptions, and beliefs (Orgad, 2012).

According to the meaning theory of media portrayal proposed by Melvin DeFleur and Timothy Plax in 1980, communication is a tool used to process meanings. Individuals create, interpret, and retain a sense of meaning through the media content. As the media content is constructed in the form of a message and interpreted within the context of those messages by the audiences. Moreover, this theory states that how humans behave is a product of their inner understanding. That understanding is formed based on how an audience constructs meanings for the semiotics that they perceive through media, and this happens only when the audience's culture lends to their shared interpretations of the media portrayal (DeFleur & Plax, 1980). Similarly, the perception of risk in news coverage reflects the interaction between audiences and Thai news media organizations. Through participation in various communication processes, the perception of risk is constructed, shaped, and stabilized by both the media and its audiences.

Punnahitanond (2018) revealed that international media portrayal of the Thai cave rescue positively influenced global audiences' cognitive perception of Thailand's country image, which in turn enhanced their emotional perception and significantly increased their intention to travel to Thailand. The study identified five key positive themes portrayed by the media: efficient performance, impressive competences, aesthetic qualities, Buddhist virtues, and amazing personal qualities of Thai people. Media exposure indirectly influenced travel intention through these perceptions, with cognitive components having a stronger impact than affective competencies. Additionally, prior direct experience with Thailand also boosted travel intention. Overall, media portrayal acted as a significant mediator between news exposure and travel intention, improving Thailand's international image from previously negative depictions.

Another example of media portrayal's impact on travel perception during COVID-19 is from Austria. The ski resort town of Ischgl was widely presented in the media as a "super-spreader" destination early in the pandemic. This portrayal generated fear and negative perceptions, heavily reducing travel to the area. At the same time, destinations increased their use of social media to communicate with tourists, share updates, and build trust. This shift showed how media portrayal can shape risk perception and influence travel behavior during a crisis (Matiza & Slabbert, 2022).

The Influence of News and Media on Tourism and Travel Intention

The role of media in shaping tourist perceptions and influencing travel behavior is a well-established but continuously evolving area of academic inquiry. Traditional news media, as well as the rapidly growing landscape of social media, have been shown

to significantly impact destination image, perceived risk, and, ultimately, a tourist's intention to travel. This literature review synthesizes key findings from several recent studies, focusing on how different forms of media influence tourist decision-making (Kapuscinski, 2014).

Academic research consistently highlights the powerful effect of news media on tourists' perception of risk, particularly concerning man-made disasters like terrorism and political instability. A central theme in this body of work is the media's role in providing and framing information about hazardous events. While there is a common scholarly agreement on the media's influence on perceived risk, this relationship remains under-researched (Kapuscinski, 2014).

A study on Chinese tourists' visit intentions to Malaysia offers a nuanced perspective on the impact of media, particularly social media. It found that while negative news generated discussion within Chinese social media, it was not the main factor diminishing visit intentions. Instead, issues like the lack of multilingual services, homogeneous tourism offerings, and regional infrastructure disparities were more significant. This suggests that while media may shape narratives, practical and destination-specific factors can have a stronger influence on a tourist's ultimate decision. The paper highlights the importance of leveraging social media for targeted marketing and promotion of local culture to enhance tourism recovery (Jiang et al., 2024).

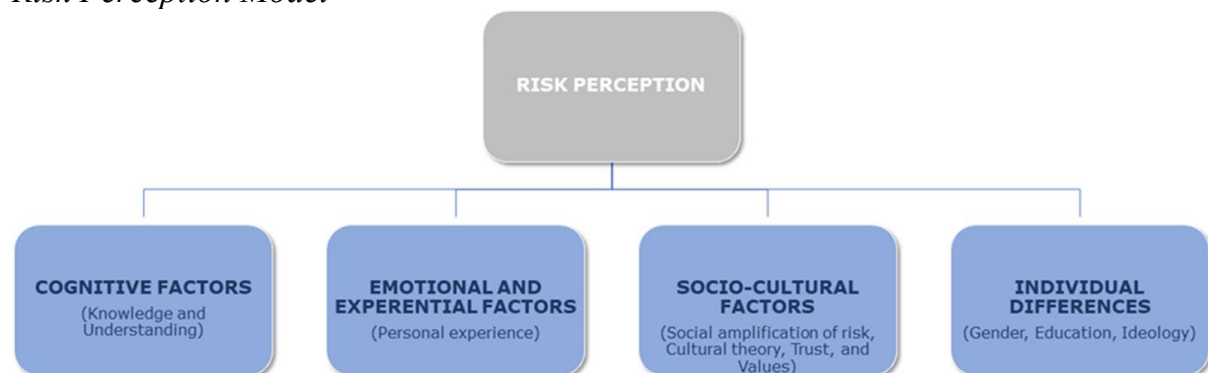
The reviewed literature establishes that media, in both traditional and social forms, is a critical determinant of tourism patterns and travel intentions. News media's influence is particularly pronounced in the context of perceived risk from terrorism, political instability, and environmental crises. The effect of media messages, however, is not uniform and is moderated by audience characteristics and destination attributes. Social media's role is increasingly significant, influencing information search and consumer behavior, though its impact can be overshadowed by on-the-ground destination factors (Jiang et al., 2024; Kapuscinski, 2014).

A previous study focusing on Chinese tourists visiting Thailand, for instance, found that despite significant negative news coverage regarding safety, fraud, and crime, tourists were still motivated to travel due to powerful "push" and "pull" factors. The push factors, which are internal motivations, include a strong emotional attachment to Thailand, often developed through past positive travel experiences, and a sense of cultural integration stemming from shared cultural values like Buddhism and the presence of a large Chinese community. The pull factors, or external destination attributes, were identified as Thailand's high cost-effectiveness and its close geographical proximity to China, which results in short, convenient travel times. Ultimately, the study concludes that these combined motivations were sufficient to reduce tourists' sensitivity to negative information, allowing them to continue choosing Thailand as a preferred travel destination (Qiang, 2025).

Perceived Risk and Risk Perception

Perceived risk plays a crucial role in influencing individual behaviors and decisions, particularly concerning the adoption and utilization of new technologies. As highlighted by Abu Seman et al. (2020), the perceived risk of an intervention, such as Mobile Health (mHealth), can significantly interfere with its intended behavioral outcomes. Risk perception is a core variable in the protection action decision model that predicts an individual's behavioral responses to risk. It has been gauged with diverse scales by different researchers (Naw & Kohsuwan, 2023; Zhu et al., 2016). According to Wählberg and Sjöberg (2000), research findings from the past portray mixed outcomes regarding the role of media in influencing risk perception, possibly resulting from the differences in the research methodologies and samples used in each of the studies. Wählberg and Sjöberg (2000) underscored the distinction between intentional and unintentional communication and that the former is more likely to influence perceptions significantly. As a result of the inconsistent findings from the earlier studies, Wählberg and Sjöberg (2000) proposed that further research be done on the media's effect on risk perception using larger and more varied samples in order to get a more realistic picture of what is happening. Therefore, this study could provide empirical evidence on how media coverage influences audience perceptions of travel-related risk.

Figure 1
Risk Perception Model



Note. From Dryhurst et al. (2020).

Dryhurst et al. (2020) used the risk perception model introduced by van der Linden (2015) to examine the perception of risk in response to COVID-19. This model has four key components, namely: 1) Cognitive factors (knowledge and understanding of risks), 2) Emotional and experiential factors (personal experience), 3) Socio-cultural factors (socio-amplification of risks), and 4) Individual differences (gender and education). Dryhurst et al. (2020) showed that this model can be used to explain risk perception of COVID-19 as experiential and socio-demographic factors were found to explain the majority of the variance compared to cognitive factors. Meanwhile, many scholars studying in Western countries have shown a positive correlation between knowledge and perception (Tuah & Wong, 2023; Wahlen et al., 2020).

This model is particularly relevant to the current study because it goes beyond assessing risk as a purely rational or statistical judgment. In real-world crises, such as an unexpected aviation accident, audience responses are shaped not just by information accuracy but by emotional intensity, cultural context, and personal relevance. The Risk Perception Model, originally proposed by van der Linden (2015), integrates these factors by including cognitive, emotional, social, and individual-level variables. Its application by Dryhurst et al. (2020) during the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated how risk perception is often socially amplified and emotionally driven. In this study, where the public learns about the Jeju Air crash primarily through media coverage, this model helps explain how risk is interpreted differently across individuals depending on what they feel, what they trust, and how they relate to the event. This multidimensional approach offers a more realistic lens for analyzing how media messages affect travel-related risk perceptions and behavioral intentions.

Research Gaps

The research gaps relevant to the Jeju Air Flight 2216 incident and its media portrayal context can be inferred from the available information as follows:

There is limited research specifically focusing on how Thai news media portrayed the Jeju Air Flight 2216 incident and how such portrayals influenced the perception of risk among Thai audiences and their air travel intentions. While media portrayal literature explains general influences, the incident-specific Thai context remains underexplored.

The uneven quality and timeliness of emergency communication (such as delayed or irrelevant emergency text messages) present gaps in crisis information dissemination, which may influence media portrayal and public perception and that warrant further study in terms of media and public communication effectiveness.

There is also an implied gap in understanding how socio-cultural factors, emotional responses, and cognitive interpretations interact specifically with the Thai audience regarding air travel risk after such an incident, suggesting a need for empirical studies to explore these dimensions more deeply.

These gaps justify the need for research into the Thai media portrayal's impact on risk perception and travel intention, emphasizing improved communication strategies, comprehensive media coverage analysis, and a deeper understanding of audience risk perception dynamics related to aviation disasters.

Significance

The significance of this study lies in its potential to provide reporters, news anchors, and other media professionals with valuable insights into how emergency issues are portrayed to the public, thereby guiding effective communication strategies.

Additionally, the research may benefit governments and industries by identifying key factors from the theory of risk perception that influence people's travel intentions during crises. This understanding enables more targeted interventions and strategies to address public concerns, strengthen tourism resilience, and maintain a positive national image as much as possible.

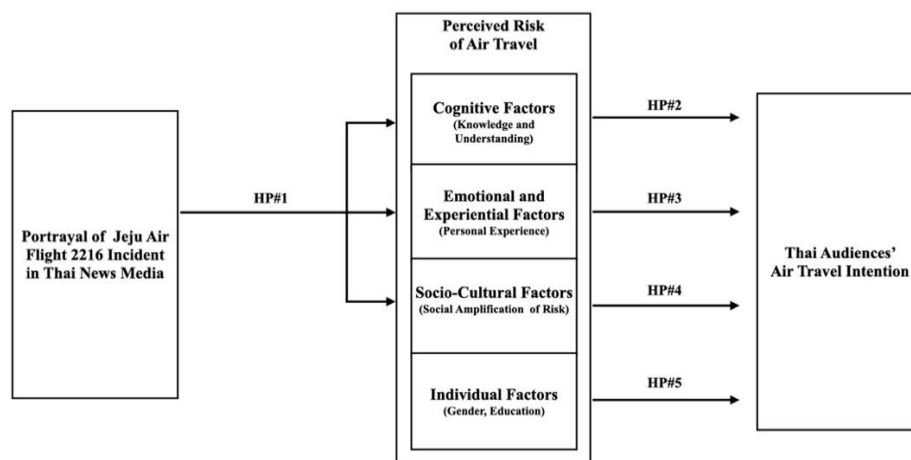
Objectives

Accordingly, this study was conducted to achieve the following objectives:

1. To identify emerging themes in the portrayal of the Jeju Air Flight 2216 incident in Thai news media.
2. To investigate the impact of this media portrayal on the perceptions of risk related to air travel.
3. To examine whether perceived risk factors significantly influence air travel intentions.

Methodology

Figure 2
Conceptual Framework



Hypotheses

Based on the conceptual framework, the following research hypotheses were proposed:

HP#1: The portrayal of the Jeju Air Flight 2216 incident by Thai news media positively influences Thai audiences' risk perception of air travel.

HP#2: Cognitive factors of risk perception regarding air travel negatively influence Thai audiences' air travel intention.

HP#3: Emotional and experiential factors of risk perception regarding air travel negatively influence Thai audiences' air travel intention.

HP#4: Socio-cultural factors of risk perception regarding air travel negatively influence Thai audiences' air travel intention.

HP#5: Individual factors of risk perception regarding air travel positively influence Thai audiences' air travel intention.

Population and Sampling

A mixed-method approach was employed in this research, combining a qualitative content analysis and a quantitative survey. For textual analysis, news articles and videos about the Jeju Air Flight 2216 incident reported between December 29, 2024, and January 12, 2025, were selected from the top three news media outlets in Thailand based on SCImago Media Rankings (n.d.). These outlets included Bangkok Post, Krungthep Turakij, and Matichon.

Five news articles from each agency were selected through a filtering process using the keyword “Jeju Air” to identify the five most relevant reports appearing in search results. These articles were required to have been published within the first two weeks following the incident, between December 29, 2024, and January 12, 2025. This sampling period was chosen to ensure coverage of the incident while allowing sufficient time for data collection. The selected articles are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

Headlines of News Articles from Each Selected News Agency

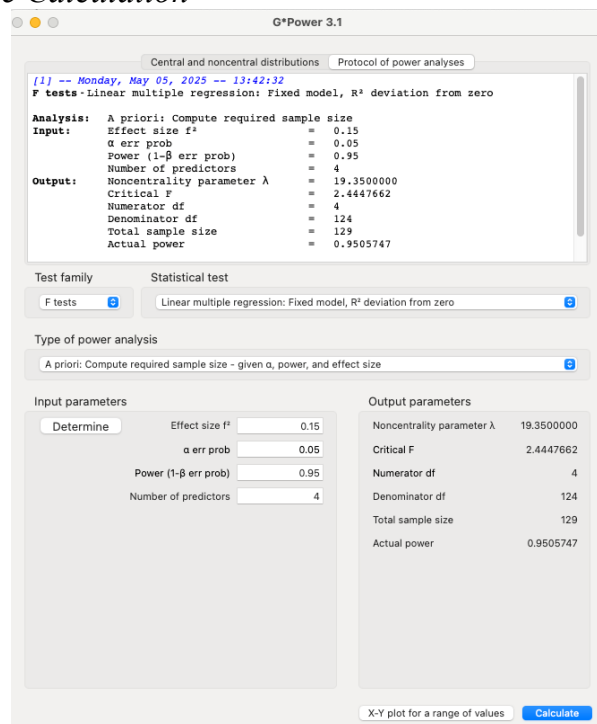
News Agency	Headlines of News Articles
Bangkok Post	Korean police raid airport where Jeju Air jet crashed (Korean police raid, 2025).
	South Korea to send Jeju Air crash black box to US (South Korea to send, 2025).
	S. Korea starts releasing Jeju Air crash victims to families (S.Korea starts releasing, 2024).
	South Korea inspects B737-800 fleet after worst plane crash (South Korea inspects, 2024).
	2 Thais among 179 dead in plane crash in South Korea (2 Thais among 179, 2024).
Krungthep Turakij (bangkokbiznews)	สิ้นสุดการค้นหาร่างผู้เสียชีวิต รวบรวมข้อมูลเสียงนักบินเครื่องบินเจจูแอร์ (Sinsut kan khon harang phu siachiwit, 2025)
	เปิดภาพนาทีสุดท้าย ‘เจจูแอร์’ แห่ชนชม ‘กัปตัน’ ทำหน้าที่จนวาระสุดท้าย (Poet phap nathi sutthai, 2025)
	หั่นเจจูแอร์ร่ววงหนักสุด หลังเกิดอุบัติเหตุร้ายแรงขณะลงจอด (Hun che chu æra wong nak sut, 2024)
	สื่อเกาหลีใต้ชี้ เครื่องบินเจจูแอร์ ถูกใช้งานหนัก (Su Kaoli tai chi, 2024)
	‘น้องเหมย’ เด็กกลุ่มชาติพันธุ์ เหมย Jeju Air ตกฝันอยากเป็นแอร์โฮสเตส (Na ong hem yo kok lum chattiphan yua, 2024)

Matichon	เกาหลีใต้ พบข้อมูลกล่องดำ บินเจ็แอร์หายไ 4 นาทีสุดท้าย ก่อนโถงชนคอนกรีต (Kaoli tai phop khomun, 2025)
	ผู้โดยสารแห่ ยกเลิกตั๋ว เจ็แอร์ เกือบ 7 หมื่นที่นั่ง หลังเกิดเหตุระทึกซ้ำ ช่วงเช้าวันนี้ (Phudoisan hæ yok lœk, 2024)
	ถูกนกชนจริง เครื่องบิน เจ็แอร์ กับต้นพุดเมื่อยเคย์ 4 นาทีก่อนโถงชนรันเวย์ (Thuk nok chon ching,” 2024)
	เปิดข้อความสุดท้าย ผู้โดยสารบนเครื่องบิน เจ็แอร์ ส่งหาญาติ เห็นนกคิตตี้ปิก ต้องสั่งเสียไหม (Pœt khokhwam sutthai, 2024)
	ตำรวจโสมขาวบุกค้น ‘เจ็แอร์-สนามบินมูอัน’ หาหลักฐานโยงเครื่องบินตก (Som khao buk khon,” 2025)

For the survey research, the required sample size of 129 participants was calculated using the G*Power application. To ensure sufficient data collection, 155 participants were invited to complete an online self-administered questionnaire. The study employed convenience sampling, targeting individuals who were accessible and willing to participate during the data collection period. Each participant was given approximately one week to complete the questionnaire. Screening questions were used to ensure that participants had been exposed to the Jeju Air incident.

Figure 3

*G*Power Sample Size Calculation*



Research Procedure

This study was conducted in two phases. In the first phase, textual content analysis was applied to examine how the Jeju Air Flight 2216 incident was portrayed in Thai news media. A total of 15 news reports were purposively selected from the official

websites of the top three Thai media outlets. After reviewing both verbal and visual content of the reports about the incident, emerging themes were identified. To enhance reliability, 30% of the data were independently coded by a second coder with academic expertise in communication. Although formal intercoder reliability statistics, such as Cohen's Kappa, were not calculated, coder agreement was reached through comparison and discussion, ensuring analytic rigor and trustworthiness.

In the second phase, to investigate the impact of media portrayal on perceived risks and the impact of perceived risks on the travel intention of Thai audiences, a survey was conducted using a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire was reviewed by three communication scholars to ensure the validity of the measurement. After revision, it was pretested with 30 participants before being distributed in its final form to the sample. Questionnaire items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Disagree nor Agree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree). The final data were analyzed using SPSS software with both descriptive and inferential statistics, including regression analysis, to test the proposed hypotheses and examine the predictive relationships among variables.

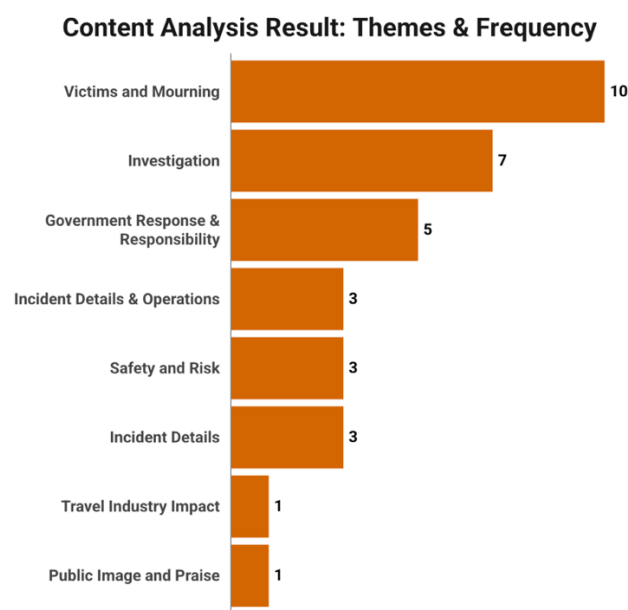
Findings

Theme

Based on news articles from the top three Thai media agencies, seven key themes were identified. The themes and their respective frequencies are listed below.

Figure 4

Identified Themes and Frequency



The theme of “Victims and Mourning” was the most prominent, appearing in 10 out of 15 articles, highlighting society’s focus on the tragic loss of life. The incident, which claimed 179 deaths, led to widespread mourning, including the lowering of the national flag to half-mast for seven days and the establishment of memorial altars inside the airport. This theme underscores the emotional impact of sharing personal stories of victims and the grief experienced by their families. Among the sub-themes, one notable example was the so-called “victim’s last message,” in which messages to relatives were described in detail, depicting the fear and helplessness of the final moments of the flight caused by the bird strike. Moreover, public criticism of the handling of victim recognition prompted the government to increase its support and facilitation of the response actions.

The theme of “Investigation” appeared in 7 out of 15 articles. Its focus lay in the determining of the cause of the accident and resolving technical problems related to it. Korean authorities quickly initiated investigations, gathering evidence through special inspections and seizure operations to obtain important materials. The international dimension of aviation safety was emphasized through collaboration with international organizations such as Boeing in the United States. However, a major setback occurred when it was discovered that the black box had stopped recording four minutes before the sequence of events. Investigators continued collecting evidence at the crash site and analyzing flight records while reviewing technical systems and pilot behavior. The media extensively covered these activities and stressed the need for stronger surveillance measures and improved aviation safety procedures. For example, some reports highlighted that Korean police raided the airport to gather evidence, aiming to make the investigation more transparent to the public.

The theme of “Government Response and Responsibility” appeared in 5 out of the 15 articles, focusing on the reactions of both the Korean and Thai governments to the incident. To reassure the people, the Korean government immediately launched investigations, initiated a full overhaul of air safety systems, and carried out safety inspections. Meanwhile, the Thai government, through its embassy in Korea, provided support to the families of the two Thai victims. This included pressuring Jeju Air to assist relatives with travel arrangements to Korea, coordinating the repatriation of bodies, and providing logistical assistance after the incident. Both governments were questioned by the public and made promises to “take responsibility” and ensure “long-term safety improvements.” All these efforts were significant in rebuilding confidence in aviation safety and the government. The Korean government also held mourning ceremonies as a collective act of accountability toward the victims, their families, and society.

The theme of “Incident Details and Operations” focused on providing a clear account of the plane crash, thereby ensuring transparency. Reports indicated that a bird strike caused the aircraft to skid off the runway and collide with a concrete barrier. These reports were crucial for maintaining public trust through transparent communication about the circumstances surrounding the crash. As mentioned earlier,

the black box stopped recording before the accident, leaving uncertainty about whether human error or mechanical failure was responsible. This lack of data made both the investigation and public interpretation difficult, underscoring the importance of effective data retention systems in aviation safety. The absence of complete flight data intensified calls for stricter control over flight information management and reinforced concerns about how technical failures impede the post-incident accountability and analysis.

The theme of “Safety and Risk Awareness” highlighted critical flaws in aviation safety regulations and infrastructure. The presence of a concrete barrier near the runway, allegedly violating international safety standards, exacerbated the crash’s severity and exposed shortcomings in safety planning. Additionally, mechanical issues, such as landing gear failure and the suspected bird strike, pointed to flaws in aircraft maintenance and wildlife control. These concerns were amplified by broader scrutiny of Boeing 737 safety, with 234 hull losses and nearly 5,000 fatalities globally (Aviation Safety Network, n.d.). In response, experts stressed the need for stricter regulatory oversight, improved airport infrastructure, and alignment with international aviation standards to restore public confidence and prevent future tragedies.

The theme of “Travel Industry Impact” focused on the significant commercial losses suffered by Jeju Air following the crash. The airline reportedly faced over 70,000 ticket cancellations and a 50% reduction in bookings. Travel agencies also suspended television and online advertising campaigns. This theme revealed the severe harm to the airline’s reputation and highlighted the broader challenge of restoring passenger confidence—an essential task for both the company and the wider aviation industry.

The theme of “Public Image and Praise” highlighted the media’s portrayal of the pilot as a heroic figure. Despite the tragic outcome, the captain was widely praised for his quick thinking and composure, which reportedly helped save lives. Emotionally charged terms such as *hero*, *brave*, and *did his best*, were frequently used to illustrate his professionalism and selflessness. This positive framing appeared to provide emotional comfort to the public and help shift the narrative from grief to resilience. In contrast with media criticism of airport infrastructure and safety oversight, this focus on individual heroism redirected attention away from institutional accountability, framing the tragedy as an instance of human courage rather than systemic failure.

In summary, the interrelated themes—including the investigation, government response, incident details, safety issues, industry consequences, and public image—provide a comprehensive picture of the Jeju Air tragedy. The coverage provided detailed insights into the incident and its long-term implications by connecting technical analysis, personal narratives, and institutional responses.

Table 2*Descriptive Statistics of Examined Variables*

Variable	n	Mean	S.D.	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Exposure to News Regarding Jeju Air Incident	155	3.48	.79	8	.724
Risk Perception (Cognitive)	155	3.54	.86	6	.853
Risk Perception (Emotional & Experiential)	155	2.67	.94	3	.868
Risk Perception (Socio-Cultural)	155	3.51	.99	5	.735
Air Travel Intention	155	3.71	.91	4	.861

Most of the participants were aged 28-37 years (44.52%), followed by those aged 18-27 years (20.00%), 48-57 years (14.48%), 38-47 years (12.26%), and 58 years or older (8.39%), respectively. Regarding gender, most participants were female (50.32%), followed by male (38.71%) and LGBTQ+ (10.97%). Respondents were classified into five levels of education. Most held a bachelor's degree (63.87%), followed by a master's degree (25.81%), a doctoral degree (6.45%), and a high school education (3.87%). These results indicate that the sample was generally well-educated, with more than three-quarters holding at least a bachelor's degree. Notably, all participants had obtained a high school diploma or higher.

Table 3*Regression Analysis: The Impact of Jeju Incident Media Portrayal on Risk Perception Factors – Independent Variable*

Variable	B	S.E.	beta	t	R ²	p
Risk Perception Factors						
Cognitive Factor	.805	.059	.739	13.556	.543	<.001***
Emotional & Experiential Factor	.747	.076	.624	9.871	.385	<.001***
Socio-Cultural Factor	.908	.070	.723	12.960	.520	<.001***

Significance level * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Hypothesis #1 suggests that the portrayal of the Jeju Air Flight 2216 incident by Thai news media positively influences Thai audiences' perceived risk of air travel. The regression result, as shown in Table 3, demonstrates that the exposure to media portrayal of the Jeju Air incident positively influenced the risk perception of Thai audiences in all three factors, including Cognitive factor ($R^2 = .543$, $p < .001$, $\beta = .739$), Emotional & Experiential factor ($R^2 = .385$, $p < .001$, $\beta = .624$), and Socio-Cultural factor ($R^2 = .520$, $p < .001$, $\beta = .723$). The R^2 values can be interpreted as follows: for the Cognitive factor, 54.3% of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variable; 38.5% for the Emotional & Experiential factor; and 52% for Socio-Cultural factor. Therefore, hypothesis #1 is supported.

Table 4

Regression Analysis: The Impact of Risk Perception Factors on Air Travel Intention – Dependent Variable

Variable	B	S.E.	Beta	t	R ²	p
Risk Perception Factors						
Cognitive Factor	-.409	.079	-.385	-5.163	.143	<.001***
Emotional & Experiential Factor	-.503	.067	-.520	-7.531	.266	<.001***
Socio-Cultural Factor	-.342	.069	-.370	-4.934	.132	<.001***
Individual Factor						
Gender	.438	.103	.313	4.250	.175	<.001***
Education	.359	.101	.261	3.536	.175	<.001***

Significance level * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Hypothesis #2 suggests that the Cognitive factor of risk perception of air travel negatively influences Thai audiences' air travel intention. The regression results, as shown in Table 4, illustrate that air travel intention is negatively influenced by the Cognitive factor of risk perception ($R^2 = .143$, $p < .001$, $\beta = -.385$). The R^2 value indicates that 14.3% of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variable. Therefore, hypothesis #2 is supported.

Hypothesis #3 suggests that Emotional and Experiential factors of risk perception of air travel negatively influence Thai audiences' air travel intention. The regression results demonstrate that the air travel intention is negatively influenced by the Emotional & Experiential factor of risk perception ($R^2 = .266$, $p < .001$, $\beta = -.520$). The R^2 value indicates that 26.6% of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variable. Therefore, hypothesis #3 is supported.

Hypothesis #4 suggests that the Socio-Cultural factors of risk perception of air travel negatively influence Thai audiences' air travel intention. The regression results illustrate that the air travel intention is negatively influenced by the Social-Cultural factor of risk perception ($R^2 = .132$, $p < .001$, $\beta = -.370$). The R^2 value indicates that 13.2% of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variable. Therefore, hypothesis #4 is supported.

Hypothesis #5 suggests that the Individual factors of risk perception of air travel positively influences Thai audiences' air travel intention. The regression results, as shown in Table 4, demonstrate that the air travel intention is positively influenced by the Individual factor of risk perception, which consists of gender ($R^2 = .175$, $p < .001$, $\beta = .313$) and education ($R^2 = .175$, $p < .001$, $\beta = .261$). The R^2 value for both factors indicates that 17.5% of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variable. Therefore, hypothesis #5 is supported.

Discussion

This study aimed to achieve three objectives: 1) to identify emerging themes in the Thai news media's portrayal of the Jeju Air Flight 2216 incident, 2) to investigate

the impact of this media portrayal on the perception of risk factors toward air travel, and 3) to examine whether the factors of perceived risk of air travel significantly impact air travel intention.

Concerning the first objective, the content analysis revealed seven prominent themes in Thai news media coverage, notably *victims and mourning*, *investigation*, *government response*, and *travel industry impact*, among others. The strong emphasis on *victims and mourning* reflects a culturally rooted approach that prioritizes empathy and communal loss, which profoundly shapes public risk perception by humanizing the tragedy. From a practical standpoint, this suggests that tourism marketers and airlines should recognize that emotional narratives dominate media portrayals and public discourse following such incidents. Therefore, crisis communication strategies must balance factual information about safety with compassionate messaging that acknowledges public grief and social concerns. Ignoring the emotional dimension risks alienating the public and further damaging brand reputation.

The *investigation* and *government response* themes highlight the public's demand for transparency and accountability. Airlines and regulatory bodies can leverage this insight by proactively sharing verified information during and after crises to build trust. Timely and transparent communication addressing investigation progress and safety improvements may mitigate negative risk perceptions and restore confidence more quickly.

Regarding the second objective, the analysis confirmed that media portrayal significantly elevates perceived risk surrounding air travel across cognitive, emotional, and socio-cultural dimensions. For tourism marketers, this indicates that post-incident marketing campaigns must directly address heightened public concerns and perceptions—not only by emphasizing safety protocols but also by engaging with socio-cultural sentiments. Understanding that risk perception is multifaceted helps tailor communication that resonates with a wider audience, potentially helping to rebuild demand.

For the third objective, perceived risk factors negatively impacted air travel intention, with emotional and experiential factors having the strongest effect. Conversely, individual characteristics such as gender and education positively influenced travel intention, suggesting that personalized communication approaches could be more effective. Airlines and marketers should segment their target audiences based on these characteristics to design more nuanced messaging that either alleviates fear or appeals to knowledgeable travellers who are less influenced by general risk perceptions.

In practical terms, this study reinforces that crisis communication must be multi-layered—addressing emotional responses, providing clear cognitive information, and recognizing the socio-cultural context in which messages are received. For crisis communicators, the Protection Action Decision Model guides the crafting of messages

to ensure they capture attention, are understandable, and lead to protective behaviors without unnecessarily deterring safe travel.

Ultimately, the findings underscore a crucial implication for the tourism and aviation sectors: the way media frames an incident can substantially shape public risk perception and travel intentions, which directly influences industry recovery. Proactive, transparent, and culturally sensitive communication strategies that integrate emotional and informational content can help mitigate perceived risks, retain consumer confidence, and accelerate the rebound of affected airlines and destinations.

Conclusion

This study examined the connection between the media coverage of an aviation accident and risk perception and travel intentions among Thai audiences. The findings indicate that media coverage of the Jeju Air Flight 2216—particularly content focusing on victims, investigation, and government response—significantly reshaped how people understand aviation risks at cognitive, emotional and experiential, and socio-cultural levels. This increased awareness, in turn, resulted in lower intentions to travel by air. However, individual factors such as gender and education positively affected travel intention, indicating a multidimensional interaction of factors. The results point to the importance of responsible media reporting during crises and to the complexity of risk perception in aviation contexts.

Suggestions

News organizations' coverage of emergency events significantly influences how the public interprets such events; therefore, these organizations should be aware of the potential consequences of their reporting on public trust and the industry as a whole. Although the need to report such cases promptly and in detail cannot be overstated, a balanced editorial policy—one that not only outlines the dangers but also explains the measures taken to address the situation—would help reduce the negative effects on public trust. By highlighting the efforts of authorities to enhance safety and assist the victims, the media can foster greater public reassurance.

At the same time, governments and aviation industries should actively engage with the media during crises, using communication strategies that acknowledge public fears, highlight safety measures, and provide reassurance to victims. Such approaches help maintain a positive image of the organization and demonstrate resilience in tourism-related sectors. Moreover, an understanding of differences in risk perception across demographic groups can enable more effective communication with target audiences.

This paper proposes a structured model for disseminating information during crises in the aviation and tourism industries. By understanding key themes in media representations and how they influence risk perception, stakeholders can develop

targeted communication programs to shape public opinion and minimize negative impacts on travel activity.

These conclusions also have direct policy implications for public policy development aimed at improving aviation safety and maximizing the effectiveness of disaster response. The thematic categories identified in the study, such as government accountability and transparency in safety measures, highlight areas where policymakers can make significant changes and communicate them effectively to the public. Priorities such as installing concrete barriers along runways or extending the data retention period of black boxes are examples of practical steps toward policy improvement.

For tourism marketers, this research highlights the importance of monitoring media portrayals during and after crises. Strategies to rebuild trust and promote destination safety should consider the cognitive, emotional, and socio-cultural factors that influence perceived risk.

Study Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, the content analysis included only 15 news articles—a small sample that may limit the generalizability of the findings. Second, all the news sources were Thai media outlets. While they reflect domestic viewpoints, they may not capture how international news agencies reported the same event, potentially omitting alternative perspectives. Third, the survey received 155 responses. Although this exceeds the minimum requirement, the sample size remains relatively small. Furthermore, all respondents were Thai, meaning the findings may not apply to people from other cultures or countries. Finally, this study employed convenience sampling, which may not fully represent the wider population; thus, some perspectives may have been excluded.

Future Research

Future research could conduct longitudinal studies to track the long-term effects of media portrayal on risk perception and travel intention beyond the initial immediate aftermath of an incident. Comparative studies across different cultural contexts could also provide broader insights into global crisis communication strategies. Investigating the impact of specific media platforms (e.g., social media vs. traditional news) on risk perception and travel intention could yield detailed understanding.

While this study identified positive influences of individual factors, future qualitative research could explore in greater depth why variables such as gender and education influence air travel intention in the context of perceived risk, offering richer contextual insights. Moreover, given the speed and reach of information dissemination today, future studies could explore the impact of misinformation or disinformation during aviation incidents on public perception and travel behavior.

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