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Tourists of the Future

Introduction

While tourist arrivals took a significant hit during the COVID-19 pandemic, international tourism has been quickly recovering, reaching 97% of pre-pandemic levels during the first quarter of 2024 (UNWTO, 2024). This is an indication that, while the pandemic might have temporarily restricted tourists' ability to travel, the demand for traveling continues to be strong. Traditionally, the 'wealthier industrialised world' has predominantly been responsible for both the supply and demand of tourism. However, in recent years, a gradual shift has occurred with new destinations beginning to challenge these traditional destinations. There is the expectation that 57% of all international tourist arrivals will be in emerging destinations by 2030 (UNWTO, 2017). The rise of the middle class has resulted in more of the world's population gaining access to leisure time and the means to increase international travel. Travel experiences in the past have typically consisted of sun, sand and surf type holidays. Tourists are no longer content with these passive activities, rather seeking more experiential and engaging travel experiences instead. This suggests a change in demand from the mass tourism holidays of the 1970s and 1980s to more individualised tourist experiences (Sharpley, 2018). Drivers of change contributing to these changes in travel demand include increased globalisation along with a variety of economic, social, political, technological and environmental trends (Dwyer *et al.*, 2008). Chapter 2 discusses the key drivers of change, along with several trends considered to have an impact on the future development of the international tourism industry. In addition, Chapter 3 demonstrates how tourists' motivations affect their travel behaviours. To follow up on these two chapters, this chapter explores important trends in the context of future tourist behaviour, namely virtual tourism, digital nomads, digital detox, slow tourism, and solo traveling.