

Chapter 19

Psychological Characteristics of Tourist Behavior During a Pandemic and Expectations of Future Tourists

Darja Kobal Grum

University in Ljubljana, Slovenia

ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic has radically cut into tourism behaviors and virtually disabled any form of tourism. This chapter deals with the problem of how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the changes of tourist behavior and how these changes are reflected in the wellbeing of potential tourists. The purpose of this chapter is to find out what are the psychological characteristics that will help to return to tourist behavior after the pandemic subsides. Next, the chapter will pay attention to the relationship between the gradual return to tourist activities and safe, but at the same time relaxed tourist behavior. The author performed a method of systematic review, which performed a systematic analysis of the most relevant target literature since the COVID-19 pandemic has existed. Based on the obtained results, the author designed a model of the psychological characteristics of safe tourist behavior at the transition to the post-COVID-19 period.

INTRODUCTION

The pandemic COVID -19 is unparalleled in its magnitude, and the modern world has yet to face a similar situation. The World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic on March 11, 2020 (WHO, 2020). The consequences of a pandemic are felt at the individual, community, social, and global levels (Gruber et al., 2020). Even the SARS epidemic, which led to new psychological insights into the dimension of human mentality at the beginning of this millennium, is not comparable to the psychological consequences of the pandemic COVID-19, but still provides a basis for the study of current events (Esterwood and Saeed, 2020). Research on the impact of quarantine during a SARS outbreak (e.g. Lee

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et al., 2005; Reynolds et al., 2008) on people's mental health and psychological wellbeing found that individuals experienced primarily negative feelings, associated with stigma, feelings of lack of control and lack of access to information. During the COVID-19 pandemic, previous studies have shown similar trends, with studies reporting a high prevalence of distress in the general population (e.g., Ahuja, 2011; APA, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic also affected the behavior of tourists and consequently the entire tourism industry (Qui et al., 2020). Tourism clearly plays a role in exacerbating the resulting public health crises. Prior to the pandemic, tourism as such had several positive impacts on the development, visibility, economy, and prosperity of countries providing tourism services. It also had a positive psychological impact on people, promoting their motivation to travel, their positive emotions and generally having a positive effect on their psychological wellbeing. Visiting foreign places and resorts and relaxing in well-known tourist destinations has a beneficial effect on an individual's psychological wellbeing and life satisfaction.

Now, more than a year after the pandemic, the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on tourism and the hospitality industry as well as on tourist behavior, wellbeing and quality of life is harmful. There is, of course, a lot of research on the topic of COVID-19, but there is a lack of research that would focus on the psychological aspects of tourist behavior. From this point of view, this study is a novelty on a global scale. What is largely missing in the literature is research that sets out to investigate how tourist behavior could be fundamentally different in a post-COVID-19 era. This chapter pays attention to the relationship between the gradual return to tourist activities and safe, but at the same time relaxed tourist behavior. How to behave safely in tourism, but at the same time satisfy its meaning of rest and relaxation? It is thus critical to identify the psychological risks of tourist behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic to minimize the negative effects of tourism on destination cities and regions.

This chapter aims briefly elaborate on psychological underpinnings of tourist behavior, provide an overview of current research trends based on the COVID-19 pandemic, discuss the limitations of this approach, and outline some suggestions for future research. Specifically, four research objectives are set, focusing on the following: (1) perceptions of altered tourist behavior due to the COVID-19 pandemic, (2) psychological impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourist behavior, (3) psychological characteristics most associated with positive expectations about the return of safe tourism and opportunities for tourist travel, and (4) psychological guidelines for promoting safe yet relaxed tourist behavior in the future. The author asks the following questions: (1) how are changes in tourist behavior due to the pandemic COVID-19 related to the wellbeing and quality of life of individuals who engaged in tourist behavior prior to the pandemic, and (2) what psychological characteristics would support a safe return to tourist behavior after the pandemic situation has calmed. To achieve the objectives and answer the questions, in the continuation of the chapter, the author designed a model of the psychological characteristics of safe tourist behavior in the transition to the post- COVID-19 era.

To understand the relationship between the pandemic COVID-19 and tourist behavior, it is worthwhile to provide more technical information and expert opinion on the concept of human behavior and the identification of its main psychological factors.

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