

**POST-PANDEMIC TRANSFORMATION OF INTERNATIONAL TOURIST BEHAVIOR MODELS**

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<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>KEYWORDS</b>
<p>The COVID-19 pandemic has caused profound structural changes in international tourism, influencing not only the volume of tourist flows but also traveler behavior patterns. The purpose of this article is to analyze the post-pandemic transformation of international tourist behavior and identify its key areas and management implications. The study utilizes an analytical review method based on a synthesis of scientific publications and reports from international organizations (OECD, UN Tourism , World Tourism Organization). Bank , WEF). It is shown that in the post-pandemic period, the role of risk and safety perceptions has increased, the demand for flexibility in planning and booking has grown, the structure of tourist motivations has shifted toward natural and "slow" forms of tourism, and digital tourism behavior has become more entrenched. It is demonstrated that the identified changes are sustainable and are shaping new requirements for international tourism management, implying a transition to a more flexible, resilient, and data -driven model for industry development.</p>	<p>International tourism, post-pandemic behavior, tourist preferences, risk perception, booking flexibility, sustainable tourism, digitalization.</p>

**Introduction**

The scientific novelty of this article lies in its systematization of the post-pandemic transformation of international tourist behavior patterns from the perspective of integrating behavioral theories and the contemporary institutional context of tourism development. The paper substantiates that post-pandemic changes represent a structural shift in tourist behavior, rather than a recovery phase, and identifies their connection with changes in management approaches at the destination , business, and tourism policy levels.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been the biggest shock to international tourism in the 21st century, causing a sharp decline in mobility, disruption of tourism service chains, and a transformation of consumer practices. Even early studies viewed the pandemic as a trigger not only for a short-term "crash" in demand but also for a potential restructuring of travel norms, risk perceptions, and service expectations (hygiene, distancing, contactlessness), which requires a rethinking of both the scientific agenda and management approaches in tourism [1].

In the post-pandemic period, the industry has moved from the "volume recovery" stage to a stage of qualitative behavioral changes. According to UN Tourism, international tourism recovered to pre-pandemic levels in 2024, with further growth in international arrivals projected for 2025 relative to 2024 [2].

At the same time, the OECD emphasizes that, despite the recovery, structural challenges remain (sustainability, staffing and infrastructure constraints, rising travel costs and uncertainty), which reinforce the importance of adaptive policies and demand management [3].

At the level of tourist behavior, post-pandemic dynamics are manifested in changes in risk perception, the expansion of "insurance" strategies (booking flexibility, avoiding crowded locations, choosing more predictable conditions), and a reconfiguration of travel value. Empirical studies show that risk perception and the pandemic context are statistically associated with travel patterns and behavioral decisions of travelers, including avoiding certain modes of transport and changing the frequency/character of travel [4]. Theoretically, post-pandemic tourist behavior is also interpreted through the lens of post-traumatic growth, where travel can serve as a way to restore well-being and "return to meaningful experiences," while maintaining a heightened sensitivity to risk and uncertainty [5].

An additional layer of transformation is related to the macro-conditions of travel post-pandemic: the accelerated digitalization of the customer journey and increased price sensitivity amid inflation, climate, and geopolitical factors. World Analytics Bank (Tourism Watch) notes that the recovery in demand is occurring in a more complex environment and is accompanied by the influence of economic, geopolitical and climatic events, which reinforces the value of timely monitoring and flexible management of tourist flows and products [6]. In parallel, World Economic The Forum views tourism as a sector at a "tipping point," where expected growth is coupled with pressures (environmental constraints, staff shortages, conflicting interests between residents and visitors), which directly impacts traveler preferences and behavior [7].

The purpose of this article is to systematize the key areas of post-pandemic transformation of international tourist behavior patterns (risks and safety, flexibility and planning, motivations and travel formats, digital practices) and to demonstrate the management implications for destinations and the tourism business.

The analysis of the post-pandemic transformation of international tourist behavior draws on interdisciplinary approaches from tourism economics, behavioral science, and risk studies. Classic models of tourist behavior view demand as the result of the interaction of motivations, constraints, and the external environment, including economic, institutional, and sociocultural factors [8]. The COVID-19 pandemic has acted as an exogenous shock, disrupting established behavioral patterns and enhancing the role of intangible factors, primarily risk perception and uncertainty.

In the post-pandemic literature, considerable attention has been paid to risk perception theory, which posits that travel decisions are influenced less by objective threat indicators than by subjective assessments of the safety of the destination, transportation, and living conditions. Empirical studies confirm that sanitary and social risks have a persistent impact on destination choice, trip duration, and willingness to travel internationally even after formal restrictions are lifted [5].

A complementary conceptual approach is the idea of posttraumatic growth in tourism, which views travel as a tool for restoring well-being and finding meaningful experiences after a crisis. This approach

helps explain the simultaneous coexistence of restrained and compensatory tourist behavior, ranging from cautious planning to a desire for more intense and extended trips [5].

Methodologically, the article is based on a qualitative synthesis of scientific publications and analytical reports of international organizations (OECD, UN Tourism, World Bank, WEF), which allows us to combine micro-level behavioral findings with the macroeconomic and institutional context of international tourism recovery. This approach provides a holistic understanding of the post-pandemic transformation of tourism behavior and its management implications.

The post-pandemic phase of international tourism development is characterized not by a return to previous behavioral patterns, but by their structural transformation. Scientific and analytical studies have identified a number of persistent behavioral shifts affecting travel motivations, decision-making processes, and patterns of tourism consumption.

1. Increased importance of safety and risk perception. One of the most enduring consequences of the pandemic has been the increased importance of safety factors. Even after the lifting of sanitary restrictions, tourists continue to consider epidemiological, medical, and social risks when choosing a destination and travel format. Research shows that subjective risk perception has a long-term impact on international mobility and can persist longer than objective restrictions [5, 8]. This manifests itself in the avoidance of congested locations, increased attention to the quality of medical infrastructure, and the level of trust in destination institutions .

2. Growing demand for flexibility and reduced uncertainty. Post -pandemic tourist behavior is characterized by increased demand for flexible booking options and the ability to cancel and reschedule trips without financial loss. This strategy serves as a mechanism for reducing uncertainty in the face of persistent external risks (economic, geopolitical, and climatic). OECD analytical materials emphasize that flexibility has become a key factor in the competitiveness of tourism products in international tourism [1].

3. Reconsidering the value of travel and changing demand structures. Against the backdrop of rising prices and inflationary pressures, tourists are demonstrating greater price sensitivity and a focus on value for money. According to World Bank , in the post-pandemic period, there is a trend towards longer but less frequent trips, especially to destinations with relatively low costs, which reflects a strategy of optimizing tourist spending [6].

4. Shift in motivations towards nature and "slow" tourism. The literature notes a steady increase in interest in natural, less urbanized and less dense forms of recreation, as well as in "slow" tourism formats. This shift is interpreted as a response to the stress of the pandemic and a desire to restore well-being and experience authenticity. Such preferences are directly linked to the sustainable development agenda of destinations .

5. Strengthening digital practices in tourist behavior. The pandemic has accelerated the digitalization of all stages of the tourist journey: from planning to on-site service consumption. In the post-pandemic period, digital practices (online planning, contactless services, mobile apps) are perceived as the norm, not a temporary adaptation. Research in the field of "smart tourism" emphasizes that digital integration is becoming a basic expectation of international tourists [9].

Table 1 - Key areas of post-pandemic transformation of international tourist behavior

Direction of transformation	Main behavioral manifestations	Management implications
Increased attention to safety	Avoiding congested areas, risk assessment	Strengthening service and communication standards
Demand for flexibility	Flexible bookings, last-minute trips	Revenue review management and sales conditions
Increased price sensitivity	Cost optimization, longer trips	Bundling services, focusing on value for money
Shift in motivations	Natural, slow, and meaningful tourism	Diversification of tourism products
Digital normalization	Online scheduling, contactless service	Investments in digital infrastructure

Post-pandemic changes in international tourist behavior are creating new demands on tourism management at the destination, business, and public policy levels. A key management shift is moving from a focus on maximizing flows to a more flexible and sustainable model that considers the quality of the tourist experience, demand distribution, and the risk of overcrowding.

destination management organizations (DMOs), the transformation of tourist behavior necessitates enhanced strategic planning and demand management. Increased sensitivity to safety and overcrowding requires the development of flow monitoring mechanisms, diversification of tourist routes, and smoothing out seasonality. The OECD emphasizes that in the post-pandemic period, destinations are increasingly using demand management tools (management), and not only its stimulation, including spatial and temporal redistribution of visits.

Product and operational flexibility are becoming key for the tourism industry. Growing demand for flexible booking options and travel uncertainty require a rethinking of revenue management approaches (management and cancellation risk management). At the same time, increasing tourist price sensitivity increases the importance of transparent pricing, package deals, and product personalization. Research emphasizes that companies that integrate digital channels and customer behavior analytics adapt more quickly to new demand patterns [9].

At the level of public tourism policy, the post-pandemic transformation of behavior is increasing the need for more responsive and adaptive regulatory tools. International organizations note that traditional statistics with their long time lags are insufficient for managing demand in conditions of high volatility. Therefore, the role of alternative data and analytical tools for monitoring tourist behavior and supporting decisions in near real time is increasing.

Table 2 - Management implications of the post-pandemic transformation of international tourists' behavior

Management level	Key behavioral shifts	Key management measures
Destinations (DMO)	Increased attention to safety, avoiding overload	Flow management, route diversification, standards communication
Tourism business	Demand for flexibility and personalization	Flexible rates, revenue updates management, digital services
State policy	High volatility and uncertainty in demand	Operational monitoring, sustainability support, data analytics
Infrastructure and service	Growing expectations for quality and digitalization	Investments in infrastructure and smart solutions

Overall, the management implications of the post-pandemic transformation of tourist behavior lie in the need for a coordinated transition to a sustainable, flexible, and data-oriented model of international tourism management, where tourist behavioral changes are viewed not as a temporary aberration, but as a new structural context for the development of the industry.

The post-pandemic transformation of international tourist behavior patterns is sustainable and structural, extending beyond the short-term recovery of tourism flows. This article demonstrates that these changes manifest themselves in the heightened importance of safety and risk perception, increased demand for flexible planning and booking, increased price sensitivity, a shift in motivation toward natural and "slow" forms of tourism, and the entrenchment of digital practices at all stages of the tourist journey.

The identified behavioral shifts are creating new demands on international tourism management. For destinations, this means a shift from a policy of increasing volumes to managing the quality of the tourist experience and sustainability; for tourism businesses, this means the need for product and operational flexibility, the development of digital channels, and analytical decision support; and for public policy, this means strengthening the role of operational monitoring and adaptive regulatory tools in conditions of highly volatile demand.

Thus, the post-pandemic behavior of international tourists should not be viewed as a temporary aberration, but as a new institutional and behavioral context for the development of international tourism, requiring a rethinking of management strategies and further scientific research.

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