# Ahmad Salman / Alexander Trupp / Ling-Foon Chan Tourism in Times of Crisis and Post-Crisis: A Model to Understand Tourists' Post-Pandemic Travel Intentions

## Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound effect on tourists' travel plans. Whilst the relationship between perceived risk and tourists' decisions and behaviours concerning COVID-19 is already an established research area in tourism studies, the dynamics of post-pandemic travel intentions and how they are influenced by travel motivation, destination safety and the notion of revenge tourism received very little attention. Therefore, this study proposes a model linking revenge tourism, destination safety, and travel motivations, leading to post-pandemic travel intentions. Furthermore, this research note lays a foundation for future research that can guide towards understanding tourists' travel intentions in times of crisis, similar to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: COVID-19 pandemic, travel motivation, revenge tourism, travel intention, destination safety

## 1. Introduction

Early in 2020, the world's social and economic activities, including tourism, abruptly halted due to the spreading of COVID-19 (Tiwari & Chowdhary, 2021; Trupp & Dolezal, 2020; Harchandani & Shome, 2021). Governments worldwide responded to the pandemic's (potential) impacts with unprecedented measures such as shutting borders, banning international and domestic travel, and closing hotels and restaurants. As a result of these changes, the tourism industry was one of the hardest hit in terms of income, employment, and possibilities for continuing operations during the lockdowns (World Travel & Tourism Council [WTTC], 2020). Millions of tourists who used to travel regularly were suddenly confined to their homes and within their national borders for extended periods.

The adverse effects of COVID-19 have forced the world to adapt to the "new normal" (Tiwari & Chowdhary, 2021, p. 89). The 'new normal' refers to using facemasks, taking adequate health measures such as social distancing (Rab et al., 2020) and travelling with restrictions because of COVID-19. The sudden suspension of tourism, constraints on individual freedom, and the predominance of social distancing measures have put people internationally in a dilemma, wanting to "get back to normal" yet rejecting the "new normal" (Brouder et al., 2020, p. 735). Returning to normal (before COVID-19) would probably be impossible as the pandemic has altered tourists' behaviour and travel intentions (Boto-García & Leoni, 2021; Ma et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2021).

Past crises have increased the focus on public health and safety measures, leading to changes in tourists' preferences and behaviours (Alexander, 2000; Quarantelli, 2005). However, the COVID-19 crisis is unprecedented and can be classified as a global health crisis with widespread social and economic consequences. Due to its unique characteristics, it differs from other crises, such as natural or human-made disasters. Firstly, it is a highly contagious and easily transmitted virus, which resulted in rapid global spread and high infection rates (World

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Health Organization, 2021). Secondly, the pandemic has led to the widespread implementation of lockdown measures and travel restrictions, severely impacting the tourism industry on a global scale (Salman et al., 2022). As a result, there has been a growing interest in research related to Covid-19 and its impact on tourism destinations (Anwar et al., 2022; Matiza, 2020; Rastegar et al., 2021; Salman et al., 2022; Tiwari & Chowdhary, 2021), but most of the investigations occurred during the peaks of Covid-19 cases (Gengeswari et al., 2021). Thus, understanding the unique nature of the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis and the related dynamics of revenge tourism is crucial in developing a comprehensive framework for analyzing post-pandemic travel intentions.

It is vital to study post-pandemic tourists and travel intentions, which can aid in recovering tourism sustainably (Ahmad et al., 2021; Saxena et al., 2021; Sengel et al., 2023). Several studies have examined the effect of COVID-19 on tourists and tourism, especially regarding tourists' risk perception (Karl et al., 2020), employees and residents' well-being (Anwar et al., 2022; Salman et al., 2022), tourism resilience and recovery (Corbisiero & Monaco, 2021; Yeh, 2021), changing consumer behaviours (Sánchez-Pérez et al., 2021; Toubes, 2021), profiling consumers (Jin et al., 2022), and the economic impacts of the crisis on tourism (Foo et al., 2021). Existing research highlighted that tourists' travel behaviour has considerably changed due to COVID-19 (Shamshiripour et al., 2020). Such changes include travel restrictions, new health protocols, and additional perceived travel risks (Issabel et al., 2020).

The impact of the pandemic on tourists' post-pandemic behaviour in visiting a destination is of particular significance to the future of the global tourism sector and its recovery (Matiza, 2020; Rastegar et al., 2021; Seyfi et al., 2021). While some scholars highlight the opportunities for more sustainable tourism in the postpandemic era (Ioannides & Gyimothy, 2020), others point to a pandemic-related impact and trend, also referred to as revenge tourism. Revenge tourism may emerge if people are too long bound at home (Abdullah, 2021; Oktaviani & Sutisna, 2021). It infers that people who lived under lockdowns and travel restrictions for a long time develop an even stronger desire to travel often and consume tourism and hospitality products more frequently and intensively once they have the opportunity again (Wang & Xia, 2021).

Given these new dynamics of health consciousness and indications of revenge tourism, travel intention amid COVID-19 cannot be fully comprehended by exploring only one factor at a time. Combining travel motivation, destination safety concerns, and revenge tourism dynamics leads to a more holistic understanding of travel intentions in the COVID-19 recovery process. Such studies are currently scarce, and more attention is needed to conceptualize these factors into one framework. Enhancing or adopting an existing framework might only partially address the unique context and interplay of factors resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, our proposed framework emphasizes the importance of capturing the specific characteristics of the COVID-19 crisis and its impact on tourism to provide a more comprehensive understanding of travel intentions during the recovery process.

Furthermore, to better understand the context of this study, it is essential to differentiate between health crises, such as COVID-19, and other crises, including human-made and natural disasters. Health crises, like pandemics, are characterized by the rapid spread of infectious diseases that threaten public health and can lead to widespread illness, emergencies, and social disruption (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, n.d.). On the other hand, human-made disasters refer to events resulting from human actions or inactions that cause extensive damage and suffering, such as terrorist attacks, industrial accidents, and transportation accidents (Quarantelli, 2005). Natural disasters are events caused by natural processes, such as earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, and volcanic eruptions, that result in substantial damage, loss of life, or disruption of social and economic activities (Alexander, 2000). While each type of crisis presents unique challenges to the tourism industry, health crises like COVID-19 have widespread and long-lasting impacts on travel behaviour, restrictions, and health measures, which are central to the concept of revenge tourism.

Hence, investigating the factors mentioned above will provide a clear understanding of tourists' travel intentions after COVID-19 that can guide policymakers about tourists' travel plans and help explain whether travel



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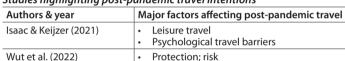
motivation, destination safety, or revenge travel is their main reason for travel. This research note, therefore, offers a conceptual framework for understanding tourist visit intentions in light of these recent dynamics. Research hypotheses were developed based on academic literature and tourism industry studies to provide the groundwork for a future empirical study on the relationship between different factors such as travel motivation, destination safety, revenge tourism, and travel intentions in times of crisis. This study aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by proposing a model that investigates the relationship between travel motivation, perceived risks, and travel intentions in the context of post-pandemic tourism. This model is relevant for scholars and practitioners as it will help them to comprehend the factors influencing tourists' decision-making processes and tailor their strategies accordingly. By examining the proposed model, readers can gain insights into the crucial factors that shape travel behaviours in the new normal, thereby facilitating the recovery and future resilience of the tourism industry.

# 2. Research propositions

Table 1

COVID-19 has noticeably altered travellers' psychological attitudes, motivations, and perceptions, resulting in a more selective travel pattern, such as solo travel, luxury excursions, revenge, and health and wellness tourism. Despite recent debates on the influence of crises on future travel intentions, researchers still need to pay more attention to the mechanism of these factors. Table 1 summarises the findings of selected studies on COVID-19 that have attempted to determine the most critical elements influencing travellers' actions and intentions following the pandemic.

Authors & year	Major factors affecting post-pandemic travel intentions
Isaac & Keijzer (2021)	<ul><li>Leisure travel</li><li>Psychological travel barriers</li></ul>
Wut et al. (2022)	Protection; risk
Liu et al. (2021)	<ul> <li>Political and religious ideology</li> <li>Covid-19 characteristics</li> </ul>
Issabel et al. (2020)	<ul><li>Travel behaviour</li><li>Safety procedures</li></ul>
Orden-Mejía et al. (2022)	<ul> <li>Tourist preferences</li> <li>Attitudes</li> <li>Travel expectations</li> </ul>
Samdin et al. (2021)	<ul><li>Travel Risk</li><li>Tourist income</li></ul>
Şengel et al. (2022)	Anxiety
Wang et al. (2022)	Travel bubble with less restrictions
Woyo (2021)	<ul><li>Affordability</li><li>Technology</li></ul>
Ahmad et al. (2021)	Destination image
Zaman et al. (2021)	<ul><li>Travel incentives</li><li>Pandemic fatigue</li></ul>
Kala (2021)	<ul><li>Place attachment</li><li>Religious beliefs</li></ul>
Tiwari & Chowdhary (2021)	Over tourism
Jin et al. (2022)	<ul><li>Social distancing</li><li>Income and wealth effect</li></ul>
Corbisiero & Monaco (2021)	<ul><li>Travel behaviour</li><li>Challenges for the tourism sector</li></ul>
lo & Peralta (2022)	<ul> <li>Psychological needs</li> <li>Emotional well-being</li> <li>Travel goals</li> </ul>
Carvalho (2022)	Awareness; risk perception
Gu et al. (2022)	Risk; security





The global tourism industry has experienced unprecedented challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As the world gradually recovers from the crisis, understanding tourists' travel intentions and motivations in the post-COVID-19 era becomes crucial for tourism stakeholders and destination managers. While these studies evaluate the drivers of post-pandemic travel intention, factors such as travel motivation, destination safety indicators, and revenge tourism as a mediator for travel intention are yet to be examined together for the post-COVID-19 era. Moreover, before the pandemic, numerous studies investigated travel behaviour, constraints, and risk perception (Hall et al., 2017; Karl, 2018; Schmude et al., 2020; Cahyanto et al., 2016). In the context of COVID-19, researchers have built on this foundation to explore the changing dynamics of tourism (Filimon et al., 2022; Benjamin et al., 2020). The current study acknowledges the influence of past research. It focuses on the emergence of revenge tourism as a form of recovery and adaptation to the 'new normal' in the post-pandemic era. However, high volumes of revenge tourism can also recreate the adverse effects of mass tourism. Thus, this research note presents a conceptual framework for analysing the impact of factors such as travel motivation, destination safety, and revenge tourism on travel intention. The framework enhances understanding of whether motivation, destination safety, or revenge tourism mediates and influences tourists' intention to travel. This study contends that these three elements will have a substantial impact on future travel plans during the end of and after the pandemic.

## 3. Travel motivation

Travel motivation is a prominent factor influencing visitor behaviour and destination selection in tourism research (Su et al., 2020). The literature on travel motivations is extensive, exploring various aspects such as push and pull factors (Dann, 1977), hierarchical needs arrangements and travel careers (Pearce & Lee, 2005), quests for authenticity (MacCannell, 1973), and non-Western tourism mobilities (Trupp et al., 2022). Several studies have identified different dimensions of motivations, such as cultural, prestige-related, and socio-psychological components (Crompton, 1979), as well as specific motives for distinct tourist groups (Chen et al., 2014). However, the COVID-19 pandemic has considerably affected tourists' motivations to travel (Io & Peralta, 2022). Understanding tourists' intentions and motivations has become more challenging during the pandemic due to changing travel restrictions and evolving attitudes toward health and safety. Recent tourism literature has sought to forecast aspects such as tourists' emotions (Zheng et al., 2022) and attitudes (Stankov et al., 2020) in the post-COVID-19 era. In this context, it is vital to comprehend tourists' intentions for travelling in the post-COVID-19 era to facilitate the tourism sector's quick and timely recovery. Understanding tourists' intentions in the post-COVID-19 era is crucial for the timely recovery of the tourism sector, leading to the first proposition of the study:

P1: Travel motivation affects tourists' travel intention

# 4. Destination safety

Recent studies conducted by Abraham et al. (2020), Osti and Nava (2020), and Zheng et al. (2021) show that travel risk and destination safety are significant issues for tourists, even more so in the COVID-19 era. Visitors who have been to a disaster-prone area are more worried about safety and danger than before such a visit, and tourists' views of the risks associated with the destination can influence their desire to visit that location (Fountain & Cradock-Henry, 2020; Rosselló et al., 2020). Consequently, during the COVID-19 pandemic, destination safety is crucial for tourists' decision to return or travel. Safety is essential when considering a vacation or travelling to a specific destination. Natural and human-induced disasters, including tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, tsunamis, and person-made catastrophes like terrorism, crime, health hazards and conflict, are all included in the literature on destination safety. Sönmez and Graefe's (1998) influential study provides valuable insights into tourists' travel intentions to risky destinations, primarily focusing on



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factors such as terrorism risk on decision making. However, the framework was conceived in a pre-pandemic era and, thus, might not fully encapsulate the unique, multifaceted impacts of a global health crisis like COVID-19 on travel behaviours and destination safety considerations. Previous pandemics like SARS had already impacted international tourism and safety precautions (Kuo et al., 2008). However, COVID-19 has had more global and far-reaching consequences as a hazard to health, economy and psychological well-being (Ukpabi et al., 2021; Zou & Meng, 2020). Moreover, the impact of safety accidents is not destination-specific, as a single incident in one location (for example, a COVID-19 outbreak in one particular area) might have a cascading effect of concern on the entire nation or region (Ukpabi et al., 2021). Therefore, understanding destination safety measures is of vital importance to understanding tourists' travel intentions, leading to the second proposition

P2: Destination safety affects tourists' travel intention

### 5. Revenge tourism

The notion of revenge travel derives from the concept of vengeance or revenge spending, which occurred in China during the 1980s and was characterized by increased consumer demand following decades of economic hardship during the Cultural Revolution (Shadel, 2020; Zaman et al., 2021). The terms Revenge Tourism and Revenge Travel became buzzwords in 2021 and refer to tourists' pent-up leisure and travel demand, which evolved in response to experiences of quarantines, lockdowns and other constraints on individual travel and mobility (Zaman et al., 2021). Wang and Xia (2021) showed that consumers who perceive the COVID-19 crisis as more severe develop a stronger desire to travel (again). This increased demand and desire to travel again may be further driven by savings which people accumulated during the time they could not travel. Accordingly, travel would be more frequent, more indulgent, and away from home again. Such scenarios are also reflected in a recent UN Tourism (UNWTO, 2022) confidence index stating that "for the first time since the start of the pandemic, the index returned to levels of 2019, reflecting rising optimism among tourism experts worldwide, building on strong pent-up demand, in particular intra-European travel and US travel to Europe."

Moreover, revenge tourism requires a novel framework to address the challenges and opportunities it presents in the post-pandemic world. Existing frameworks for international tourism decision-making processes by Sönmez and Graefe (1998) focusing on terrorism risk and Filmon et al. (2022) on sociodemographic factors to understand travel before and during COVID-19 offer valuable insights for vacation decisions when risk is involved. Even though these studies provide useful information, they may not sufficiently account for the nuances and complexities of revenge tourism. By proposing a new framework, we aim to understand better the factors driving revenge tourism behaviour and provide more practical guidance for industry stakeholders and policymakers to capitalize on this emerging trend. Compared to the existing frameworks, the study's proposed framework for revenge tourism focuses specifically on the motivations and behaviours of tourists seeking to make up for lost travel experiences due to the pandemic. While the proposed framework does not explicitly include demographic factors, as suggested by Sönmez and Graefe (1998) and Filmon et al. (2022), we believe that the unique context of revenge tourism warrants a separate analysis. Our framework is designed to capture the nuances of this emerging phenomenon and provide a foundation for future research in this area.

Furthermore, the 'new normal' has emerged as a critical concept in the post-pandemic landscape, shaping how people perceive and engage in travel (Benjamin et al., 2020). Even though a crisis can impact a destination's tourism development (Wang, 2009), revenge tourism can manifest this 'new normal,' where travellers seek to compensate for lost opportunities during the pandemic. Furthermore, revenge tourism contributes to the recovery process in the tourism industry, helping destinations rebound from the economic impacts of the crisis (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2020). By understanding the motivations and behaviours of revenge tourists, policymakers and industry stakeholders can devise

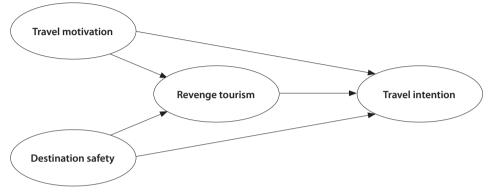


strategies to facilitate a sustainable and resilient recovery. Thus, this factor can substantially impact tourists' travel intention, leading to the third and fourth propositions of the study.

- P3: Revenge tourism can affect tourists' travel intention
- P4: Revenge tourism mediates the relationship between travel motivation, destination safety and travel intention

Figure 1

A model linking revenge tourism, destination safety, and travel motivations to understand tourists' post-pandemic travel intentions



## 6. Conclusion

COVID-19 has severely impacted tourism and hospitality activities globally. The impact of the pandemic on post-pandemic visitor behaviour is essential for the future of global tourism. Factors such as travel motivations, destination safety, and revenge tourism should be explored to understand tourists' travel intentions in the post-COVID-19 era. Such an understanding is vital at a time when travel restrictions have been lifted in most countries, and people have started to travel again, both domestically and internationally. Therefore, it is crucial to explore travellers' intentions and related socioeconomic and psychological factors that shape tourists' post-crisis travel plans.

Moreover, the proposed model focuses explicitly on the post-COVID-19 context and provides insights into the emergence of revenge tourism by offering a unique perspective on tourism behaviour in the post-lockdown era. Future research could explore testing the proposed model alongside further refining the conceptual and empirical understanding of the tourism decision-making process in the post-pandemic era. This approach can entail further developing and integrating our model with existing frameworks, ultimately contributing to a richer analysis of revenge tourism and its implications for the broader tourism industry. This study contributes to the existing literature on factors of post-pandemic travel intentions. It provides a model for understanding the impact and predicting tourists' travel intentions, which could play a vital role in tourism recovery in the post-COVID-19 era.

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