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SOLO TOURISM AS AN EMERGING TREND IN THE TOURISM ECONOMY

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Introduction

- After the pandemic there was a desire to „travel for revenge” (Nirkow A., & Abbasian S., 2024)
- Solo tourism is a segment of the tourism market is on the rise, in conditions of loneliness and solitary life style, marked by people`s desire to be independent, free and eager to live new experience.
- The United Kingdom, Denmark, France, Germany, etc. are countries with significant potential for solitary tourism, as the share of single-person households is high.
- Solitary households recorded the most spectacular rise 2010-2019, increasing by 31%. And by 2040 estimated that it will be even higher, 1 in 10 people will live in solitude.
- About 84% (2024) of travelers are women, half of them were traveling alone without a companion, although the trend shows that packages intended for women in the solo tourism context have decreased significantly.
- Of the solo travelers, about 1/3 planned to travel alone 4-5 more times in 2025.

(Grand View Research, 2026; Rude J, 2020; Brittany Ferries, 2025; Acorn Tourism Consulting, 2024)

Introduction

- According to the provisions of the 2030 Agenda, but also of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG5 – Gender Equality), tourism can be considered a sector that would contribute to achieving this goal, but at the moment there are still great inequalities.
- Solo tourism is an important segment for the tourism market and an emerging trend in the tourism economy, especially highlighted after the COVID-19 pandemic.
- People have requested recovery services after the pandemic in health centers and spas.
- (Otegui-Carles, A., Araújo-Vila, N., & Fraiz-Brea, J. A. 2022; Jonas, L. C.,2022).

Introduction

Research purpose

The purpose of this study is to highlight the architecture of solitary tourism by delimiting the profile of the solitary tourist, analyzing the capabilities of the industry to connect to the needs of this segment of consumers, identifying the risks associated with solitary tourism and determining the role of digital technologies in tourism.

Methodological approach – includes qualitative and quantitative research aspects.

The analysis of the specialized literature, the studies carried out and the publications presented by entities active in the field, allows to outline the perceptions and needs of solo tourists as market subjects.

The study will highlight indicators to measure the global travel market reflected in the open access reports.

The synthesis of existing data creates a new methodological premise for research and new directions of the tourism economy.

Key results

Freedom is the foundation of solitary travel, in the context of issues related to security, cost and stigma. The role of digital tools is undeniable in the tourism industry, from the stage of identifying the need and the right tourism product to the consumption stage.

Solo tourism - definitions

- People who travel alone, having to travel alone, and those who choose to do it alone(Otegui-Carles, A., Araújo-Vila, N., & Fraiz-Brea, J. A. 2022)
- Traveling on their own, without other people on a long or short term, although they can admit participation in group trips (CBI, 2024).
- Solo tourism represents travel according to circumstances resulting from death or divorce, for self-discovery.
- Solitary trips can be an option for freedom, solitude, but also meeting new people or looking for a new meaning in life(Jonas, L. C. ,2022)

Tendences of solo tourism market

- **Business Research Insights, 2025:** The solo tourism market is forecast to reach USD 2.2 billion by 2026 and the 2035 budget to reach USD 4.28 billion.
- Solo tourism: 40-45% are tourists from Europe, and 30-33% are from North America.
- More than 22 million Americans over the age of 55 have traveled alone, and in Australia Encounter Travel (2023) achieved growth for luxury vacations for singles by 15%.
- In 2023, Exodus Travel (UK) served 50,000 solo tourists, Enterprise Travel (Australia) – 35,000 bookings for adventure tourism.
- **Grand Review Research, 2026; Brittany Ferries, 2025:** Trends in statistical evolution forecast that solo travelers will generate about USD 1508.2-1624.23 billion by 2033, about 3 times more than the data for the years 2024-2025 show.
- 37.18% is the market share of solo tourism in Europe, and France comprised 27.47% of European solo travel.
- Approximately 2/3 (64.7%) were domestic tourism, as a segment of solitary travelers.
- Leisure and recreational tourism accounted for 30.85% in 2025.

Determinants of solo tourism

Stimulants:

- Popularity Among Millennials and Gen Z to Boost the Market, influenced by social media and history.
- Increased Access to Individualized Travel Experiences Through Technology to Expand the Market by realizing personal interests and motivations to benefit from flexibility.
- According to data from The Global Digital Nomad Report 2024 - 15 million people work remotely and prefer to travel alone.
- Seeking opportunities for self-knowledge, recreation and freedom by people after the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The increase in the number of solo trips by women decreases the fear of loneliness to 59%.
- 90% of men feel safe, interested in history, viticulture, etc.

Hinder:

- Safety And Security Issues to Potentially Impede Market Growth
- UNWTO data shows that 48% of those who prefer solitary travel are concerned about their safety.
- For women who are lonely while traveling, 70%, safety remains a determining factor and 65% are bothered by higher costs.
- Also here, 24% feel guilt for not traveling with those close to them or 20% claim that their family was against it.
- Around 50% of solo tourists spend less than \$2000, 1/3 of U.S. women planned to exceed this spending threshold, while men - 45%.
- The cost of travel drives solo tourists to choose destinations.

Motivations for solo tourism

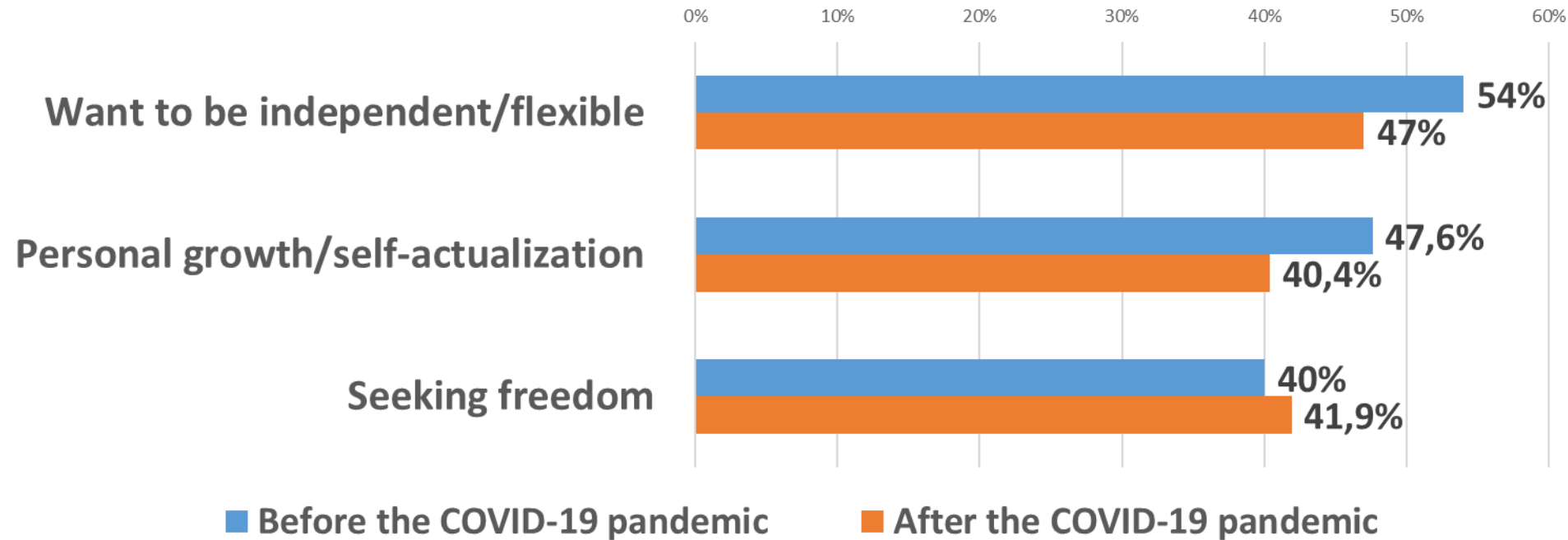
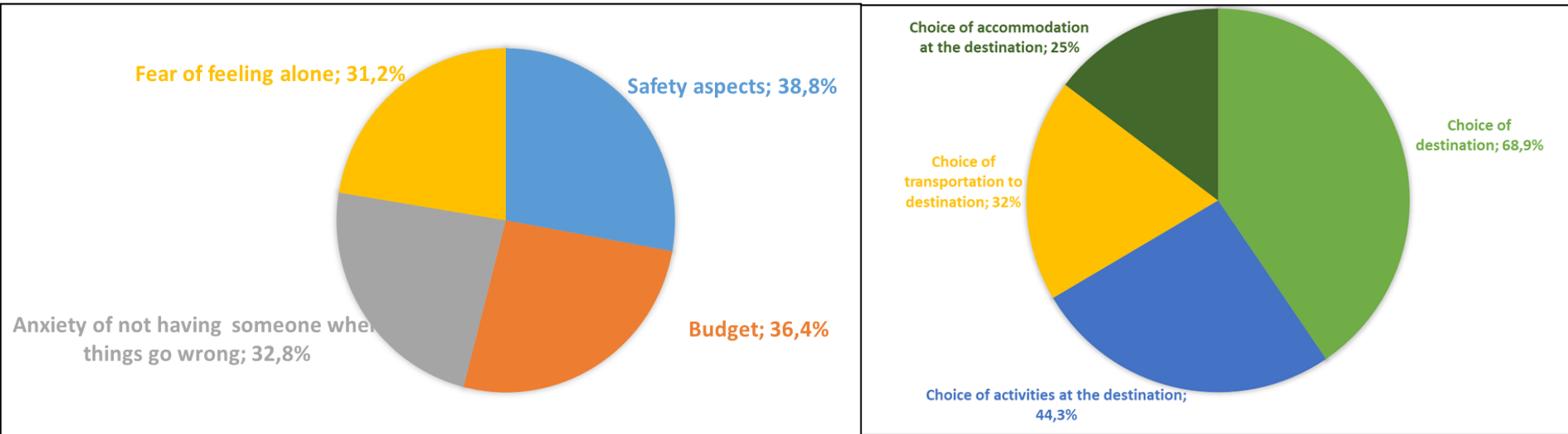


Figure 1. Top 3 solo travel motivations before and after the COVID-19 pandemic (february-march 2023)

Source: created by athor on based at the study Nirkow A., Abbasian S, 2024

Constraints for solo tourism



Constraints before the COVID-19 pandemic

Constraints during the COVID-19 pandemic

Figure 2. Top 4 travel constraints before and during the COVID-19 pandemic

Source: created by author on based at the study Nirkow A., Abbasian S, 2024

Why people travel solo

Reason	<55 years	55+ years	All
I want to see the world, and I don't want to wait for others	84%	64%	74%
I want to do what I want when I want	68%	57%	63%
I like the feeling of freedom and independence	57%	47%	52%
I want to meet new people	41%	43%	42%
Personal growth	42%	30%	36%
I have different interests than my friends	43%	37%	40%
My partner does not want to travel as much as I do	9%	13%	11%

Source: CBI, 2024

What is the most important to solo travelers (top 5)

1. Relaxing environment;
2. Low crime rates and safe areas;
3. General affordability;
4. Access to water;
5. Educational experience etc.

Women support accessibility, all-inclusive services and price reductions more than men.

(Skyscanner, 2024)

Profile of solo traveler in Europe

Top activity: culture, adventure, wellness.

- predominant solo tourists are females;
- 19% - pay luxury services;
- 44% - are most reduced budgets;
- 89% - reserved thier trips independently;
- 60% - preferred using the smartphones in the process of planning and researching the solo travels.
- Solo tourists in the UK consider technology important and are turning to sustainable tourism.
- Swedes emphasize quality services in solo travel. They are motivated by independence and freedom during their travels.(Acorn, 2024)

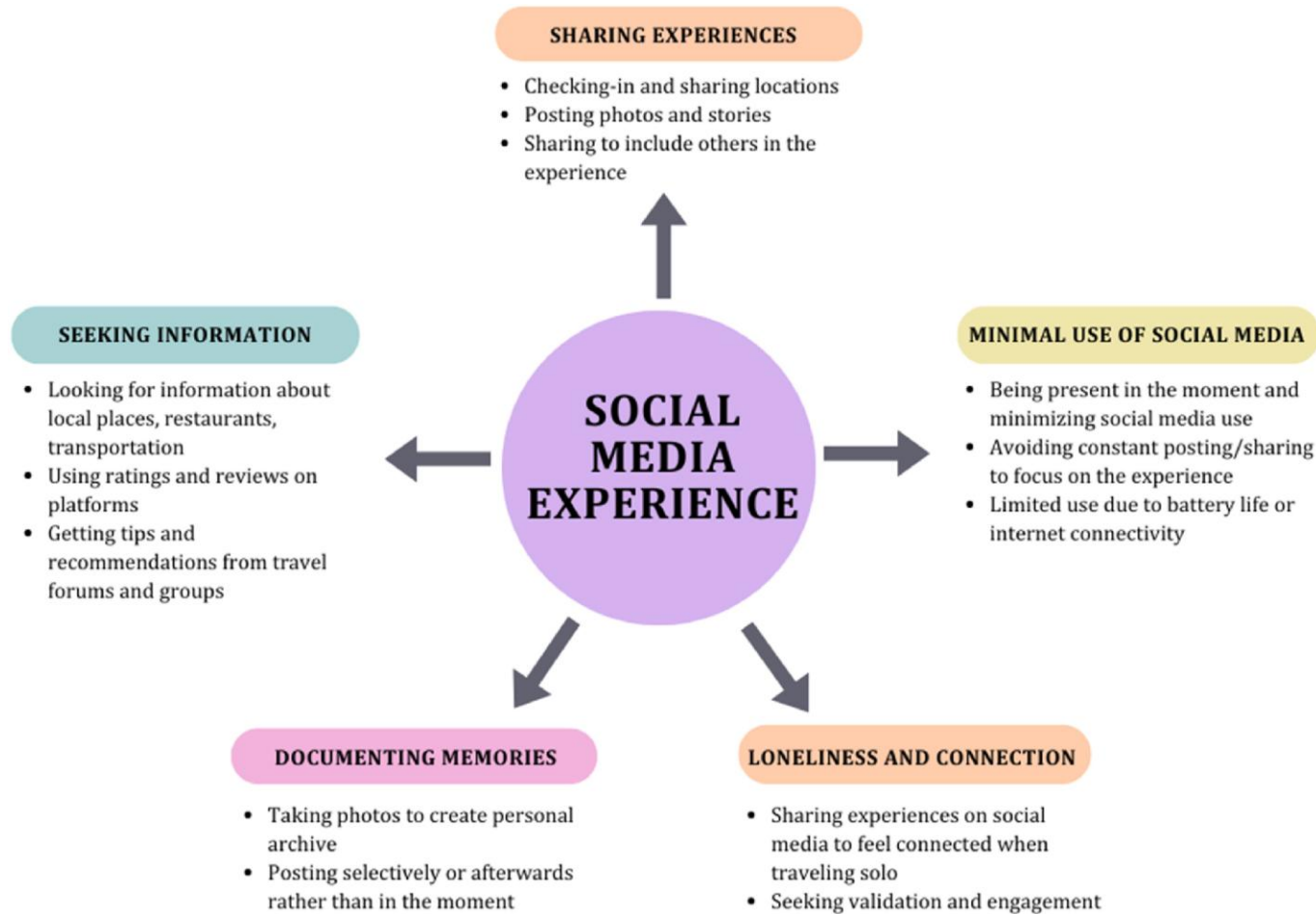


Figure 3. Themes of social media experience during solo travel.

Source: (Elnur, A., & Akgün, H. 2025)

Search country destination for solo tourism

- Social platforms are a means of communication in terms of solitary tourism. TikTok: 1.9 million videos with hashtag #solo travel;
- Google: research "solo travel", have a more than 40500 per month;
- "tour groups for solo travelers", increase at 200% in the last years;
- Instagram: users shared 9.9 million posts with #solotravel (Brittany Ferry, 2025; Explore, 2026)

Rank	Country	Continent	Annual searches
1	Japan	Asia	67,600
2	Thailand	Asia	51,900
3	India	Asia	42,800
4	Vietnam	Asia	22,900
5	Italy	Europe	19,420

Source: Explore, 2026

Search countries in Europe for solo tourists

Rank	Country	Annual searches
1	Italy	19,420
2	Ireland	15,480
3	Portugal	14,840
4	Spain	12,070
5	Iceland	11,660

Source: Explore, 2026

Opportunities for economic agents

- The efficient organization of trips taking into account personalized needs, gender risks, but also the costs incurred by solo travelers, become particularities of the development of the tourism industry in the future indispensable by SMM marketing.
- Japan is an example, which has demonstrated an increase in the flow of solitary tourists attracted by transportation infrastructure and special dining (Grand View Research, 2026), which shows that infrastructure components are elements of tourist attraction along with historic buildings or fascinating nature. Thus, developed economies are a potential place for those eager for independent travel.
- Iceland and Portugal have created opportunities for one-person room accommodations and solo tours, especially evident in the women's solo travel market, similar to the experience of Egypt's markets (Grand View Research, 2026). A benchmark for tour operators, which would take into account this important segment.
- The development of information and communication technologies favors safe and sustainable travel, and digital nomads are an important number for solitary tourism. Entities from countries with quality Internet services can benefit from these people from the perspective of solitary tourism.

Main conclusion:

- Millennials and Generation Z hold a significant share among solo travelers who pursue self-discovery and beautiful trips, they are passionate about technology and respond very well to digital marketing incentives.
- The large number of women who choose to travel on their own allows for the development of personal care and relaxation services (78%: Grand View Research, 2026).
- The desire to be independent while traveling is one of the basic reasons for traveling, along with the need for self-realization and self-knowledge.
- Most studies show that the manifestation of complete freedom while traveling is the vector for solitary tourism.
- This study nuances methodological premises for researching the particularities of solitary tourism, for which there are no continuous data, but rather fragmented statistics.