



Future Tourism Markets: Between Digitalisation and Humanity – “Coffee Road” Vision of Tourism

Renatas Milutis¹ , Alina Pestova² 

¹ Lithuanian Sports University, Kaunas, Lithuania

² Department of Tourism, International University of Tourism and Hospitality, Turkestan, Kazakhstan

Abstract

Relevance and novelty of the scientific approach. In recent decades, tourism has undergone fundamental changes that have changed the concept of travel and its social meaning. Global shocks – the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, the effects of climate change – have not only limited physical movement, but also prompted a new rethinking of the value and motives of travel. The modern tourist increasingly perceives travel not only as a geographical movement; it becomes a way to make sense of his relationship with the world, to express values and choices related to responsibility, technology, and sustainability. Bekele and Raj (2025) argue that travel today is a social and cultural investment that reflects the traveller’s self-concept and worldview. This paradigm shift suggests that future tourism must combine innovation with the need for authentic experiences.

Drawing on insights from Bekele and Raj (2025), Buhalis (2020; 2025), Gretzel (2022), OECD (2023), WTTC (2024), and others, the article discusses how digital technologies and artificial intelligence solutions are shaping a new travel culture, while highlighting the paradox between technological convenience and the need for authentic experiences. It analyses the sustainability discourse, travellers’ ecological awareness, and the phenomenon of digital fatigue, which is increasingly encouraging a return to humanity. In order to reveal how digitalisation and humanity can be reconciled in future tourism models, the article introduces and evaluates the concept of the “Coffee Road” – a form of gastronomic tourism that emphasises the connection with local culture, traditions, and sustainable choices. It provides an insight that this concept can become an innovative tourism model in which technology complements, but does not replace, human experience.

During the pandemic, the accelerating digitalisation has led to the integration of technology into almost all links of the tourism process. Buhalis (2025) emphasises that virtual experiences, artificial intelligence tools, and digital planning systems have become an indispensable part of the sector’s functioning. However, the dominance of technology has also highlighted the paradoxes accompanying travel: disappearing spontaneity, decreasing connection with local culture, and increasing digital fatigue. In addition, the growing ecological awareness of travellers (European Travel Commission, 2024) and sustainability requirements are forcing the tourism sector to search for new, responsible, and culturally meaningful forms of experiences. Considering these processes, the direction of gastronomic tourism, which combines local culture, traditions, and social connection, is becoming relevant. The concept of the “Coffee Road” emerges as one of the innovative models that offers the opportunity to combine technology with humanity and sustainability. This concept allows us to analyse a broader question – how can tourism remain modern, but at the same time be able to create authentic, valuable experiences.

Research problem. Modern tourism is experiencing a contradictory transformation: accelerating digitalisation increases the efficiency and accessibility of services, but at the same time weakens the dimensions of authentic travel experience – human connection, cultural depth, and spontaneity. Travellers, in response to the rise of technology



and increasing digital fatigue, are increasingly seeking sustainable and culturally meaningful experiences. At the same time, sustainability requirements and ecological awareness are forcing the tourism sector to search for new models that would combine innovation with humanity. However, there is still a lack of theoretical insights into how these three dimensions – digitalisation, sustainability, and authentic experience – could be combined in one coherent tourism model. Therefore, the question arises whether gastronomic tourism, and in particular the “Coffee Road” concept, can become an effective solution in integrating these competing trends and offer a more sustainable direction for tourism in the future.

The purpose of the study: to identify, based on scientific insights, the interaction of digitalisation, sustainability, and humanity in the tourism sector, highlighting the potential of the “Coffee Road” concept as an innovative model for future tourism.

The results. The results of the study suggest that the value of future tourism will depend on the ability to maintain a balance between digitalisation and authentic experience. Technologies will be effective only to the extent that they enhance the content of travel, without turning travel into a purely technological process. Gastronomic tourism models, such as the “Coffee Road”, can significantly contribute to the humanisation of travel and strengthening cultural connections, as their essence is based on a connection with tradition, local people, history, and emotional experience, which cannot be algorithmically recreated.

Future prospects show that the tourism sector will have to solve several interrelated tasks: consistently integrate innovations so that they do not replace humanity, but complement it; reduce the ecological footprint of technologies and ensure their sustainable application; create tourism models that preserve cultural identity and local experiences; and strengthen travellers’ ability to responsibly choose and value authentic, lived experiences. It can be concluded that travel will remain meaningful to the extent that it allows travellers to experience the world through people, culture, and real, non-algorithmic emotions. Tourism that is able to combine technological advancement, sustainability, and human values will have the greatest potential to become a resilient, ethical, and meaningful sector of the future.

Keywords: tourism; digitalisation; sustainability; authenticity; gastronomic tourism; artificial intelligence; “Coffee Road”

ANNOTATION

The article analyses the transformations of modern tourism, which are determined by global challenges and accelerating digitalisation, the post-COVID period, the effects of climate change and geopolitical crises. It is important to note that these sensitive environmental factors have not only changed the intensity of travel, but also fundamentally transformed the principles of the tourism sector and the motivations of travellers. The sustainability discourse, travellers’ ecological awareness, and the phenomenon of digital fatigue are analysed, which are increasingly encouraging us to look back at how digitalisation and humanity can be combined in future tourism models. As a key aspect of the change, the concept of the “Coffee Road” is discussed – a form of gastronomic tourism that emphasises the connection with local culture, traditions, and sustainable choices. The insight is presented that this concept can become an innovative tourism model, in which technology complements, but does not replace, human experience and encourages the tourism business to look into new experiences.

1. INTRODUCTION

Relevance and novelty of the scientific approach. In recent decades, tourism has undergone fundamental changes that have changed the concept of travel and its social meaning. Global shocks – the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, the effects of climate change – have not only limited physical movement, but also prompted a new rethinking of the value and motives of travel. The modern tourist increasingly perceives travel not only as a geographical movement; it becomes a way to make sense of his relationship with the world, to express values and choices related to responsibility, technology, and sustainability. Bekele and Raj (2025) argue that travel today is a social and cultural

investment that reflects the traveller's self-concept and worldview. This paradigm shift suggests that future tourism must combine innovation with the need for authentic experiences.

Drawing on insights from Bekele and Raj (2025), Buhalis (2020; 2025), Gretzel (2022), OECD (2023), WTTC (2024), and others, the article discusses how digital technologies and artificial intelligence solutions are shaping a new travel culture, while highlighting the paradox between technological convenience and the need for authentic experiences. It analyses the sustainability discourse, travellers' ecological awareness, and the phenomenon of digital fatigue, which is increasingly encouraging a return to humanity. In order to reveal how digitalisation and humanity can be reconciled in future tourism models, the article introduces and evaluates the concept of the "Coffee Road" – a form of gastronomic tourism that emphasises the connection with local culture, traditions, and sustainable choices. It provides an insight that this concept can become an innovative tourism model in which technology complements, but does not replace, human experience.

During the pandemic, the accelerating digitalisation has led to the integration of technology into almost all links of the tourism process. Buhalis (2025) emphasises that virtual experiences, artificial intelligence tools, and digital planning systems have become an indispensable part of the sector's functioning. However, the dominance of technology has also highlighted the paradoxes accompanying travel: disappearing spontaneity, decreasing connection with local culture, and increasing digital fatigue. In addition, the growing ecological awareness of travellers (European Travel Commission, 2024) and sustainability requirements are forcing the tourism sector to search for new, responsible, and culturally meaningful forms of experiences. Considering these processes, the direction of gastronomic tourism, which combines local culture, traditions, and social connection, is becoming relevant. The concept of the "Coffee Road" emerges as one of the innovative models that offers the opportunity to combine technology with humanity and sustainability. This concept allows us to analyse a broader question – how can tourism remain modern, but at the same time be able to create authentic, valuable experiences.

Research problem. Modern tourism is experiencing a contradictory transformation: accelerating digitalisation increases the efficiency and accessibility of services, but at the same time weakens the dimensions of authentic travel experience – human connection, cultural depth, and spontaneity. Travellers, in response to the rise of technology and increasing digital fatigue, are increasingly seeking sustainable and culturally meaningful experiences. At the same time, sustainability requirements and ecological awareness are forcing the tourism sector to search for new models that would combine innovation with humanity. However, there is still a lack of theoretical insights into how these three dimensions – digitalisation, sustainability, and authentic experience – could be combined in one coherent tourism model. Therefore, the question arises whether gastronomic tourism, and in particular the "Coffee Road" concept, can become an effective solution in integrating these competing trends and offer a more sustainable direction for tourism in the future.

The purpose of the study: to identify, based on scientific insights, the interaction of digitalisation, sustainability, and humanity in the tourism sector, highlighting the potential of the "Coffee Road" concept as an innovative model for future tourism.

Methods: 1. Analysis and research of scientific literature; 2. Analysis and processing.

2. METHODOLOGY

To achieve the research goal, the following steps are planned:

1. To define modern trends in tourism digitalisation and their impact on traveller behaviour;

2. To discuss the challenges posed by digital technologies to authentic travel experience and humanity;

3. To reveal the potential of the “Coffee Road” concept of gastronomic tourism by combining innovation, sustainability, and human experience.

This article uses the method of systematic analysis of scientific articles. The phenomenon under study includes the interaction of tourism digitalisation, sustainability, and humanity, which is conceptual and theoretical in nature; literature analysis allows for a critical assessment of the attitudes, trends, and research results formed in the scientific community from a scientific perspective. This method is considered the most appropriate when seeking to understand complex, multi-layered processes, the study of which requires a conceptual approach that will allow preparing the components for further empirical research.

Research methods. The latest 2019–2025 publications were selected for analysis. Research conducted by scientists and published in scientific publications, which examine tourism digitalisation trends (Buhalis, 2020; Gretzel, 2022; Sigala, 2023), sustainability issues, and travellers’ ecological awareness (European Travel Commission, 2024; OECD, 2023), as well as the impact of global crises on tourism development (Stankov et al., 2020; World Tourism Organization, 2019; WTTC, 2024). A systematic examination of these sources allows us to highlight the most relevant directions of tourism transformation and theoretical contradictions related to the integration of technologies and the loss of authentic experience.

Research process and procedure. The analysis of scientific literature was carried out by assessing the authors’ theoretical insights, interrelationships, and strength of arguments. In this way, the aim is to determine how global digitalisation trends affect the travel experience and what challenges they pose to the human aspect of tourism. This analysis reveals how sustainability is defined in the scientific literature and what models are proposed to combine innovative digital solutions with authentic tourism experiences.

The results of the scientific literature analysis method imply aspects of interpretation, comparison, and conceptualisation, which allows forming a theoretical basis for the analysed problem.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS

Digitalisation and humanity in the modern world. Digital technologies have become an integral part of travel planning, organisation, and experience. The modern traveller increasingly uses digital tools, from searching for flights and accommodation reservations to creating routes or planning attractions. This transformation has accelerated travel processes and made them more convenient. However, the question has arisen whether surprise, spontaneity, and authenticity are being lost.

Buhalis (2020) argues that tourism is gradually moving from providing a service to creating an experience. When travel planning is taken over by algorithms, travel experiences become more technical, and the emotional connection with the place weakens. Before the pandemic, it was expected that technology would simplify every step of the journey, allow everything to be planned with a click of a button, and digitalisation would become a guarantee of sustainability (Buhalis, 2020; World Tourism Organization, 2019).

When the world came to a standstill during the pandemic, technology became the main channel that allowed people to stay connected to the world. Artificial intelligence planning tools became an important part of helping people plan, dream, and explore places virtually (Buhalis, 2025). Digital solutions became a temporary response to the halted tourism, but it quickly became clear that they could not replace the real travel experience. At the same time, new challenges emerged: information

overload, excessive data management, and constant online presence. OECD (2023) points out that algorithm-driven processes weaken the spontaneity that gives travel authenticity and liveliness. In order to summarise how the promises of technology differ from the real experience in the tourism sector, a comparison of expectations and reality is presented (see Table 1).

Table 1. Comparison of expectations and reality in digital tourism (based on Florido-Benítez & del Alcázar Martínez, 2024; Sigala, 2023)

Evaluation Area	Expectations	Reality
Comfort	Everything will happen automatically – without hassles and queues.	Even the most advanced systems require human attention and verification.
Durability	Technology will help reduce the environmental impact of travel.	Technologies themselves use energy, so the impact is not as small as thought.
Authenticity	Virtual trips will be able to replace real ones.	The real emotion of travel comes from living contact with a place and people.
Personalisation	Unique offers for every traveller.	Most offers are still shaped by general algorithmic models, not human needs.

Table 1 shows that technological advances in the tourism sector do not always deliver the expected results. Some expectations have only been partially met. Technology has improved the convenience of travellers, but has not always contributed to the quality of the travel experience. Virtual experiences have failed to replace authentic connections with place and people, and sustainability aspirations have remained limited due to the environmental impact of the technologies themselves. In addition, personalised services are often based on algorithms that do not always reflect individual needs. This shows that technological progress in tourism cannot be assessed in isolation from the human role. It is the human factor that remains the main source of authenticity in the experience (Buhalis, 2025). Digital tools such as mobile booking systems, self-service solutions, and hybrid tours have given travellers more autonomy (WTTC, 2024). Contactless systems and artificial intelligence planning tools have become commonplace (WTTC, 2024). However, the goal of full automation has not been achieved. Many processes still require human decisions and responsibility (Bekele & Raj, 2025). One can ask whether technology, in its efforts to facilitate human activity, does not at the same time reduce the authenticity of the experience itself.

Digitalisation has changed not only the forms of tourism activities, but also the behaviour of travellers themselves. Technology has provided convenience, but at the same time has distanced them from direct communication. Recently, there has been increasing talk about digital fatigue, the effects of information overload and constant presence in front of screens. Stankov et al. (2020) note that more and more travellers are choosing “digital detox” trips, which allow them to briefly step back from technology and experience the world directly again. These changes have inevitably affected public attitudes towards technology.

Public attitudes towards the development of technology vary. Digital tools provide more convenience and control, but many travellers are still wary of issues of privacy and personal data security. OECD (2023) states that travellers trust people more than technology, and that technology should

help maintain human connection rather than replace it. This contradiction suggests that technological advances in the tourism sector have limits that are set by humans themselves.

This tension between technology and humans is particularly evident when observing how the tourism sector has changed from simple, human forms to the application of high technology (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. The transition of the tourism sector to a digital model (based on Buhalis, 2025)

Figure 1 shows how the tourism process is gradually moving from a traditional digital model to a modern, contemporary model. The first stage reflects traditional tourism, when direct human involvement dominates and the use of technology is minimal. The second stage sees a transition to digital solutions that facilitate processes, but the human role remains important. The third stage is dominated by advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, automation, and data analysis. This development shows that technology is gradually taking over some of the processes, but the human role remains significant in content creation and experience shaping. Buhalis (2025) notes that only when technology complements humans, rather than replacing them, does the tourism sector become more resilient and sustainable. This idea is important in understanding how digitalisation is shaping a new travel culture.

After the pandemic, the climate crisis, and geopolitical challenges, travel goals and value orientations have changed. Travellers are increasingly seeking meaning, authenticity, and sustainability rather than consumption. According to WTTC (2024), local identity, culture, and community are becoming more important for travellers. Gretzel (2022) notes that the modern tourist is “emotionally intelligent”, choosing experiences that combine technology, people, and the environment.

This trend is increasingly visible in the Baltic countries. Small local initiatives, family businesses, and gastronomic tourism projects show that technology here is becoming not only a tool, but also a link between innovation and humanity that help maintain the connection between modernity and tradition, technology and human experience.

In summary, it can be said that technology in the tourism sector is necessary to the extent that it serves people, not replaces them. Future tourism needs to find a balance between innovation and human values. This balance is best reflected in tourism related to local culture and products that maintain a connection with traditions, people, and place. One such example is coffee. It combines communication, ritual, and sensory experience, and therefore can become a symbolic bridge between

innovation, sustainability, and human values. Thus, the question arises as to how the “Coffee Road” could become a real example, showing that innovation can be compatible with humanity and sustainability. The vision of the “Coffee Road” also seeks such a balance, an example of how technology can complement, rather than replace, human experience.

The vision of the “Coffee Road” in future tourism. Gastronomic tourism today is considered one of the fastest growing tourism trends, as it allows you to get to know the local culture through taste, aromas, and traditions. Drinking coffee is increasingly perceived as part of cultural identity, combining tradition, communication, and rituals. The “Coffee Road” can become an example of future tourism, where technology, sustainability, and humanity merge into a meaningful journey.

The “Coffee Road” is based on the idea that technology should help maintain a person’s connection with the local culture, traditions, and people. This is an interactive tourism model in which the traveller becomes not an observer, but an active participant. During the trip, he would visit coffee drinking places: cafes, bakeries, family farms, or educational centres, where he would not only taste, but also observe the production process, learn about the origin of coffee, growing conditions, and the people who create it. Such a trip would raise awareness and strengthen the connection between the traveller, the product, and the place.

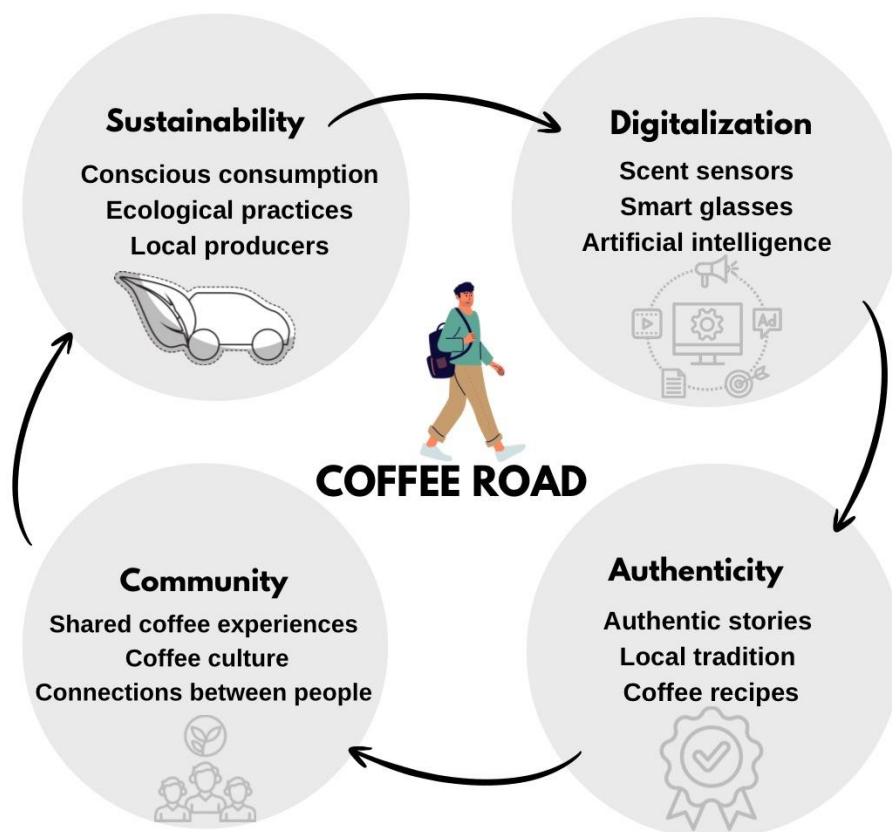


Figure 2. “Coffee Road” future tourism model (based on Buhalis, 2025; OECD, 2023)

Figure 2 shows the four principles of future tourism that the “Coffee Road” combines: sustainability, digitalisation, authenticity, and community. All of these elements are interconnected and create a seamless travel experience. The principle of sustainability emphasises responsible consump-

tion, waste reduction, and support for local producers. Digitalisation is related to technologies that help travellers navigate, explore places, and engage with local life, while preserving a direct human connection with the environment. Authenticity is created by local traditions, people, and coffee drinking culture, which gives the trip a sense of meaning and closeness. Community shows that tourism remains a social phenomenon, based on communication, trust, and shared activities. The interaction of these elements shows that future tourism can be modern but also human, when technology helps maintain the connection between people and the place.

In future tourism, this idea could become an example of gastronomic tourism, where travellers get to know local culture through tastes, aromas, and the people who create them. The idea means that once in the area, the traveller is no longer in a hurry to visit the most popular attractions but chooses places where drinking coffee becomes a way to get to know the local life and experience warm communication. This type of trip would act as a living tourism ecosystem, connecting small producers, coffee drinking places, bakeries, and educational farms. Each stop would present the history and culture of the place, inviting the traveller not only to taste, but also to participate in the process, from coffee roasting to tasting. Such an experience creates an emotional connection that encourages loyalty to the place and a more responsible attitude towards product consumption. Coffee drinking culture in this vision is associated with sustainability. Since coffee is extremely sensitive to climate change, such trips would promote not only tastings, but also environmental awareness. This initiative could bring producers and coffee lovers closer together, revealing how much human effort and knowledge is needed for coffee to reach the consumer.

This type of tourism would meet the expectations of the modern traveller. He is increasingly looking for quick entertainment, and more and more values experiences that leave a sense of meaning and emotional impression. “Coffee Road” opens a new concept of travel, where technology only serves as an aid, and the true meaning of the trip is given to the person and his relationship with the environment.

In summary, it can be said that this direction of tourism reflects the approach of the future, where innovation is combined with sustainability, and humanity gives meaning to travel. Such a model strengthens the connection between people and the place, promotes a responsible attitude towards nature and local culture. This is an example of how future tourism can remain modern, but at the same time close to people.

4. DISCUSSION

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated this process more than any previous event. Buhalis (2025) emphasises that it was during the pandemic that digital solutions became the central axis of tourism activities: virtual tours, artificial intelligence planning tools, personalised recommendation systems, remote tourism service packages. Data from the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC, 2024) show that it was precisely technological readiness that led to a faster recovery of the sector after the crisis, as companies that invested in digital solutions were better able to adapt to new consumer needs.

However, technological progress has also highlighted the paradoxes accompanying travel. Digitalisation has provided convenience, but reduced spontaneity; accelerated information acquisition, but overshadowed the joy of discovery; expanded the possibilities of virtual experiences, but weakened the value of human contact. Gretzel (2022) states that the younger generation is “emotionally intelligent” – they see technology as a tool, but they do not want to give up authentic connections with the local community. This is also reflected in research by the European Travel Commission

(2024), which shows that as many as 79% of European youth travel based on ecological and social criteria. Thus, technological convenience is important, but not enough for the modern traveller.

The development of technology in tourism is based on two main arguments: efficiency and sustainability. OECD (2023) indicates that artificial intelligence systems, automation, and data analysis help optimise services, reduce resource use and improve the traveller experience. However, at the same time, these technologies pose challenges regarding data protection, privacy, and the limits of human control. No less important is the myth of sustainability: although it is often claimed that technology reduces the environmental impact of tourism, Sigala (2023) and Florido-Benítez and del Alcázar Martínez (2024) note that technological systems themselves use large amounts of energy and create new ecological problems.

Another paradox is revealed by the issue of authenticity of travel experiences. UNWTO (2019) predicted before the pandemic that virtual experiences could replace real travel, but in the conditions of the pandemic it became clear that they cannot provide what Buhalis (2020) calls the dimension of “lived experience” – the relationship with place, people, cultural rituals, and emotions. It would seem that trips can be planned by algorithms, but the essence of travel requires human surprise, which cannot be programmed. As a result, today there is increasing talk of digital fatigue – resulting from constant involvement in technological processes. Stankov et al. (2020) emphasise that many travellers consciously choose “digital detox” trips, giving up smart devices in order to experience the environment more intensively and establish a real connection with the local culture. Such trends show that the tourism model of the future cannot be based solely on technology – it needs a human dimension that allows the experience to become meaningful.

It is in this perspective that the direction of gastronomic tourism becomes relevant, which combines flavours, traditions, social interaction, and cultural heritage. The “Coffee Road” – a conceptual model in which coffee is perceived as a cultural ritual, an emotional practice, and part of the local community – is one of the most interesting examples of how modern tourism can combine digitalisation, sustainability, and humanity. Coffee is a global product, the path of which from seed to cup is filled with stories, traditions, and human efforts, therefore it has the potential to become the axis of a journey in which technology only complements, but does not replace the experience (Gretzel, 2022).

This vision is based on the fact that the traveller not only tastes coffee but also becomes part of the process: observes the roasting, gets to know the growers, listens to local stories, and participates in educational activities. Buhalis (2025) emphasises that the future of tourism depends on the ability to create experiences, not just provide services. The “Coffee Road” is exactly such an experience – not passive, but active; not focused on consumption, but on connection; not based on algorithms, but on communication. The sustainability aspect is also particularly prominent here, since coffee cultivation and the supply chain are closely related to climate change processes. A traveller who is familiar with these aspects becomes a more conscious consumer, better understanding the value of products and their impact on the environment.

This form of tourism also corresponds to the strategic directions of Lithuania, which emphasise innovation, circular economy principles, sustainability, and digitalisation (Ekonomikos ir inovacijų ministerija & Keliuk Lietuvoje, 2022). The “Coffee Road” can be a model in which modern technologies – virtual tours, digital routes, information platforms – are only a tool that helps the traveller discover a place but does not overshadow his relationship with culture or community.

In this way, gastronomic tourism becomes a sustainable alternative to mass travel, which often loses its authenticity. It combines slow travel, local economy, ritual experience, and emotional connection. “Coffee Road” offers a journey that not only delights with flavours but also strengthens collective cultural memory and creates a sustainable tourism model.

In general, it can be said that the tourism of the future is a balance between technology and human values. Innovations provide new opportunities, but they cannot replace the human connection that is the essence of every trip. Sustainability becomes not a choice, but a necessity, and authenticity is the main form of travel value. “Coffee Road” reveals how these three dimensions can merge into a coherent, meaningful, and responsible vision of tourism.

References

1. Bekele, H., & Raj, S. (2025). Digitalization and digital transformation in the tourism industry: A bibliometric review and research agenda. *Tourism Review*, 80(4), 894–913. <https://doi.org/10.1108/TR-07-2023-0509>
2. Buhalis, D. (2020). Technology in tourism-from information communication technologies to eTourism and smart tourism towards ambient intelligence tourism: A perspective article. *Tourism Review*, 75(1), 267–272. <https://doi.org/10.1108/TR-06-2019-0258>
3. Buhalis, D., O'Connor, P., & Leung, R. (2025). Smart hospitality: From smart cities and smart tourism towards agile business ecosystems in networked destinations. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 35(1), 369–393. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-04-2022-0497>
4. Ekonomikos ir inovacijų ministerija, & Keliauk Lietuvoje. (2022, December 23). *Lietuvos turizmo plėtros gairės*. <https://eimin.lrv.lt/uploads/eimin/documents/files/Lietuvos%20turizmo%20gair%C4%97s.pdf>
5. European Travel Commission. (2024). *Monitoring sentiment for domestic and intra-European travel*. <https://etc-corporate.org/>
6. Florido-Benítez, L., & del Alcázar Martínez, B. (2024). How artificial intelligence (AI) is powering new tourism marketing and the future agenda for smart tourist destinations. *Electronics*, 13(21), 4151. <https://www.mdpi.com/2079-9292/13/21/4151>
7. Gretzel, U. (2022). The Smart DMO: A new step in the digital transformation of destination management organizations. *European Journal of Tourism Research*, 30, 3002. <https://doi.org/10.54055/ejtr.v30i.2589>
8. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2023). *Tourism trends and policies 2023*. OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/20767773>
9. Sigala, M. (2023). *Digital transformation in tourism*. Routledge.
10. Stankov, U., Filimonau, V., & Vujičić, M. D. (2020). A mindful shift: An opportunity for mindfulness-driven tourism in a post-pandemic world. *Tourism Geographies*, 22(3), 703–712. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616688.2020.1768432>
11. World Tourism Organization. (2019). *International tourism highlights*. UNWTO. <https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284421152>
12. World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC). (2024). *Travel & tourism economic impact 2024: Global trends*. <https://researchhub.wttc.org/product/economic-impact-report-global-trends>

Ateities turizmo rinkos: tarp skaitmenizacijos ir žmogiškumo – „Kavos kelio“ turizmo vizija

Renatas Milutis¹, Alina Pestova²

¹ Lietuvos sporto universitetas, Kaunas, Lietuva

² Turizmo katedra, Tarptautinis turizmo ir svetingumo universitetas, Turkestanas, Kazachstanas

Santrauka

Mokslinės prieigos aktualumas ir naujumas. Per pastaruosius dešimtmečius turizmas patyrė fundamentalių pokyčių, kurie iš esmės pakeitė kelionių sampratą ir jų socialinę prasmę. Globalūs sukrėtimai – COVID-19 pandemija, karas Ukrainoje, klimato kaitos padariniai – ne tik apribojo fizinį judėjimą, bet ir paskatino permąstyti kelionių vertę bei motyvus. Šiuolaikinis turistas vis rečiau kelionę suvokia tik kaip geografinį judėjimą; ji tampa būdu įprasminėti savo santykių su pasauliu, išreikšti vertybes ir pasirinkimus, susijusius su atsakomybe, technologijomis ir tvarumu. Bekele ir Raj (2025) teigia, kad kelionės šiandien yra socialinė ir kultūrinė investicija, atspindinti keliautojo savivoką ir pasaulėžiūrą. Šis paradigmatis pokytis leidžia daryti prielaidą, kad ateities turizmui būtina suderinti inovacijas su autentiškos patirties poreikiu.

Remiantis tyrėjų (Bekele & Raj; 2025; Buhalis, 2020, 2025; Gretzel, 2022; OECD, 2023; WTTC, 2024 ir kt.) įžvalgomis, straipsnyje aptariama, kaip skaitmeninės technologijos ir dirbtinio intelekto sprendimai formuoja naują kelionių kultūrą, kartu išryškindami paradoksą tarp technologinio patogumo ir autentiškos patirties poreikio. Analizuojamas tvarumo diskursas, keliautojų ekologinis sąmoningumas ir skaitmeninio nuovargio reiškiny, vis dažniau skatinantis atsigręžti į žmogiškumą. Siekiant atskleisti, kaip skaitmenizacija ir žmogiškumas gali būti suderinti ateities turizmo modeliuose, straipsnyje pristatoma ir vertinama „Kavos kelio“ koncepcija – gastrominio turizmo forma, pabrėžianti ryšį su vietos kultūra, tradicijomis ir tvariais pasirinkimais. Pateikiama įžvalga, kad ši koncepcija gali tapti inovatyviu turizmo modeliu, kuriame technologijos papildo, bet ne pakeičia žmogiškąją patirtį.

Pandemijos metu spartėjanti skaitmenizacija paskatino technologijų integraciją į beveik visas turizmo proceso grandis. Buhalis (2023) pabrėžia, kad virtualios patirtys, dirbtinio intelekto įrankiai ir skaitmeninės planavimo sistemos tapo būtina sektoriaus veikimo dalimi. Vis dėlto technologijų dominavimas išryškino ir keliones lydinčius paradoksus: nykstantį spontaniškumą, mažėjantį ryšį su vietos kultūra ir didėjantį skaitmeninį nuovargį. Greta to, augantis keliautojų ekologinis sąmoningumas (European Travel Commission, 2024) ir tvarumo reikalavimai verčia turizmo sektorių ieškoti naujų, atsakingų ir kultūriškai prasmingų patirčių formų.

Atsižvelgiant į šiuos procesus, aktuali tampa gastrominio turizmo kryptis, kuri jungia vietos kultūrą, tradicijas ir socialinį ryšį. „Kavos kelio“ koncepcija iškyla kaip vienas iš inovatyvių modelių, siūlančių galimybę derinti technologijas su žmogiškumu ir tvarumu. Ši koncepcija leidžia analizuoti platesnį klausimą – kaip turizmas gali išlikti modernus, tačiau kartu gebėti kurti autentišką, vertybinę patirtį.

Tyrimo problema. Šiuolaikinis turizmas patiria prieštarą transformaciją: spartėjanti skaitmenizacija didina paslaugų veiksmingumą ir prieinamumą, tačiau kartu silpnina autentiškos kelionės patirties dimensijas – žmogiškąjį ryšį, kultūrinį gylį ir spontaniškumą. Keliautojai, reaguodami į technologijų įsigalėjimą ir didėjantį skaitmeninį nuovargį, vis dažniau siekia tvarių ir kultūriškai prasmingų patirčių. Tuo pat metu tvarumo reikalavimai ir ekologinis sąmoningumas verčia turizmo sektorių ieškoti naujų modelių, kurie derintų inovacijas su žmogiškumu. Tačiau iki šiol stokojama teorinių įžvalgų, kaip šias tris dimensijas – skaitmenizaciją, tvarumą ir autentišką patirtį – būtų galima suderinti viename nuosekliame turizmo modelyje. Todėl kyla klausimas, ar gastrominis turizmas, o ypač „Kavos kelio“ koncepcija, gali tapti veiksmingu sprendimu integruojant šias tarpusavyje konkuruojančias tendencijas ir pasiūlyti tvaresnę ateities turizmo kryptį.

Tyrimo tikslas: mokslinių įžvalgų pagrindu, identifikuoti skaitmenizacijos, tvarumo ir žmogiškumo sąveiką turizmo sektoriuje, išryškinant „Kavos kelio“ koncepcijos, kaip inovatyvaus ateities turizmo modelio, potencialą.

Rezultatai. Tyrimo rezultatai rodo, kad ateities turizmo vertė priklausys nuo gebėjimo išlaikyti pusiausvyrą tarp skaitmeninimo ir autentiškos patirties. Technologijos bus veiksmingos tik tiek, kiek jos praturtins kelionių turinį,

nepaversdamos jų vien technologiniu procesu. Gastronominio turizmo modeliai, tokie kaip „Kavos kelias“, gali reikšmingai prisidėti prie kelionių humanizavimo ir kultūrinių ryšių stiprinimo, nes jų esmė grindžiama ryšiu su tradicijomis, vietos gyventojais, istorija ir emocine patirtimi, kurios negalima algoritmiškai atkurti.

Ateities perspektyvos rodo, kad turizmo sektorius turės išspręsti keletą tarpusavyje susijusių uždavinių: nuosekliai integruoti inovacijas, kad jos ne pakeistų žmogiškumą, o jį papildytų; mažinti technologijų ekologinį pėdsaką ir užtikrinti jų tvarų taikymą; kurti turizmo modelius, kurie išsaugotų kultūrinį identitetą ir vietos patirtis; ir stiprinti keliautojų gebėjimą atsakingai rinktis ir vertinti autentiškas, išgyventas patirtis. Galima daryti išvadą, kad kelionės išliks prasmingos tiek, kiek leis keliautojams patirti pasaulį per žmones, kultūrą ir tikras, ne algoritmines emocijas. Turizmas, gebantis derinti technologinę pažangą, tvarumą ir žmogiškąsias vertybes, turės didžiausią potencialą tapti atspariu, etišku ir prasmingu ateities sektoriumi.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: turizmas; skaitmenizacija; tvarumas; autentiškumas; gastronominis turizmas; dirbtinis intelektas; „Kavos kelias“

Received 2025 06 30

Accepted 2025 07 18