

## From Risk to Resilience: Tourist Loyalty and Sustainable Coastal Tourism after COVID-19 (2020–2025): A Bibliometric and Systematic Review

Constantina Alina Miloș (Ilie)<sup>1\*</sup>, Andreea-Daniela Moraru<sup>2\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>West University of Timișoara, Timișoara, Romania

<sup>2</sup>“Ovidius” University of Constanța, Faculty of Economic Sciences, Romania

### INTRODUCTION & AIM

The COVID-19 pandemic profoundly disrupted global tourism, with coastal destinations among the most severely affected due to their dependence on international mobility and seasonal concentration of demand.

Beyond its economic impact, the crisis exposed structural **vulnerabilities** related to **governance**, **environmental pressure**, and **destination management**, while simultaneously accelerating debates on **sustainability** and **resilience**.

Recent tourism research increasingly conceptualizes the pandemic not only as a **crisis** but also as a **catalyst for systemic transformation**.

In coastal contexts, tourist loyalty, trust, and risk perception have emerged as key behavioral mechanisms supporting recovery, while sustainability-oriented governance and digitalization represent structural pillars of long-term adaptation.

The **aim** of this study is to synthesize how academic research between 2020 and 2025 has conceptualized the relationship between perceived risk, tourist loyalty, and sustainable coastal tourism, and to identify dominant thematic patterns, theoretical developments, and managerial implications for post-pandemic resilience.

### METHOD

**Design.** Mixed-method study combining bibliometric analysis and systematic literature review (SLR).

**Data source.** Web of Science Core Collection.

**Sample.** 49 peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2020 and 2025.

**SLR procedure.** Study selection followed PRISMA 2020 guidelines (identification, screening, eligibility, inclusion).

**Analytical techniques:** Co-authorship and country collaboration mapping, Keyword co-occurrence analysis, Thematic mapping (centrality–density), Bibliographic coupling, Temporal trend analysis of research themes.

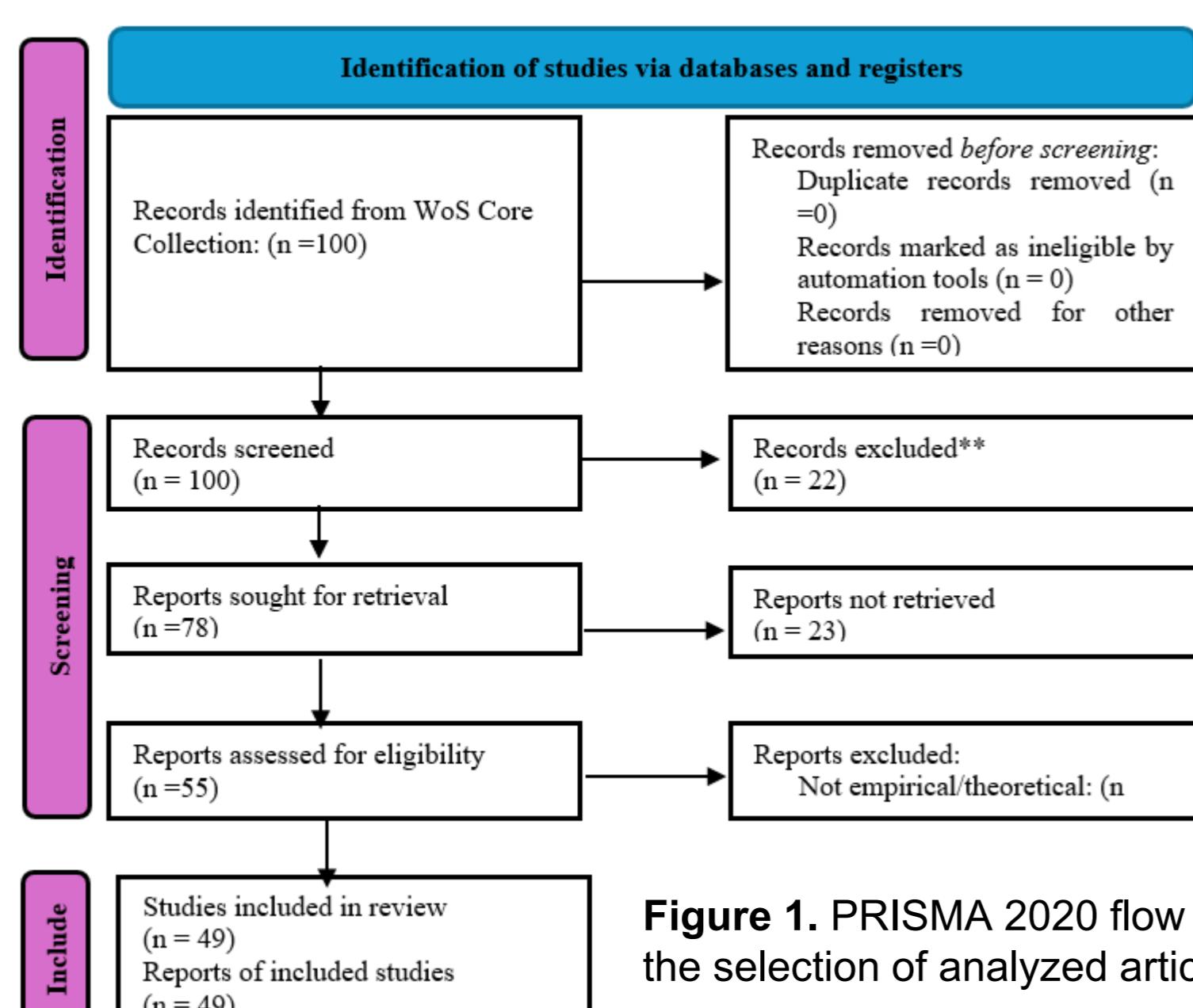


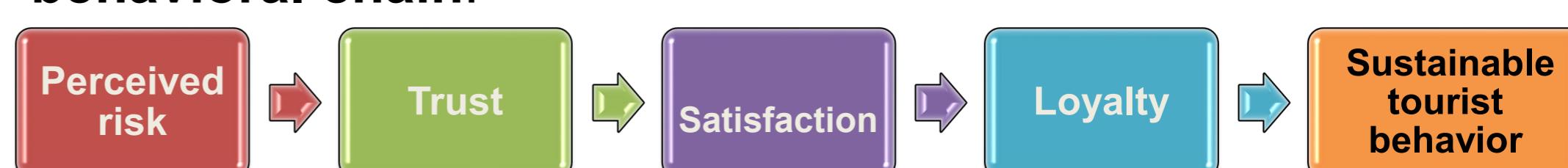
Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 flow chart for the selection of analyzed articles

### RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The bibliometric mapping revealed **three dominant thematic clusters**:

- Service quality, satisfaction, and tourist loyalty
- Perceived risk, trust, and behavioral intention
- Sustainability, governance, and resilience

The systematic review confirmed a consistent **causal behavioral chain**:



Temporal analysis showed a clear shift in research focus:

**2020–2021:** crisis impact, safety, travel restrictions, risk perception

**2022–2023:** behavioral adaptation, satisfaction, loyalty formation

**2023–2025:** sustainability, digital engagement, governance, and resilience

Tourist loyalty increasingly appears not merely as a marketing outcome but as a **mechanism of behavioral resilience**, stabilizing demand and facilitating the implementation of sustainable practices in coastal destinations.

Digital technologies (contactless services, online communication, smart destination tools) and sustainability policies jointly function as structural enablers of post-pandemic recovery.



Figure 2. Keyword co-occurrence network based on Web of Science publications (2020–2025). Colors indicate thematic clusters.

### CONCLUSION

This study reveals that tourist loyalty plays a central role in the post-COVID recovery of coastal tourism, acting as a behavioral buffer against uncertainty and risk.

Sustainability and digital transformation constitute the structural foundations of destination resilience.

Theoretically, the findings integrate micro-level psychological mechanisms (risk perception, trust, satisfaction) with macro-level sustainability governance. Methodologically, the study validates the complementarity of bibliometric mapping and systematic review for post-crisis tourism research.

### FUTURE WORK

Future research should:

- incorporate longitudinal and multivariate behavioral models;
- examine loyalty formation across different cultural contexts;
- integrate objective sustainability performance indicators;
- explore the long-term effects of digital engagement on destination resilience.