Reset or temporary break? Attitudinal change, risk perception and future travel intention in tourists experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic

Francesc González-Reverté, Joan Miquel Gomis-López and Pablo Díaz-Luque

Francesc González-Reverté, Joan Miquel Gomis-López and Pablo Díaz-Luque are all based at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, Barcelona, Spain.

Abstract

Purpose – There is little knowledge to date regarding the influence of the COVID-19 health crisis on tourists' intention to travel differently in the future. This paper addresses this and explores its determinants. The objective of the present study is to determine to what extent the Spanish tourists affected by COVID-19 may change the way they travel in the future, according to the perceived risk of travel in a pandemic context.

Design/methodology/approach – Between May and June 2020, the authors conducted a survey with a sample population of Spanish tourists who were resident in Spain during the COVID-19 pandemic, for the purposes of studying the role of attitudes and risk in the intention to change the way they want to travel in the future. Cluster analysis and one-way ANOVA were conducted to assess differences among the respondents. Finally, some models were built using the linear regression technique in order to evaluate the role of attitudes in the tourists' adaptive response to the perceived risk of travel.

Findings – Results confirm the formation of a new way of life influencing tourists' intentions to travel more sustainably. Accordingly, tourists with a previous environmental attitude are less interested in visiting mass tourism beach destinations in the future. However, changes in the way some tourists travel can also be read as an adaptive and temporary response to the perceived risk of contracting the disease, and do not point to a reduction of the vital importance of tourism in their lives.

Research limitations/implications – The exploratory nature of the study and the lack of similar international analyses does not allow the authors to contrast its results at a global level, though it offers a starting point for future research in other countries. There are also methodological limitations, since the field work was carried out between the first and second waves of the disease, at a time when the pandemic was in remission, possibly affecting the orientation of some responses, given the desire to recover normalcy and "normal" travel, and this may have influenced the priority given to tourism.

Social implications – This study gives new insights into the debate on the social transformation of the collective consciousness. Despite some signs of change, part of the Spanish tourists are still anchored in traditional tourism practices embedded in cultural factors, which can hinder sustainability in the Spanish tourism industry. The experience of the COVID-19 crisis has not been sufficient to change the declared travel habits of Spanish tourists. Therefore, progress towards the definition of a new tourism system that implies the effective transformation of demand will require applying policies and promoting institutional innovation and education to create paths that facilitate transformative experiences.

Originality/value – The study is focused on the analysis of the relationship between attitudes and risk perception, including novel elements that enrich the academic debate on social progress in the transformation of tourism and the possibilities of promoting a reset from the demand side. Moreover, it incorporates, for the first time, the COVID-19 as it was experienced as an explanatory variable to analyse the changing travel attitudes in a post-COVID-19 era. The analysis of the psychosocial mechanisms of risk offers a good opportunity for a better assessment of post-pandemic demand risk perception. Finally, the study offers empirical evidence on how Spanish tourists are reimagining their next and future holidays, which can be highly valuable for destination managers.

Keywords Personal COVID-19 experience, Future travel intention, Global change, tourism demand, Sustainable tourism

Paper type Research paper

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Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic is probably the most important challenge currently facing humanity. Its appearance has been linked to the direct result of space-time compression (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020), and interpreted as a recent manifestation of modernization and the neoliberal globalization process (Harvey, 1990). As the planet becomes socially and economically smaller, socially transmitted diseases such as the COVID-19 coronavirus are transmitted more rapidly and over larger areas than before. Tourism is an economic activity that requires mobility and social contact, and the very high volume of movements it generates on a global scale has contributed to the spread of the disease. It is also among the worst affected economic sectors (Gössling et al., 2020). As the disease has spread around the world, mobility and travel restrictions have become the norm in many countries. The impact of the slowdown caused by these restrictions has served to demonstrate the fragility of the rapid growth model on which tourism has been based so far, and to debunk the supposed advantages of globalization, aspects that are revealed within the framework of the need for global economic change (Ioannides and Gyimóthy, 2020). In academia, there have been calls for a change in the global tourism system oriented towards the achievement of global sustainability objectives instead of growth that benefits only the few.

A collective conscience promoting sustainability and tourism degrowth is entering the debate. Although some authors are sceptical as to the degree to which the inherited forces and inertias of the tourism system will allow significant change in this direction and argue that any transformation of the tourism system will be extremely difficult to achieve, it has also been suggested that COVID-19 may drive transformation at the level of the individual (Hall et al., 2020). However, very little is known about the concrete effects of COVID-19 on the personal lifeworld of individuals and whether this will eventually translate into a shift in collective consciousness. Nor do we yet know the repercussions of this possible transformation for how tourism will be conducted in the post-COVID-19 era. The COVID-19 pandemic is considered a once-in-a-lifetime experience for all the inhabitants of the planet, and one which may result in the expansion of awareness of global change (Sheldon, 2020). This new global mindset may be transmitted depending on several factors such as communication channels (Hsiao and Tseng, 2011), education systems, the media, and family, friends and personal relationship networks (Galvani et al., 2020); nevertheless, it is believed that it will affect the way people travel. Studies have been conducted on the resilience capacity of tourist destinations in epidemic crises, though little is known about the reaction of demand and to what extent personal experience of COVID-19 may affect future travel behaviour (Ivanova et al., 2021; Peters et al., 2020; Bratic et al., 2021).

Based on the considerations proposed in the conceptual framework of a "transformative turn" in tourism, the objective of the present study is to determine to what extent the Spanish tourists affected by COVID-19 may change the way they travel in the future, according to the perceived risk of travel in a pandemic context. In connection with this objective, we also analyse the tourists' attitudinal change in a post-pandemic scenario. To do that, we will take into account how tourists' attitudes to future travel are influenced by factors such as the risk of travelling in a pandemic, their personal experience of COVID-19, and the tourists' environmental attitudes.

A sample of 496 Spanish tourists, gathered with the aim of making an empirical contribution to the study of tourists' changing intentions after experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic, was used to identify how the pandemic is changing the priority of tourism in people's lives, to identify changing features when travelling to mass tourism beach destinations (related to travel distance, frequency, budget and safety issues) and to determine the influence of their environmental attitude on a more sustainable travel pattern in the future. With this background, this paper focuses on the role and importance of individual attitudes in the positive or negative evaluation of perceived risk and the evaluation of how this risk is associated with the intention to travel differently in the future.

The future intention of tourists to visit mass tourism beach destinations was then tested. The results indicate that prior individual attitudes influence perceived risk and that perceived risk acts as a driver of future travel intentions and travel preferences. Three different profiles of tourists were identified, according to their adaptive strategy towards risk: (1) tourists who perceived visiting mass tourism destinations as highly risky, (2) tourists who perceived only a temporary risk visiting these destinations; and (3) tourists who perceived low risk visiting these destinations.

In the discussion section, we examine the main differences between the three groups of tourists, and their potential effect on the raising of awareness of the need for an eventual collective transformation of tourism from the point of view of demand. Identifying changes in travel intention to visit mass tourism beach destinations, as a result of the attitudinal change towards risk during a global health crisis, allows us to make practical recommendations to managers of tourist destinations and businesses on how to approach their planning and marketing according to responsibility and sustainability criteria in a post-COVID scenario.

Literature review

The COVID-19 pandemic as a driver of critical alternatives for the transformation of the global tourism system

Diseases and epidemics have always had the ability to transform societies, due to their demographic effects as well as their impact on productive systems, lifestyles (Morens et al., 2009) and even worldviews. In the recent past, tourism has been especially sensitive to epidemics (SARS, MERS, etc.), which have had economic effects and reduced the volume of international tourist arrivals with varying degrees of significance (Burns et al., 2006). Pandemics have been on the rise in the 21st century, and this has been interpreted by the increase in globalization and global change processes, of which tourism is the driving force (Allen et al., 2017; Wallace et al., 2018). Among the factors with the greatest incidence in the appearance and spread of epidemics are the increased population concentration and density that accompanies the urbanization process (Connolly et al., 2020), increased mobility of the world's population, greater interconnection between urban centres as a result of improved transport connectivity (Hufnagel et al., 2004), development of global transport networks that act as transmission vectors for pathogens, loss of biodiversity in many natural environments bringing animals and humans into ever closer contact (Pongsiri et al., 2009), and increased meat consumption and production (Labonte et al., 2011). In addition, some indications suggest that the impact of climate change will contribute to increasing the frequency of pandemics and disease outbreaks in the coming years (Ebi et al., 2017; Kavanagh et al., 2019).

Although the resilience of tourism to external forces such as disease or economic crisis is very high (Broud and Saarinen, 2019), the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the tourism sector is unprecedented (Gössling et al., 2020). At the time of writing this paper, the COVID-19 pandemic had infected 110 million people and produced 2.4 million deaths (Center for Systems Science and Engineering, 2020) and the different waves of the disease had generated numerous international, regional and local restrictions, harming national economies and affecting all parts of the value chain of the tourism and transport sector.

Initial studies of the impact on the tourism sector carried out during the first wave of the pandemic spoke of devastating effects on tourism as a whole, especially in the air transport, cruise and accommodation sectors. The UNWTO suggested a decrease in international tourism arrivals of between 20 and 30% in 2020 compared to the same period in 2019, and calculated a drop of 70% between the months of January and August 2020 (UNWTO, 2020).

In recent decades, tourism research has included new perspectives derived from what is known as the critical approach to social science research (Ateljevic et al., 2005; Bianchi, 2009; Tribe, 2008). Understanding of the tourism phenomenon and its relationship and interaction with

society from critical perspectives raises a new interpretive framework of reality which questions the notion that the social context of tourism has evolved "naturally" and suggests that, on the contrary, it is a social construction (Bramwell and Lane, 2014). Social processes such as tourism must also be analysed from the incorporation of subjective dimensions that allow understanding of different points of view, worldviews and practices derived from the lived experience, values and beliefs of individuals. In fact, without taking into account these subjective elements, such as way of life, perceptions, discourses or life perspectives, which allow identifying social processes based on personal trajectories, it is not possible to broaden our gaze towards alternative visions of development (Blomley, 2006). This critical perspective is also crucial to understanding personal reactions and lifestyle changes in times of global crisis such as that produced by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite widespread acknowledgement that, as soon as the virus is controlled, activity will resurface strongly, it is also believed that the crisis has generated lessons on the resilience and vulnerability of the tourism system, conveying a clear message regarding future crises with the potential to be even more devastating than COVID-19, such as those associated with climate change. From this point of view, the starting point of the post-COVID-19 recovery should not be framed as a return to "business as usual", but rather as an opportunity to do things differently, and to rethink the global tourism system in line with sustainability objectives (Gössling *et al.*, 2020). This will require knowledge of tourism demand behaviour during and after the pandemic, and this is the focus of our study.

Towards a new collective consciousness in tourism?

Given the important economic and social effect of pandemics on tourism, it is critical to analyse the extent to which tourist destinations are prepared to deal with changes in demand resulting from fear of travel in the aftermath of an epidemic crisis. From a critical perspective, the COVID-19 pandemic has been interpreted as an element of transition to sustainability that is generating new sensitivities among the population, which suggests new scenarios for understanding tourism. The effect of the crisis on our vision of the world may induce individuals to turn their backs on the selfish, consumerist perspective, and conceive tourism as a transformative social force rather than a market opportunity (Benjamin *et al.*, 2020). Other authors believe that the COVID-19 crisis expands the global consciousness of humanity, helping to make people understand that we are global beings who must act beyond our own particular interests, overcome the disease in co-responsibility, and change the world from a shared common fund (Galvani *et al.*, 2020). The transition towards sustainability is occurring to the extent that resilience and the mobilization of adaptive capacities after the crisis episode generate spaces for transformation and create opportunities to reconsider certain practices (Ioannides and Gyimóthy, 2020). The effects of behavioural change and the creation of new regulations will have transformative consequences for the tourism sector, since the requirements of more locally-oriented and environmentally aware tourists will have to be taken into account. The evolutionary path of transformation in tourism (reset) will be possible if institutional innovation drives changes in both supply and demand (Brouder, 2020).

The changing mental framework towards sustainability in individuals is associated with the presence of three dimensions: ethics, consumption, and risk. The ethical dimension incorporates elements of social justice that confront preconceived ideas and respond to neoliberal principles in the way we understand the world and conduct tourism. The COVID-19 crisis is making us rethink our notion of globalization as an unstoppable force, the impossibility of detaching ourselves from the logic of continued growth, and the inescapable link between identity and consumption or capitalism as the most efficient system of managing resources (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020). The incorporation of plural worldviews and new relational ways of being can displace instrumental thinking and modern values of market-led economic growth and embrace alternative ways of understanding and managing global problems such as climate

change or overtourism (Jamal, 2019). The progressive emergence of a collective conscience also passes through attitudes of individual responsibility towards the protection of the planet that affect consumption.
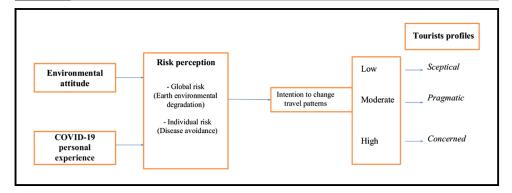
Environmental attitudes have been identified as one of the factors capable of bringing about decisive changes in individuals in the transition towards a sustainable society (Hedlund-de Witt *et al.*, 2014; Passafaro, 2020; Prillwitz and Barr, 2011). Attitudes are extremely important determinants of environmental behaviour that can drive diffusive effects on personal choices in various aspects of personal life (Thogersen and Olander, 2003). In tourism, general environmental attitudes can act on individual decisions to consume sustainable products in a number of ways. The effects of attitudes on consumption decisions can vary according to several conditioning elements, such as the influence of past experiences with respect to the individual's social and physical environment (Miller, 2005), personal characteristics (Hepler and Albarracín, 2014), and training and education (Kaiser and Fuhrer, 2003). The fear associated with travelling caused by health crises such as the coronavirus pandemic can leave deep-seated impressions that affect the way people think and feel (Zenker and Kock, 2020; Gössling *et al.*, 2020) and produce a psychological effect of fear of travelling that decreases motivation to travel or increases travel risk prevention and the adoption of self-imposed protective measures (Zheng *et al.*, 2021).

Potential changes in travel demand have been interpreted from different conceptual perspectives on the reduction of interest in travelling in times of epidemiological crisis. These perspectives, related to perceived risk, include the variation in the material conditions and economic well-being of individuals and the consequent effect on consumption, the widespread restrictions imposed, and the natural tendency of people to avoid contracting the infection in epidemic times. Among the adaptive responses that condition human behaviour to avoid infection are aversion to travel (Brunei and Wilson, 2020) and the establishment of psychosocial mechanisms by tourists to avoid contracting the disease when they do decide to travel: the perceived risk associated with health care in the destination area (Jonas *et al.*, 2011), the assessment of personal vulnerability to the disease (Wang *et al.*, 2019), the generation of self-protective behaviour mechanisms by the tourist to limit the risk of infection (Kuo *et al.*, 2008), and the assessment of the health security risk involved (Mertzanis and Papasthopoulos, 2021).

A number of studies have found that tourists have adopted measures during the COVID-19 pandemic to avoid the risk of contracting the disease (Kock *et al.*, 2020; Zenker and Kock, 2020). The pathogenic threat indicates that adaptive strategies to avoid risk may take place at three levels. In the first place, the presence of a disease encourages ethnocentric attitudes that favour intragroup relationships and collectivism as a way to avoid health risk and facilitate support for individuals in the group who contract the disease (Navarrete and Fessler, 2006), as well as attitudes associated with tourist ethnocentrism, or a preference for travelling to nearby as opposed to distant destinations (Kock *et al.*, 2019). Second, the activation of the behavioural immune system increases the negative perception of congestion and densely populated situations as involving a high risk of contagion, resulting in tourists preferring to holiday in remote, sparsely populated places (Wang and Ackerman, 2019). Third, the pathogenic threat generates fear of the unknown to avoid contagion with external groups perceived as potential carriers of disease in what has been defined as tourist xenophobia, that is, the perception of discomfort and anxiety associated with encountering strangers in foreign surroundings (Kock *et al.*, 2019).

Individual attitudes are considered general drivers of tourists' intention to change the way they travel (affecting aspects such as the frequency of travel, their travel budget or the maximum travel distance to destinations, and especially the preference given to safety concerns when choosing a destination, accommodation and mobility, or prioritising sustainable tourism products). Attitudes are also analysed here as factors influencing how risk perception leads to projected changes in travel to specific tourist places, such as beach destinations. Thus, we consider that changes in the intention to travel in the future are influenced by individual attitudes and are mediated through risk perception, as an adaptive response to crisis scenarios (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 Individual attitudes and the mediating role of perceived risk in travel behaviour during the COVID-19 pandemic

Methodology

Data collection

The collection of first-hand data was deemed a prerequisite for the fulfilment of the above-stated research objectives, and a quantitative approach was therefore chosen for the study. Between May and June 2020, we conducted a survey with a sample population of individuals who were resident in Spain during the COVID-19 pandemic and had undertaken at least one travel trip in the years 2018 and/or 2019, for the purposes of studying the role of COVID-19 in the adoption of new travel patterns among Spanish tourists. A travel trip is defined here both as an international trip away from Spain and as a domestic trip requiring an overnight stay. The selection criteria included a maximum travelling time lapse (people who have undertaken a recent trip during the last two years) with the hope that the experience would still be fresh in their minds, thus facilitating responses which help to identify future attitudes when asked about features of those trips. The survey was conducted via the internet, and the questionnaire was disseminated online, mainly through Facebook, and the sample was collected at random. Of the 505 respondents, 9 were excluded on the basis that they either did not travel or had failed to complete the questionnaire correctly; 496 valid responses were finally obtained. Based on a review of the literature, a questionnaire was created to obtain information for the purpose of identifying the factors that condition behavioural change in tourists during episodes of health crisis (see Table 1). The questionnaire opened with a paragraph informing the respondents of the characteristics and objectives of the study and the anonymous nature of the responses, and respondents were provided with an email address to which they could direct their questions, as well as recommended procedures for improving the reliability of the survey (Malhotra, 2008). The questionnaire was divided into four main sections in which the respondents were asked to respond to a number of statements according to a five-point Likert scale (with the exception of the last block of questions). The possible responses were as follows: (1) Totally disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Neither agree nor disagree; (4) Agree; and (5) Totally agree. The first section included questions about the respondent's personal experience with the disease and degree of personal, economic, psychological and health affectation, as well as questions about the impact of the pandemic on their vision of the world and way of life. The second section included questions about environmental concerns, to obtain information on the respondent's environmental attitudes. The questions in the third section aimed to determine the respondent's predisposition to change the way they travelled post-COVID-19 and related to various aspects of travel preferences. The last section of the questionnaire contained questions about the respondent's sociodemographic characteristics and the way in which they usually organize their tourist trips.

Measurements

Following the proposed conceptual framework, a construct of personal change related to the pandemic experience was built with the aim of analysing the influence of the pandemic crisis on

Table 1	Overview of the literature		
Items used to identify attitudinal factors		Authors	Year
COVID-19 experienced disease, Personal economic impact of COVID-19, Personal psychological impact of COVID-19 (anxiety), Direct relationship with COVID-19-infected persons, Indirect relationship with COVID-19-infected persons		Newly developed	
It has changed my view of the world		Adapted from Hedlund de-Witt et al.	2014
I want to live differently		Adapted from Hedlund de-Witt et al.	2014
I want to travel differently		Adapted from Kock et al.	2019
*Impact on travel behaviour**			
Tourism is a priority in my life, Criteria of sustainable products in choice destination, I will stay in small establishments, I will travel to highly-frequented tourist destinations, I will stay in small establishments		Newly developed	
I will travel less in the future		Adapted from Ivanova et al.	2021
I will spend less money when I travel		Adapted from Chebli and Foued	2020
I will travel closer to home		Adapted from Ivanova et al.	2021
Importance of health security criteria		Adapted from Chebli and Foued	2020
I will use public transport		Adapted from Ivanova et al.	2021
Environmental attitude			
The Earth is like a spaceship with very limited room and resources		Adapted from Dunlap et al.	2000
The balance of nature is very delicate and easily upset		Adapted from Dunlap et al.	2000
I am very concerned about environmental problems		Adapted from Dunlap et al.	2000
I worry about the environment when I make choices concerning my holiday travel		Adapted from Prillwitz and Barr	2011
Nature has value only because the human being is able to use and enjoy her		Adapted from Hedlund de-Witt et al.	2014
I am likely to change my holiday plans in response to global climate change		Adapted from Dunlap et al.	2000
Modifying the environment for human use can cause serious problems		Adapted from Prillwitz and Barr	2011
There is no limits to growth for nations like mine		Adapted from Prillwitz and Barr	2011
I like making an effort to contribute to a better environment		Adapted from Hedlund de-Witt et al.	2014
Humankind was created to rule over the rest of nature		Adapted from Prillwitz and Barr	2011
Technological advances will solve many environmental problems		Adapted from Prillwitz and Barr	2011
Problems like climate change are a threat to me and my family		Adapted from Prillwitz and Barr	2011

Note(s): *See also more recently Bratic et al. (2021)

behavioural change in tourists. The personal transformation construct includes variables related to environmental attitude and perceived risk of travel during a pandemic. The inclusion of personal environmental values was designed to link the respondent's ecological sensibilities to their travel behaviour, especially in relation to the selection of sustainable tourism products and services. Variables from the "New Ecological Paradigm" (NEP) scale developed by Dunlap et al. were used (Dunlap et al., 2000). Although this scale has been used in numerous previous tourism studies, to the authors' knowledge it has never been used to analyse the effects of pandemics on tourism behaviour until the development of this questionnaire in 2020. To shorten the scale, five variables were used, according to their level of correlation. The literature on destinations indicates that perceived travel risk after a pandemic cannot be measured with a single scale, despite the existence of generic studies on travel risk and anxiety (Reisinger and Mavondo, 2005). Nevertheless, four variables were chosen to study the respondent's perception of health security and risk of social contact. Finally, three additional variables related to world understanding, travel experiences during the pandemic and personal lifeworld were introduced. It is believed that both the perception of risk and the attitudes derived from the individual's personal lifeworld are relevant to explaining the behaviour of tourists in times of health crisis.

Data analysis

Descriptive analysis was conducted to describe the participant's demographic profile as well as their general travel behaviour response to the COVID-19 pandemic episode. To define sample segments with reference to attitudes, we combined factor and cluster analysis. In a first step,

based on 14 statements regarding attitudes towards certain travel risks, environmental attitude and personal experience with the COVID-19 pandemic, a preliminary principal component analysis was conducted to integrate attitudinal statements into a few groups and to establish the most reliable factorial solutions. Factor extraction was carried out with maximum likelihood, and for multi factor structures, a preliminary Oblimin rotation was run to test for any correlation between factors. When a correlation was <0.20, a Varimax rotation for orthogonal factors was run to obtain a simple structure. This method was chosen as a suitable analytical tool to test between factors. Items loading <35 in any of the factors or presenting high factor loadings in more than one factor were eliminated. A five-factor solution was obtained, each factor containing between two and four attitudinal statements, with factor eigenvalues greater than 1 and accounting for 65.5% of the total variance. The factor analysis exhibited a KMO measure of sampling adequacy of 0.753, which was considered satisfactory; and the construct validity (all factor loadings, except one, were greater than 0.500). Cronbach's alpha was then calculated to test factor reliability: items showing a lower inter-correlation with the factor or which consistently lowered the Alpha index were also eliminated. The scales used show good internal consistency, as the Cronbach's alpha index ranged from 0.80 to 0.83 (see Table 2).

The first factor was named "new environmentalism concern attitude" (23.1% of the total variance) and includes five variables that express a generic concern for the state of the environment, which requires a personal or collective response. This environmental attitude is linked to the feeling of the fragility of the planet, the immediate risk associated with climate change and involves a transformative and active environmental vision. The second factor, named "environmental travel attitude" (13.9% of the total variance) includes three variables that express how environmental concern is translated into changing travel intentions towards more environmentally friendly and sustainable tourism. The third factor, named "human exceptionality and techno-optimism attitude" (8.9% of the total variance) includes four variables that express scepticism about the risks associated with global environmental changes and the superiority of the human race. The fourth factor, named "COVID-19 worldview attitude" (6.5% of the total variance) includes three variables that express the intention to change the way of living and travelling as a result of having experienced the COVID-19 pandemic. Finally, the fifth factor, named "COVID-19 personal experience attitude" (5.6% of the variance), includes two variables that express the personal impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on individuals, both economically and psychologically. Considered together, the five factors express different attitudinal dimensions

Table 2 Attitudinal dimensions

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
COVID-19 economic impacts affected me	−0.025	0.155	0.071	0.106	*0.741*
COVID-19 generated anxiety to me	0.035	−0.082	0.073	0.06	*0.761*
COVID-19 changed the way I see the world	0.222	−0.066	0.101	*0.625*	0.376
I want to live in a different way than I have done until now	0.112	0.115	0.009	*0.842*	0.008
I want to travel for tourism in a different way than I used to	−0.012	0.157	−0.02	*0.834*	0.023
I consider the environment when making travel decisions	0.223	*0.836*	−0.03	*0.13*	0.107
I take into account climate change when making travel plans	0.154	*0.871*	0.008	0.056	0.006
I am very concerned about environmental issues	0.514	*0.595*	−0.019	0.092	−0.037
The balance of nature is very delicate and easy to upset by human activities	*0.707*	0.13	−0.197	0.028	−0.001
The Earth is like a "spaceship" with only limited room and resources	*0.328*	0.246	−0.017	0.111	−0.171
Problems like climate change are a threat to me and my family	*0.676*	0.279	0.004	0.089	0.049
We will need to make sacrifices in our lifestyles to reduce environmental problems	*0.709*	0.187	−0.173	0.088	0.045
Modifying the environment for human use cause serious problems	*0.737*	−0.031	−0.131	0.022	0.035
The main reason for the existence of plants and animals is to support people	−0.072	0.118	*0.693*	0.089	0.159
There are no limits to growth for nations like mine	−0.174	0.121	*0.721*	−0.001	0.144
Humankind was created to rule over the rest of nature	−0.248	−0.12	*0.723*	−0.042	0.097
Technological advances will solve many environmental problems	0.013	−0.164	*0.613*	0.002	−0.182

Note(s): Extraction method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation method: Varimax. Entries in italics indicate a loading of more than 0.350 on the appropriate component

that can condition the way tourists will live and travel in the future. The factors suggest that both global attitudes and personal experiences in times of health crises affect the way that tourists understand or interpret the world.

In order to understand how future changes in tourists' travel intentions in a pandemic context are driven, the concept of risk is used here. In this study, the perceived risk is considered to be associated with travel attitudes in two ways. On the one hand, environmental attitudes are considered to be related to the perceived risk based on the fear that certain forms of travel may contribute to the degradation of the planet. On the other hand, attitudes derived from personal contact with COVID-19 are considered to be related to perceived risk because they increase or decrease the fear of contracting the disease during holidays.

In the next step, the set of 5 factors was reduced and used to segment the sample into three different attitudinal clusters. These clusters were sorted and named according to their degree of connection with an environmental attitude and related to the personal experience of the COVID-19 pandemic. Then, a one-way ANOVA technique was used to examine the differences between the three groups of tourists in their intention to change their way of travel and their intention to visit mass beach destinations in the future. Finally, five regression models were carried out to assess the association between attitudes and risk of travel in a pandemic context. The models show that previous personal attitudes act as a predictor of risk-driven changes in the way tourists travel in the future.

Findings and discussion

Descriptive analysis

The respondents were resident in Spain; 33.7% were men and 66.3% were women, mostly falling into the 35–45 and 46–54 age groups (34.9 and 25.8%, respectively). Most of the respondents had an intermediate level of education: 53.5% had completed secondary education, while 33% were graduates (33.0%). At the time of the survey, 79.0% of the people surveyed were working, while 21.0% either did not work or were unemployed; 37.9% of the respondents described themselves as left-wing (see Table 3).

The descriptive analysis of the variables that enable us to determine the impact and personal experience of COVID-19 indicate that the majority of individuals had little direct relationship with the disease ($M = 2.68$ and $SD = 1.40$), and a moderate knowledge of cases of distant acquaintances ($M = 03.33$ and $SD = 1.41$). However, the disease had a significant economic ($M = 3.78$ and $SD = 1.21$) and psychological ($M = 3.66$ and $SD = 1.17$) impact on the respondents, whose vision of the world changed ($M = 3.72$ and $SD = 01.05$), as did their intention to travel differently in the future, although somewhat less so ($M = 3.14$ and $SD = 01.15$). Finally, the respondents affirmed that tourism was still a basic priority in their lives ($M = 3.68$ and $SD = 1.13$), that they would not travel less than before the health crisis ($M = 02.21$ and $SD = 01.06$), and would not spend less money on travel ($M = 2.41$ and $SD = 01.11$). However, they also indicated that in the future they would change their travel behaviour in certain aspects such as giving weight to health security criteria in their choice of destination ($M = 4.20$ and $SD = 0.92$), choosing destinations and products perceived as sustainable ($M = 3.94$ and $SD = 0.84$), staying in small establishments ($M = 3.34$ and $SD = 0.95$), travelling closer to home ($M = 3.22$ and $SD = 01.16$), going to highly frequented tourist sites ($M = 02.45$ and $SD = 0.94$), and using public transport to access tourist destinations ($M = 3.13$ and $SD = 01.02$).

Attitudinal segmentation

The main instrument for the segmentation of tourists' attitudes was a cluster analysis based on general environmental concerns, specific environmental travel concerns, and COVID-19 attitudinal change in the personal sphere. Three clusters, each with a clearly differentiated attitude, were identified (see Table 4). The first group was named "sceptical tourists". These

	Frequency	Average
Table 3	**Sociodemographic characteristics of the sample**	

	Frequency	Average
Gender		
Man	167	33.7
Woman	329	66.3
Age		
<25	28	5.6
25–34	109	22.0
35–45	173	34.9
46–54	128	25.8
>54	58	11.7
Total	496	100.0
Education		
Primary	35	7.0
Secondary	265	53.5
Bachelor's degree	164	33.0
Master's or PhD	32	6.5
Total	496	100.0
Political ideas		
Conservative	35	7.1
Left	188	37.9
Centre	89	17.9
Ecologist/Green	54	10.9
Other	366	26.2
Total	496	100.0
Working		
Yes	392	79.0
No	104	21.0
Total	496	100.0

tourists show an intention to continue with their previous travelling habits. This group is also characterised by having suffered the economic impacts of COVID-19, but not the psychological impacts. Despite increasing global environmental concern after experiencing the pandemic, their future travel intention remains mainly unchanged, and they do not intend to take into account health risk criteria or the existence of sustainable products and services as a condition when choosing a holiday destination in the future. The second group was named "pragmatic tourists". This group is strongly concerned about the environment and they have experienced few personal impacts during COVID-19. Tourists in this group intend to follow strict risk prevention measures when choosing a tourist destination in the future, but they do not intend to change their way of life substantially in the long term. The third group of tourists was named "concerned tourists". This group has a higher level of environmental sensitivity and suffered a severe negative personal experience with COVID-19. Concerned tourists express their intention to substantially change the way they live and travel, and they also want to reduce health risks and take sustainability criteria into account in their future travels.

Comparison of cluster characteristics in terms of socio-demographic factors, tested using Pearson Chi-square tests, revealed only small statistically significant differences between the segments. Age, education, ideology and travel preferences were variables that generated significant behavioural differences among the respondents (see Table 5). The younger people accorded greater priority given to tourism after COVID-19 than the older people ($F = 4.67$, $p < 0.001$), and those who tended to visit mass tourism destinations accorded greater importance to tourism in their lives than those who visited these destinations less ($F = 7.95$, $p < 0.000$). On the

Table 4 Final cluster centres: average environmental and personal experience with COVID-19

	C1. Sceptical	C2. Pragmatic	C3. Concerned
I take into account climate change when making travel plans	3.33	4.56	3.05
I am very concerned about environmental issues	4.2	4.45	4.52
We will need to make sacrifices in our lifestyles to reduce environmental problems	4.43	4.85	4.3
Problems like climate change are a threat to me and my family	4.56	4.01	3.56
COVID-19 changed the way I see the world	3.67	4.25	4.28
COVID-19 economic impacts have affected me	3.23	4.29	4.36
I will take into account Health security criteria when choosing a tourist destination	4.12	4.95	3.52
I will take into account the existence of sustainable products and attractions when choosing a tourist destinations	4.05	4.56	3.65
COVID-19 generated anxiety to me	3.35	4.26	3.24
I want to travel for tourism in a different way than I used to	2.29	4.39	3.44
I want to live in a different way than I have done until now	2.45	4.67	4.65

Table 5 Results relating to differences of social and cultural variables on tourist groups

	(a) Sceptical tourists	(b) Pragmatic tourists	(c) Concerned tourists	Chi Square	p-value
Sex				Non sig	
Men	36.1	38.3	29.8		*0.000*
Women	62.3	61.7	70.2		*0.000*
Age (Mean)	40.1	42.7	41.6	*6.736*	*0.000*
Education				Non sig	
Primary	4.9	1.0	1.2		0.671
Secondary	16.4	13.7	9.5		0.483
Bachelor's degree	55.7	54.1	51.6		0.376
Master's or PhD	23.0	31.1	37.7		0.845
Political ideas				19,914	*0.001*
Conservative	13.1	5.5	6.7		*0.003*
Left	29.5	44.3	35.3		*0.001*
Centre	21.3	18.6	16.7		*0.001*
Ecologist/Green	4.9	7.1	15.1		*0.002*
Other	31.1	24.6	26.2		*0.005*
Frequency of travel to mass destinations				*18,798*	*0.004*
Never	8.2	7.7	7.1		*0.002*
Sometimes	11.5	18.0	19.0		*0.004*
Regularly	19.7	23.5	36.1		*0.002*
Often	42.6	29.0	32.9		*0.001*
Always	18.0	14.8	11.9		*0.004*

Note(s): Italics values represent the statistically significant values

other hand, no significant differences were observed regarding the changes brought by the pandemic in the personal lifeworld of those surveyed. The graduates were more inclined to change the way they travelled in the future compared to the respondents with secondary education ($M = 3.81$ vs 2.71). The respondents who vote for Green political parties declared a greater intention to change than those who described themselves as left-wing or conservative voters ($M = 3.69$ vs 3.11 and 3.31, respectively).

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) is used to analyse the differences in the opinions of the three groups of tourists regarding their intention to change the way they live and travel in the future, the intention to take specific measures to avoid risk of getting sick when travelling in a pandemic

context, and their intention to visit mass beach destinations in the future. The results indicate that, in contrast to limited differences in terms of socio-demographic characteristics, clear links between attitudes and future travel intention patterns were identified. Therefore, it can be stated that the three groups of tourists respond to very contrasting profiles. Concerned tourists express a stronger intention to change their way of life and travel in the future. These tourists intend to take strong preventive measures to avoid risk when travelling and reject visiting mass tourist beach destinations. They perceive mass beach destinations as risky places, both because of their global impact on the environment and the fear of getting sick when visiting them. In a similar vein, they state that they will travel less frequently (2.935) and to nearby destinations (3.54), their preference for small tourism establishments (3.53) and for destinations offering sustainable products (4.27) (see Table 6).

From a diametrically opposed point of view, sceptical tourists have no intention to change the way they travel in the future and they are the least concerned with taking precautionary measures when traveling in a pandemic context. These tourists do not prefer to travel to nearby destinations (2.67) and do not show much interest in aspects relating to health security (2.74) or sustainability (2.93) when choosing a holiday destination. In addition, they express the strongest intention to visit mass beach destinations in the future (2.77) and give their family and friends the strongest recommendations to visit them (2.69).

Pragmatic tourists show an intention to prevent risk when travelling in a pandemic situation, but they are not interested in changing the way they live and travel in the future in the long term. Thus, tourism still remains a priority in their lives (3.64), and they do not intend to reduce their future travel budget (2.20) nor the frequency of travel (2.11). However, they express a clear intention to strictly follow risk prevention measures when travelling during the pandemic context. For example, they intend to use small accommodation establishments (3.24), and to choose future destinations according to health criteria (4.28) and sustainability products offered (3.83). Furthermore, these tourists have less intention to visit (2.44) and recommend (2.55) mass tourism beach destinations. Given that this group of tourists regularly visited mass beach destinations before the COVID-19 pandemic, it can be hypothesised that they will return once the current risk conditions are over.

The individual's temporal or permanent will to change their lifestyle shown in, respectively, pragmatic and concerned tourists suggests that experience with COVID-19 is accompanied by a

Table 6	Cluster differences of future preferences and the intention to visit beach mass tourism destinations				
	C1. Sceptical n = 61 (12.3%)	C2. Pragmatic n = 183 (36.9%)	C3. Concerned n = 252 (50.8%)	Mean n = 496	Sig
Tourism is a basic priority in my life	3.62	3.64	3.71	3.68	0.777
I want to travel less frequently than before	2.11	1.93	2.93	2.21	*0.000*
I will spend less money on travel for tourism	2.34	2.20	2.55	2.40	*0.004*
I will travel to nearby destinations	2.67	2.98	3.54	3.22	*0.000*
I will take into account health security criteria when choosing a tourist destination	2.74	4.28	4.50	4.20	*0.000*
I will take into account the existence of sustainable products and attractions when choosing a tourist destination	2.93	3.83	4.27	3.94	*0.000*
On my tourists trips I will stay in small establishments	2.84	3.24	3.53	3.34	*0.000*
I will use public transport	3.13	3.16	3.11	3.13	0.836
I will travel to destinations frequented by many tourists	2.67	2.48	2.38	2.45	0.830
I will travel to beach mass tourism destinations	2.77	2.44	2.53	2.52	0.208
I will recommend beach mass tourism destinations to my family and friends	2.69	2.55	2.58	2.58	0.756

Note(s): Italics values represent the statistically significant values

process of personal reflection. This is consistent with the results of other studies that indicate that changes in consumer perceptions, preferences and travel attitudes are fundamentally explained by the pandemic (Page *et al.*, 2011; Peters *et al.*, 2020), and suggests that personal experiences during the crisis have had an impact of a magnitude sufficient to provoke a change in the way they think and feel (Zenker and Kock, 2020), with the associated repercussions for the individual's personal lifeworld and maintaining it through what Hollinshead has termed "worldmaking" actions (Hollinshead *et al.*, 2009).

Some of the results referred to concerned and pragmatic tourists– intention to travel less frequently in the future and intention to travel to closer places in the future – suggest that those tourists react by assuming collectivist and ethnocentric attitudes, giving preference to short trips over long-distance travel (Kock *et al.*, 2019). Travelling to nearby places is interpreted as a mechanism to control the otherness and the unknown associated with travel, especially in contexts where cultural and social differences are considerable. This result is consistent with recent studies of travel demand behaviour in Spain (Hosteltur, 2020), which point to greater interest in travel to domestic destinations than long international trips. Disinterest in travel can be explained by the wish to avoid the risk of contracting the disease. Together, these two aspects reveal the existence of a feeling of fear of the unknown interpreted by Kock *et al.* as an attitude of tourist xenophobia in times of health crisis (Kock *et al.*, 2019). Empirical evidence from other contexts supports the results obtained in our study in the fact that reducing travel distance from home makes tourists feel safer (Enger *et al.*, 2020), but contradicts the increased use of private transport, which in our study has no significance (Ivanova *et al.*, 2021; MMGY Travel Intelligence, 2020). In short, the predisposition of Spanish consumers to travel less and closer to home can be interpreted as a reactive strategy to temporarily reduce their risk of contracting the disease, especially in the case of the pragmatic tourists.

On the other hand, a preference for consuming products and services perceived as sustainable is observed in pragmatics and concerned tourists. In this respect, the results concur with those obtained in other studies that show the influence of attitudes on the consumption of specific forms of sustainable tourism (Huang and Liu, 2017; Lu *et al.*, 2016), and the motivation to carry out sustainable environmental practices (Luo and Deng, 2008; Prillwitz and Barr, 2011).

It is remarkable that sceptical tourists are not concerned about the variables related to evolutionary adaptation to the risk of becoming ill, reducing tourism spending, reducing use of public transport, travel to highly frequented destinations, or staying in small establishments. It is especially interesting that no significant correlation is observable in the intention to use health as selection criteria to select destinations. This approach is consistent with the results of other studies which show that, despite the fact that the pandemic seems to generate concern and uncertainty in multiple aspects of the daily lives, people continue to have a positive attitude to travel and do not express anxiety in doing so (Wachyuni and Kusumaningrum, 2020). From the point of view of destination management and business strategies, this aspect is also interesting, given that one of the most widespread measures in Spain to date to promote tourism recovery and establish safe travel corridors has been to ensure the health security of tourist attractions and accommodation. The results suggest that mass tourism destinations in Spain and the associated forms of accommodation and transportation are perceived as safe for sceptical tourists.

The role of attitudes in the tourists' adaptive response to the perceived risk to travel

To improve understanding of attitudinal influence on the perceived risk of travel, five regression models were carried out using the linear regression technique (see Table 7). In the models, adaptation to risk in different travel situations is examined from a multilevel theoretical perspective and translated to three composite scores obtained from three attitudinal dimensions detected through factor analysis (new environmentalism concern, human exceptionality and techno-optimism attitude, and COVID-19 personal experience attitude).

Table 7	Regression of attitudes on risk to travel in a pandemic context			
Independent variable		*Beta*	*t-value*	*Prob*
Model 1: Tourist density risk $R^2 = 0.084$				
Attitudes				
New environmentalism concern		−0.129	−2.992	*0.003*
Human excepcionality and techno-optimism		0.254	5.911	*0.001*
COVID-19 personal experience		0.46	1.147	0.551
Intercept		1.042	6.3	*0.001*
Model 2: Proximity to destinations risk $R^2 = 0.108$				
Attitudes				
New environmentalism concern		0.124	2.906	*0.004*
Human excepcionality and techno-optimism		−0.162	−3.794	*0.000*
COVID-19 personal experience		0.104	2.198	0.164
Intercept		1.445	10.1	*0.001*
Model 3: Health security risk $R^2 = 0.085$				
Attitudes				
New environmentalism concern		0.232	5.371	*0.000*
Human excepcionality and techno-optimism		0.32	0.732	0.465
COVID-19 personal experience		0.79	1.824	0.694
Intercept		1.215	9.5	*0.001*
Model 4: Lodgement size risk $R^2 = 0.057$				
Attitudes				
New environmentalism concern		0.96	2.209	0.284
Human excepcionality and techno-optimism		−0.138	−3.163	*0.002*
COVID-19 personal experience		0.003	0.074	0.921
Intercept		1.345	7.8	*0.001*
Model 5: Sustainable criteria risk $R^2 = 0.240$				
Attitudes				
New environmentalism concern		0.191	4.848	*0.000*
Human excepcionality and techno-optimism		−0.33	−0.837	0.415
COVID-19 personal experience		0.89	2.258	0.244
Intercept		3.942	119.26	*0.000*

Note(s): Italics values represent the statistically significant values

The model shows that the attitudes based on technological optimism are associated with a lower perceived risk of travel in a pandemic context. This attitude is negatively associated with the risk of disease (for instance, expressing the intention to travel to nearby destinations and taking into account the size of the establishment) and positively associated with high density (travelling to places visited by many tourists). Individual attitudes can be considered a driver for the risk adaptive response in specific groups of tourists. Thus, sceptical tourists do not avoid density, do not take into account the precautionary principle when travelling, and are not very concerned about the risk of getting sick during the holidays. On the other hand, as shown in the case of pragmatic and, especially, concerned tourists, the environmental concern-based attitude is positively related with the risk of disease (safety criteria and lodging in small accommodation facilities) and sustainable consumption of tourist products, and is negatively associated with high density (travel to places where there are many tourists). Finally, the attitudes derived from personal experience with COVID-19 have no causal relationship with the perceived risk.

Discussion

The results of the present study contribute novel empirical elements that enrich the academic debate on social progress in the transformation of tourism and the possibilities of promoting a reset from the demand side. Above all, we can affirm that Spanish tourists are changing the way they travel as a result of a changed vision of the world. Our study results corroborate the belief that personal attitudes can influence the perceived benefits of a certain activity or action. Consequently, in the case of

Spanish tourists, individuals who manifest ecocentric positions (concerned and pragmatic tourists) may exhibit a propensity to change in various spheres of life, and their adoption of sustainability criteria may influence their choices (Thogersen and Olander, 2003; Passafaro, 2020).

This suggests a potentiality for a novel travel ethic that demonstrates a certain receptivity to alternatives that require "a systematic overhaul of established institutions, imaginary and modes of living" (Kallis, 2018), such as degrowth; or, as proposed by social tourism, that increase interest in the local aspect of tourism, in response to awareness of the importance of community and social interactions during the pandemic crisis, as well as the fragility and low reliability demonstrated by global tourism (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020). However, the collective generalization of this mentality will be conditional on institutional and supply innovation being powerful enough to drive demand (Brouder, 2020). In fact, there are numerous global and local obstacles to the passage of intention or predisposition to real change in Spanish tourists. These include increased probability of forgetting the effects of the crisis with the passage of time (Farmaki, 2021), relaxation of fear as the population is immunized, and the pressure to return to business as usual exerted by the tourism industry (Hall *et al.*, 2020). It is also interesting to contrast this change in the attitudes towards future travel with the fact, contrasted in this study, that tourism continues to have a high priority in the lives of Spanish tourists, particularly among younger tourists, an aspect that can be linked to the contribution of tourism to quality of life and well-being (Dolnicar *et al.*, 2011).

One interesting contribution of the study is the finding that changes are not associated with personal experience with COVID-19. Contrary to what might be expected, future travel change intention was unaffected among individuals who either had personal experience of the disease or knew people who had. We are unable to establish conclusive explanations for this with the available data, and further research will therefore be needed to determine whether the media and communication context within which the disease has been socially constructed has influenced how it is perceived by Spanish consumers.

The present study shows that temporal adaptation to the risk of illness plays a fundamental role in a pandemic context, especially in tourists characterized by a pragmatic attitude. It will be necessary to continue to analyse whether this effect manifests as a temporary response attitude, as the authors suggest for pragmatic tourists, or is due to a long-term consumption pattern related with environmental attitudes, in the case of concerned tourists. It is interesting to note that, despite the existence of evidence of a predisposition to adopt sustainable consumption patterns, there are also symptoms of continuity with traditional practices such as those related with visiting mass tourism beach destinations. The trust placed in beach destinations as a safe place during pandemics, or the non-existent intention to change to more sustainable travel patterns in the case of sceptical tourists, challenge the view that mass tourism destinations may be the most affected in the short and medium term in the post-COVID-19 future. In terms of Spanish domestic tourism due, we attribute this not only to the popularity and physical proximity of these large resorts with their high concentration of accommodation, but also to the role of second homes in coastal tourist towns and cities, which have made a significant contribution to the building of the Spanish tourism urbanization model (González, 2008) and acted as leisure havens during the "new normal" periods following the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. Finally, it must be taken into account that mass tourist destinations continue to be an extremely important leisure option for the population segment with reduced travel budgets, in a context where prices have fallen as a result of the drastic, continuous fall in demand. This analysis of future acceptance of mass tourism destinations needs to be contrasted with further comparative studies in other international contexts. The nature and main features of temporary risk perception detected as a driver of future travel intention should also be analysed in future research. Other studies on sustainable tourism suggest the intervention of other determinants, beyond attitudes, that explain behaviour (Ajzen, 1991, 2015; Antimova *et al.*, 2012; Kredenster *et al.*, 2012). It is especially important to use the attitude behaviour-gap theory to further explore the association between tourists' risk perception and environmentally responsible attitudes and behaviours. This aspect will need to be corroborated with new field studies and specific analyses for the case of Spain in particular.

The results obtained allow us to make some recommendations for practitioners, the design of policies and tourism planning that can stimulate sustainability in the future behaviour of Spanish tourists. Although the COVID crisis has revealed the malfunctioning and existence of fundamental contradictions in the current production system, it does not seem reason enough to change the attitude of most Spanish tourists. Our analysis of the Spanish market provides empirical evidence that their main reason for attitudinal change, the risk of getting sick, will only be kept in mind on a temporary basis, as it is strictly associated with the period of time in which this risk is perceived, and it tends to dissolve in the longer term. Given that it seems difficult to articulate a generational change discourse from a demand perspective, we suggest the regulation of the tourism industry as an alternative. The establishment of tourism policies aimed at increasing sustainable tourism products, financial incentives and the identification of best business practices are some measures that can lead to transformative changes from the supply side. Considering that similar health crisis phenomena will be repeated in the future, as they are intimately linked to the climate crisis, it is important for destinations to learn the lessons of the COVID pandemics and use the information gathered on demand attitudes to better understand the behaviour of post-pandemic tourists, which will allow them to manage risk efficiently. Thus, the concept of resilience is useful for incorporating risk management in tourism, but also for generating more responsible actions towards future pandemic crises. Finally, the study detects tourists with an attitude to future travel that can be associated with a collective consciousness and an ethical relationship with the planet. The tourism industry must take into account the motivations of this segment, especially those that are not inherent to their personal worldview, and try to extend them to tourists as a whole through incentives or pricing policies.

The present study has a number of limitations which we do not believe to significantly affect the value of its contribution. In the first place, it must be taken into account that the study was conducted during an extraordinary period in which the uncertainty of the fight against the virus generates personal and collective doubts that may modify initial perceptions and, therefore, condition actual behaviour in the future. The exploratory nature of the study and the lack of similar international analyses does not allow us to contrast its results at a global level, though it offers a starting point for future research in other countries. There are also methodological limitations, since the field work was carried out between the first and second waves of the disease, at a time when the pandemic was remitting, possibly affecting the orientation of some responses, given the desire to recover normalcy and "normal" travel, and this may have influenced the life priority given to tourism.

Conclusions

The present study has made it possible to provide data from a sample of Spanish tourists, one of the main outbound tourist markets in the Mediterranean, making a contribution to knowledge of post-pandemic demand behaviour, particularly in the period of transitory recovery immediately following the first wave, a subject that has not yet been analysed. The analysis has made it possible to increase knowledge about the attitudes associated to the perception of risk that lead to change in the way tourists see the world and travel in the wake of personal experience of an episode of global crisis. The results support the differences in tourists' intention to change their travel patterns in the future, as well as their predisposition to consume sustainable tourism. The differences found between tourist groups are explained by their risk perception, which in turn is related to their previous environmental attitude. Thus, the tourists with a stronger environmental attitude (concerned) express a stronger intention of avoiding the risk of getting sick during the trip and prefer sustainable destinations to mass tourism beach destinations. In contrast, sceptical tourists, with low environmental concern, show a negative association with the perceived risk. Finally, pragmatic tourists recognise the risk during the pandemic context, but they do not express a clear intention to change the way they will travel once that risk disappears. In contrast, the personal experience of the pandemic has no significant effects on intention to change travel habits.

This result represents a step forward towards the social transformation of the collective consciousness, understood as a prior and essential step for structural change in the tourism system. The fact that the change in mentality is not related to personal proximity to the disease

suggests that the transformation has a social character. Managers of tourist destinations and attractions must take into account the importance of adaptation to the risk of illness in the collective response, aspects that may influence decision-making in choosing destinations once normality is restored. On the other hand, the absence of a relationship between tourist behaviour change and the perceived importance of health security, tourist congestion and accommodation size in travel choices, or the priority that respondents continue to give to tourism in their life, suggest attitudes of continuity with previous models.

The study provides evidence for a better understanding of the future behaviour of Spanish tourists according to the transformative character of their travel attitudes. On the one hand, Spanish tourists perceive density as having higher health risk levels, which supports a short term future scenario during the immediate effects of the COVID-19 pandemics, characterized by decreasing visitors to sun and beach and urban tourism destinations, a fall in international tourism flows, and a preference for travel to domestic, low-density nature destinations located away from big cities. However, as personal experiences with the COVID-19 pandemic are not associated with a change in individual worldviews and preferences for traditional holidays are still valid, the medium- and long-term future scenarios do not provide signals of the social assumption of sustainable concerns or changing travel attitudes in response to a global environmental conscience. Thus, Spanish tourists are not expected to change their behaviour permanently in response to awareness of anthropocene risks, nor to react against the neoliberal logics of the tourism industry. That is, at least in the case of the Spanish market, the radical alternative character proposed by the transformative turn in tourism perspectives, or in consumer development models based on the socialization of tourism or degrowth, are not envisioned in the long-term future.

The results help to understand the crossroads at which tourists currently find themselves, between the life change driven by their personal experience of the pandemic and a real transformation of behaviour that contributes to promoting a reset in tourism. The conditions for social impact are present, but their translation into travel behaviour change manifests more as a temporary adaptation than a structural transformation. The experience of the COVID-19 crisis has not been sufficient to change the declared travel habits of Spanish tourists. Therefore, progress towards the definition of a new tourism system that implies the effective transformation of demand will require applying policies and promoting institutional innovation and education to create new paths that facilitate transformative experiences.

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Further reading

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About the authors

Francesc González-Reverté has been a lecturer in tourism at The Open University of Catalonia (UOC) since 2003 and member of the NOUTUR research group. He is the author/co-author of several books on tourism and he has widely published sustainable issues in referred journals. His research experience spans a variety of tourism contexts, including sustainable tourism development, tourism impacts, event and festival tourism and tourism local development. His recent research interests include the social construction of tourism-phobia and overtourism, resident's attitude towards tourism, technology and tourists' perceived risk and mass tourism development. To date, he has published several books and more than 50 scientific articles in different languages. Francesc González-Reverté is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: fgonzalezre@uoc.edu

Joan Miquel Gomis-López is an associate professor in the Faculty of Economics and Business at the Open University of Catalonia (UOC). His research focuses on sustainable tourism, commercialization and changes caused by IT in tourism distribution channels, and innovation. He has published in reputed journals in such areas, including Annals of Tourism Research, Tourism Analysis, and Sustainability, among others.

Pablo Díaz-Luque is a lecturer of economics and business studies at the UOC (Universitat Oberta de Catalunya). Luque is responsible for Tourism and ICT subjects in the Tourism Degree, holds Master of Sustainable Tourism and ICT and PhD in Economic and Business Sciences from the University of Malaga ("Turismo de España" Scholarship from the Ministry of Economy). Luque is a member since 2015 of the NOUTUR Research Group (UOC). Previously, Luque was a member of the Research Group of Sociology and Local Policies at Pablo de Olavide University (Seville). Research focus: e-tourism, consumption and collaborative economy in tourism, tourism development.