

Article

Young Travellers and Green Travel in the Post-COVID Era

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Abstract: The concept of sustainable mobility and related green travel will play an increasingly important role in the development of tourism and climate policy in the European Union. Initiated by the European Commission, Erasmus+ green travel is a new initiative and not yet researched by EU institutions or in the literature. However, it fits in with the literature research on green mobility. The aim of this paper was to assess whether young tourists are interested in green mobility, whether they are willing to use means of low-emission transport when making trips, what factors play a role in their means of transport choices, and whether risk aversion influences their choices. For the purpose of this work, the authors conducted a survey in Poland among 36 Polish and foreign people from Generation Z studying in Poland and taking advantage of the green travel program in the Erasmus+ program and an economic experiment regarding their level of risk taking. Based on these data, it was examined whether young tourists are interested in green mobility, what factors play an important role when choosing a low-emission means of transport, and whether the level of risk taking influences their choices. The results of the survey indicated that young tourists tend to choose means of high-emission transport or a mix of high- and low-emission transport. However, if they receive a financial incentive, they are willing to use means of low-emission transport when travelling. The results of this study also indicated that environmental factors do not influence the propensity of young tourists towards specific means of transport, including low-emission transport, and economic and cognitive factors play an important role. It was also found that there is some positive relationship between the level of risk taking of the traveller and the propensity to green travel.

Keywords: Gen Z tourists; green travel; post-COVID era; Erasmus+; means of low-emission transport



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1. Introduction

Travel in the European Union (EU) contributes significantly to the carbon footprint [1]. Global tourism accounts for around 8% of total greenhouse gas emissions, while transport between origin and destination produces three-quarters of this impact [2,3]. The development of the tourism sector and the increase in travel are also linked to the intensive development of transport infrastructure in tourist regions, which has a negative impact not only on the environmental condition of the destination but also on its tourist attractiveness (noise and air quality) [4]. This is particularly relevant given the increased interest of tourists in authentic and sustainable holiday experiences [5]. This results in the need to invest in sustainable tourism development and the promotion of green mobility.

The development of green tourism is closely linked to the concept of sustainable mobility [6,7]. Green tourism management policies should aim to maximise the economic benefits of tourist arrivals while minimising the associated negative environmental impacts [8]. Related to this is the problem of the negative impact of excess transport on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and climate. Therefore, many countries are implementing measures and programmes to promote carbon neutrality [7].

The literature indicates that before the COVID-19 era, tourism had a negative impact on environmental pollution [9–11]. During the lockdowns caused by COVID-19, tourist

activity decreased, which resulted in a decrease in GHG [12–14]. However, as data on travel preferences during the COVID-19 era are still emerging and recovery trajectories are very diverse, the authors do not discuss the impact of COVID-19 on preferences in this paper. In the post-COVID-19 era, some tourists continue to support green travel, while others have returned to their preferred forms of travel. The choice or abandonment of green travel can be influenced by altruistic and selfish behaviour [15,16]. The literature indicates that many factors influence the choice of transport and travel style, such as age, gender, education, place of residence, and tourists' income [17–19]. The literature also indicates that tourists often lack knowledge about the climate damage of travel. Furthermore, the degree of low-carbon behaviour decreases when people are on holiday [20]. Therefore, from a young age, tourists should learn about the principles of sustainable tourism and be encouraged to choose trips that are environmentally friendly.

In this article, we focus on green travel and ask whether young tourists (Generation Z tourists) are interested in this form of travel. For our analysis, we have chosen the Green Travel programme within the Erasmus+ programme, which, from mid-2021, has allowed students to combine studying at various EU research institutions with travel using environmentally friendly means of transport. The authors raise several research questions: Q1. What means of transport do Generation Z tourists choose when travelling and when they are offered a green travel lump sum in exchange for using an environmentally friendly means of transport? Q2. Which factor plays a more important role when choosing a means of transport: the economic, cognitive landscape, or environmental factors? Q3. Does risk aversion influence their choices?

This paper makes a threefold contribution to the literature. Firstly, the issue of green mobility within the Erasmus+ programme has not been analysed in the literature so far. It is a new programme, dedicated mainly to higher education, especially students. So far, few students have had the opportunity to use it. However, this is an important first step in raising environmental awareness among students and promoting environmentally friendly travel attitudes in them. In this article, the authors will focus on people from Europe studying in Poland, i.e., of Polish nationality (living in Poland for six months or more) and non-Polish European nationality (coming from the EU and studying in Poland). Secondly, the question arises as to whether initiatives such as Erasmus+ green travel are known and popular among students and whether this will encourage them to choose means of low-emission transport other than the plane when they benefit from such a choice with travel cost subsidies. So what factors, economic, environmental, or cognitive, would encourage Gen Z tourists to green travel? The authors fill a research gap by answering this research question. Thirdly, an answer to the research question of whether the risk aversion of Generation Z tourists is significant in their propensity to green travel will be provided. As indicated by Chien and Yeh [21], the preference for risk has an influence on the subjects' behaviours. The literature indicates that people characterised by high risk aversion have a low level of risk taking and vice versa. Risk aversion means the tendency to avoid risk, prioritise a lower level of risk, and make tourist choices characterised by lower risk taking. The literature analyses the role of risk in tourism but does not analyse whether the risk-taking level of tourists affects their perception of green tourism. Therefore, the authors will examine whether there is a relationship between the level of risk taking (low, medium, or high) of these tourists and the tendency to choose low-emission means of transport. In this paper, following Haan et al. [22], risk taking is defined as the intentional or unintentional exposure to the possibility of injury or loss. So far, the risk-taking behaviour or risk propensity of people of different ages and attitudes towards the level of safety in tourism have been investigated [23–25], but whether the level of risk taking (and risk aversion) can determine the propensity of young Generation Z tourists to green travel has not been analysed. By answering this question, this article fills a research gap.

The article is structured as follows: the introduction is followed by a literature review on the concepts of green mobility and green tourism, factors influencing green mobility, the pre-referral of Generation Z travellers, and the role of risk. This is followed by a

presentation of the proposed theoretical model and the methods used, results, discussion, and conclusion.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Green Tourism in the Post-COVID-19 Era

Green tourism is increasingly becoming a subject of academic interest as we have more and more tourism products positioned as green and responsible. However, many tourists only understand this type of tourism in a narrow context, only as the best way to enjoy holidays and nature [26]. Green tourism, on the other hand, has much more to offer, not only allowing active leisure in the natural environment but also contributing to the protection of the environment. As indicated by Andari and Setiyorini [27] (p. 18), “the purpose of green tourism is providing insight and concern with the environment, and increasing greater appreciation for nature”. The concept of green tourism, although generally widely understood, is not uniformly defined in the literature. Table 1 shows a collection of green tourism concepts and definitions.

Table 1. Concepts of green tourism in literature.

Author (Year)	Definition/Concept
R. Dodds, M. Joppe (2001, p. 263) [28]	<p>The concept can be broken down into four components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Environmental responsibility—protecting, conserving, and enhancing nature and the physical environment to ensure the long-term health of the life-sustaining eco-system. - Local economic vitality—supporting local economies, businesses and communities to ensure economic vitality and sustainability. - Cultural diversity—respecting and appreciating cultures and cultural diversity so as to ensure the continued well-being of local or host cultures. - Experiential richness—providing enriching and satisfying experiences through active, personal and meaningful participation in, and involvement with, nature, people, places and cultures.
Azam M., Sarker T. (2010, p. 7) [29]	<p>Green tourism is the term used for sustainable tourism practices which takes into account the mutual needs of the ecology and environment, local people, businesses enterprises and tourists itself. It enables us to draw a framework of management and development, for both now and in the future. The aim of these strategies to develop a governance mechanism with a prime attention to reduce negative environmental and social impacts of tourism operations located in rural or urban areas of any country premises.</p>
A. Furqan, A.P. Mat Som, R. Hussin (2010, p. 64) [30]	<p>Green tourism is defined as environmentally friendly tourism activities with various focuses and meanings.</p>
R. Andari, H.P.D. Setiyorini (2016, p. 18) [27]	<p>The concept of green tourism travel includes programs that minimize the negative aspects of conventional tourism on the environment and enhance the cultural integrity of local people. (...) Green tourism is an integral part of promotional activities for reduce, reuse, recycle, energy efficiency, water conservation, and the community empowerment to develop economic activities</p>

The development of green tourism applies the criteria of sustainable tourism, the main objective of which is the responsible use of resources and their conservation in order to preserve them for future generations [28,31]. Currently, one of the main objectives is to reduce the negative impacts of tourism development, in particular reducing energy consumption and GHG [6,32]. Green tourism therefore primarily refers to environmentally friendly tourism and helps to counteract the negative effects of development [30].

Mass tourism has had a negative impact on natural and cultural resources, with sometimes uncontrolled tourist attendance causing irreversible damage to individual tourist

sites [33]. Currently, many tourist destinations are experiencing negative externalities such as congestion, a decline in the quality of life of local residents, poor access to socio-cultural amenities, and a loss of local identity [34,35]. This is the result of tourism development geared solely to economic benefits and growth [28,36].

This sector needed a certain “shock” to reflect on the problems that were exacerbated by the unsustainable growth of mass tourism. The COVID-19 pandemic, periods of lockdowns, and restrictions had a significant impact on the tourism sector. Lockdowns of countries had an impact on changing travel behaviour. Many authors in their studies emphasise that tourists have rediscovered green space in their cities and a kind of return to nature has been observed, which also, in the post-COVID-19 era, has remained a popular leisure activity [37–43]. Also, an increasing number of tourists have found tourist products that have been created as a result of sustainable development and that promote slow tourism (characterised by time, conscious decision making, engaging the senses, holiday duration and location, and anti-commercialism) [44–46].

Green tourism is important for encouraging travel that would help support natural and cultural aspects while encouraging respect for and protection of urban resources and cultural diversity [30]. Green tourism should also include the sustainable use of water and energy; prevention of air, land, and water pollution; and protection of biodiversity [26,47]. The development of this type of tourism can also contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, for example, by moving to renewable energy sources [6]. Energy-efficient aircraft, a shift to renewable energy, new-generation energy technologies, and measures of energy efficiency in hotels would also contribute [6].

2.2. Green Mobility and Factors for Choosing Mobility Means

The increase in human mobility has been influenced not only by the increase in purchasing power and the growing availability of tourist regions or cities around the world but above all by the emergence of relatively cheap means of transport [34]. Nowadays, due to climate change and increasing pollution, the concept of green travel has been proposed as a possible solution to mitigate the negative environmental impact of increased mobility [47]. Green travel, derived from the concept of green transport, aims to persuade residents to choose modes of transport that are energy-efficient, reduce pollution, and are beneficial to the health of residents (including bus, metro, carpooling, walking, cycling, etc.) [48].

Social sustainability is linked to green mobility (e.g., public transport, walking, cycling) as a way to alleviate individual carbon footprints [49]. The aim is for transport used in tourism to have the least negative impact on the environment [50]. More recently, researchers have suggested that the carbon footprint of tourism can be reduced through strategic market development aimed at reducing the distance travelled for holidays, especially by air and car.

At the beginning of the 21st century, in developed countries, about 40% of the distance travelled was by car, 5% by plane, and 55% by other means of transport, while in developing countries, the car accounted for 20% and other means of transport accounted for 80% [50]. In cities, by contrast, the car generally remains the dominant means of transport in Europe [51] and a major contributor to ever-increasing hazardous emissions [52]. Every kilometre travelled by car or bicycle generates a cost to society, although the cost of driving is more than six times higher (EUR 0.50/km) than cycling (EUR 0.08/km) [53].

Sustainable mobility includes both public transport and active/“zero-emission” transport (walking and cycling); it contributes significantly to reducing greenhouse gas emissions [49]. Among the popular ways to reduce GHGs is to encourage tourists to use public transport (e.g., trains, buses, and ferries), which not only guarantees better accessibility to the destination but also increases green mobility [19]. However, this is only a piecemeal action in the pursuit of a green economy.

Despite these actions, the plane is a more popular means of transport because of the travel time savings and because travelling by bus is less attractive due to the uncertainty of the bus journey and the uncertainty with the travel time [54]. Therefore, as Gössling

et al. [55] emphasise, the main means of transport generating GHG emissions is air transport. The COVID-19 pandemic and the closure of countries have contributed to a reduction in air travel [14]. As Wu et al. [7] point out, a reduction of up to 7 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions worldwide was observed during the period of restrictions. One of the reasons for this was that many airlines reduced flights by more than 90% and some stopped flying altogether, and this caused airport closures [56]. However, after the end of the pandemic restrictions, there has been a steady increase in the number of flights (despite rising fuel costs and higher flight prices), not only of passengers but also of flights on private jets. As an example, we would like to mention the results from the Greenpeace report, which shows that the use of private jets in Europe increased by 64% in 2022 compared to 2021, reaching a record number of 572,806 flights, and that carbon dioxide emissions from private flights more than doubled [57] (p. 6). The number of private flights tripled within a short period of time after the end of the pandemic and, in addition, the amount of CO₂ emissions in Europe more than quadrupled in 2021 compared to 2020, from 354,690 tonnes to 1,637,623 tonnes [57] (p. 6). The same trends were observed in the following year [57].

Therefore, green mobility should be promoted not only in a narrow sense (e.g., cycling) but also as a major factor influencing GHG reduction. What factors play an important role when choosing a means of transport for Generation Z (Gen Z) tourists? As the literature indicates, the choice of green mobility is influenced by a number of factors, of which the most frequently mentioned are gender, age, and educational level. In the case of age, a U-shaped relationship between age and the proportion of travel by public transport is most commonly observed, although for some countries, an inverted U-shaped relationship also occurs [49]. Jia [58] shows that age is an important factor in choosing green mobility. In terms of gender, it is highlighted that there are statistically significant differences between genders in the choice of travel patterns [58], and green travel is most often chosen by women than by men [49,58]. In the case of education level, the literature also stresses that this is an important factor [49,58], although depending on the education, this influence can be a positive (secondary education) or a negative correlation (higher education) [49]. Other factors that can also have a significant impact are place of residence, car ownership, public transport, and income [49]. As Haustein and Nielsen [51] and Echeverria et al. [49] point out, the country of origin can also play a statistically important role when choosing a green mean of transport. As Jia [58] points out, the typical tourist who chooses green mobility is women under 30 and over 50, with higher education, with low car ownership and high income. The literature indicates also that factors such as the economic factor (interest in financial knowledge and savings [59], the tourist's financial situation [60,61], desire to enjoy the landscape, novelties, and environmental awareness [5,62,63] are important to Gen Z representatives and can influence the tourist destinations they choose. Therefore, in the context of the second research question of this paper, it can be suspected that economic, environmental, and cognitive landscape factors may influence Gen Z's propensity to green travel.

However, there is still much to be carried out to expand the use of green transport means. To achieve this, there is a need not only to improve public transport services and invest in and promote walking/cycling behaviour but also to understand who is involved in green mobility [49]. Also, the environmental knowledge of tourists should be increased, as this can influence current and future low-emission behaviour [64].

2.3. Gen Z Travellers and Their Attitude to the Risk

Travelling for young people is an integral part of their lives and not a temporary escape from everyday life as it is for the older generation [65]. In this article, we would like to focus in particular on students from Generation Z who have the opportunity to participate in the Erasmus+ programme and benefit from green travel.

Students and their preferences, goals, and motives are of interest to researchers but unfortunately only piecemeal in the area of sustainable tourism topics. The findings of Eusébio and Carneiro [66–68] have shown that we are dealing with certain groups of young

tourists. For some, economic motives are more important, and for others, cultural and natural resources and entertainment offers or products based on sustainability are more important. Analyses of young people's preferences many times showed differing findings, as their motives are influenced by the external environment to a greater extent than those of other consumer groups [65,69].

In addition, research has mainly focused on the Millennial generation, but now there is a new Generation Z in the tourism sector, which has characteristics that set it apart from other travellers. Gen Z tourists are described by researchers as “the-internet-in-its-pocket-generation” [70] (p. 33). Nechad [71] underlines that people from Generation Z have pro-environmental inclinations, i.e., they want their actions to be characterised by the sustainability of natural resources and the maintenance of development abilities for future generations. As indicated by the literature [62,72,73], Generation Z grew up in extremely unstable conditions (war on terror, refugee crises, and climate change), which made safety a value for them. However, as Gabrielova and Buchko [74] add, people from Generation Z, due to being brought up by protectionist parents, do not want to take responsibility and take precautions in risky situations. Taking into account the third research question in this paper, it can therefore be suspected that the level of risk taking of people from Generation Z may affect their tourist preferences, including in relation to green travel. Although the literature indicates what the main motives and predispositions of this generation are [75–78], we still have too little information about the extent to which sustainable tourism [79] and green travel are important to them. It is worth noting that this generation grew up in smaller households, had more money of their own, and had more opportunities to explore the world [80].

Young people's lifestyles and identities are becoming more diverse, and “for some, cars are still a central element in their lifestyle, for others they are nothing more than a means of transport” [81] (p. 13). Therefore, they are keen to rent bicycles or electric scooters. They also sometimes choose less traditional or alternative means of transport when travelling. There are also campaigns to encourage a change in transport choices. In Catania, for example, there was the “You study, you travel free” initiative to encourage students to use public transport instead of their own car [82]. In this way, students' environmental awareness is increased, which may, in the future, influence their choice of transport during domestic and international trips.

As indicated by research conducted by “Cox and Kings”, around 72% of young tourists from India would prefer to visit Europe by bike, bus, or train [77]. As Cavagnaro, Staffieri, and Postma [70] prove, young tourists tend, third, to skip on travel and accommodation costs to spend more on the destination.

In summary, we can distinguish the following groups of motives for young tourists: internal self-development, external self-development (communication), entertainment, and escape from reality (relaxation) [70]. It is worth adding that natural attractions are also at the top of the list of interests of young tourists [83].

2.4. Erasmus+ Green Travel

Travelling is not only a leisure activity; it can also be a place and a way to learn and acquire new knowledge [84]. Also, it is a great way to encourage young travellers to choose low-carbon and climate-friendly transport. One way to combine travel and study is through Erasmus+ (European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students) programmes, which have been available to students since 1987 [84].

The preferred destination for Erasmus+ (mobility for studies and mobility) is Spain [85] and further afield than the neighbouring countries. This influences the choice of air transport as the form of the fastest way to arrive at the destination.

An IO2 CO₂ visualisation tool has been developed to reduce the carbon footprint of the Erasmus+ programme. On the website, using a specialised calculator, it is possible to calculate the ecological footprint, measured in terms of carbon emissions, resulting from travel. You can calculate how your carbon footprint will change when you choose a plane,

car, motorbike, bus, train, or secondary transportation [86]. The website also includes information on measures to reduce the transport-related carbon footprint.

The European Commission has set a subsidy amount to support green travel of EUR 30–80 (those who opt for modes of transport considered more sustainable can receive a larger subsidy for their travel and up to 4 additional travel days (if travel days are relevant to the key action)) [87].

3. Materials and Methods

In this article, the authors evaluate green travel among Gen Z tourists—the tourist decisions made by them in relation to means of low-emission transport. It was investigated whether young tourists are interested in green mobility in the form of using Erasmus+ green travel and which factor, economic or environmental, plays a more important role in the choice of means of transport in this mode of travel. Additionally, it was investigated whether tourists' risk aversion influences their choices in this form of travel.

Figure 1 shows the decision flowchart that was used to guide the research process to answer the three research questions formulated in the study.

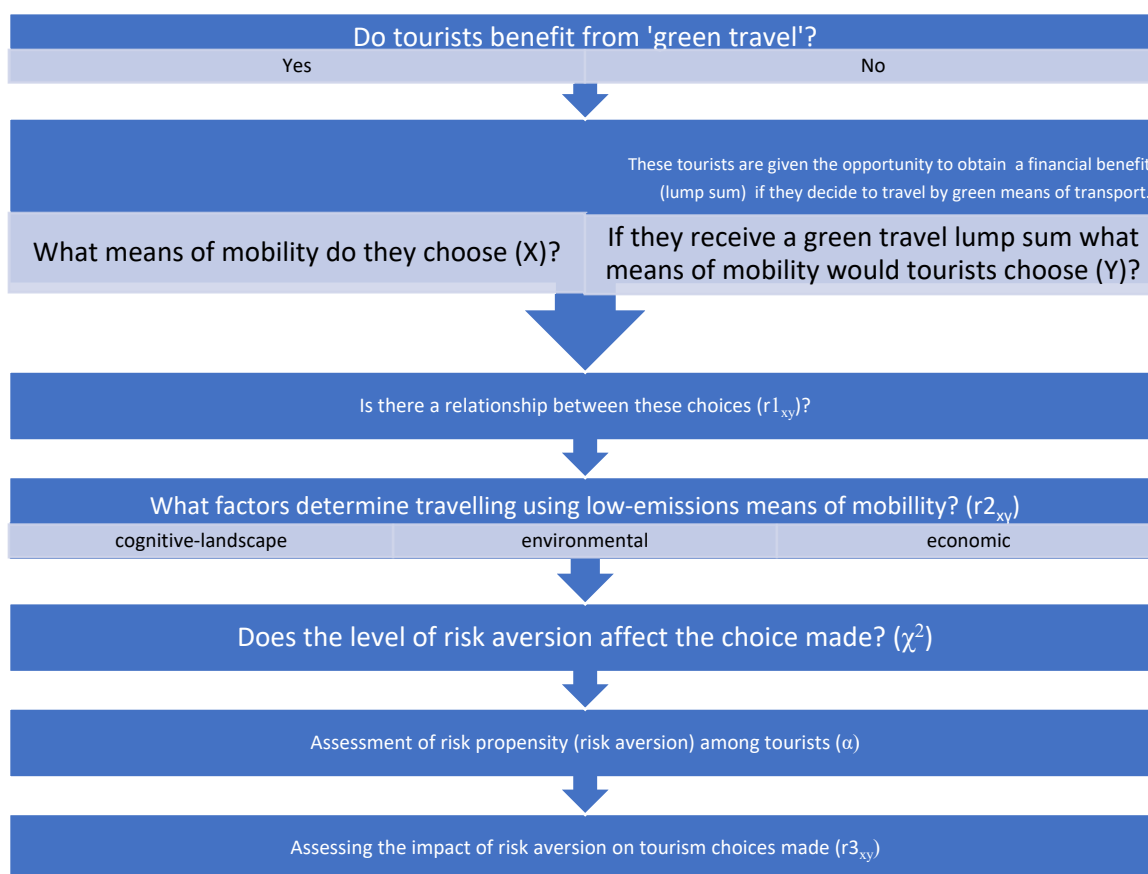


Figure 1. Logical flowchart model for green travel assessment.

As part of the research process, the authors conducted two surveys and an economic experiment. The research group was 36 Generation Z students in Poland [70], benefiting from the Erasmus+ programme, i.e., both Europeans coming to Poland and Poles going to EU countries. Information was distributed among Generation Z representatives about the possibility of participating in the survey. Only people who have used or intend to use green travel within the Erasmus+ programme were able to participate in the survey. The research was voluntary and random and took place in January–June 2023. Characteristics of the research sample are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Characteristics of the research sample.

Itemization		Value
Sample size		36
Gender (%)	women	52.8
	men	47.2
Age (%)	18–20	27.8
	21–23	55.5
	24–28	16.7

In implementing the research questions posed in the thesis, the research process in the paper will consist of three stages. Stage one is to investigate, using a survey method with a questionnaire technique, whether tourists are taking advantage of the opportunity to travel using environmentally friendly (low-emission) means of transport. To this purpose, respondents were surveyed to test their preference for means of transport (using the question: Q1. What means of transport will you choose when travelling?). After completing this survey, respondents were presented with the essence of the green travel programme in the form of a video presentation on a computer. Following this presentation, respondents were subjected to a second survey to determine what means of travel mobility they would choose if they were offered a green travel lump sum in exchange for using an environmentally friendly means of transport (Q2. What means of transport will you choose with guarantee of green travel lump sum (EUR 30–80) for travel costs?). Respondents could choose from the following means of transport: coach, train, carpooling, bike, plane, car, and other, where, in line with the Erasmus+ green travel programme, the first four were counted as means of low-emission transport. To ensure methodological correctness, respondents were shown the questions one at a time without informing them beforehand that there would be further questions. To assess whether the possibility of receiving a benefit that reduces travel costs (in the form of a green travel lump sum) influences the choice of the mode of transport and increases preference for means of low-emission transport, an analysis of the data using contingency tables was applied. The existence of a statistical dependence between these Gen Z tourists' choices (where the grouping variable is green travel lump sum) will be tested using Pearson's chi-square test of independence. Meanwhile, the potential strength of the relationship will be measured using Cramer's V coefficient.

In the second stage of the study, the same research sample investigated which factor determines ecological choices. This also used a survey method and, using a survey questionnaire technique, they were asked the question "What factor would drive you to travel abroad using means of low-emission transport?", giving a choice of three potential factors: cognitive landscape, environmental, and economic. This was used to answer the second research question. On the other hand, as the relationship between a set of three independent variables and a qualitative dichotomous dependent variable was examined here, logistic regression analysis was used to assess the impact of these factors (where maximum likelihood estimation was used). $P(X) = \frac{1}{1 + e^{-(\alpha + \sum \beta_i X_i)}}$, where X_1 = economic factor, X_2 = environmental factor, and X_3 = cognitive factor. The necessary assumptions for the use of logistic regression were met. The response variables were binary, the observations were independent (the observations did not come from repeated measurements of the same individual or be related to each other in any way), there was no multicollinearity among the independent variables (the correlations between them ranged from 0.15 to 0.47), there were no extreme outliers, and to check the assumptions of a linear relationship between independent variables and the logit of the dependent variable, a Box–Tidwell test was used.

The third stage of the research process examined the third research question (Q3) of whether tourists' risk aversion influences their choices. Two methods were used for this purpose. First, an economic experiment was used. The experiment was conducted among the same research sample using the RT-18 risk-taking questionnaire [22]. For this purpose, using Millisecond Inquisit Lab version 6.6.1 software (Millisecond Software, LLC), the level

of their risk taking was assessed. The research took place with computers at the Laboratory of Behavioural Economics of the Institute of Economics and Finance of the University of Szczecin. In this way, by marking the answers to 18 questions, respondents' susceptibility to risk-taking was assessed, of which risk-taking was assessed on a two-factor basis where the first factor assessed 'level of risk-taking behaviour' while the second assessed 'risk assessment'. In contrast, the risk-taking rating scale was as follows: 0–6 low risk-taking, 7–12 medium risk-taking, and 13–18 high risk-taking [22] (pp. 580–581). Then, using contingency tables and Pearson's chi-square test of independence, the relationship and statistical significance between the level of risk-taking (and thus also risk aversion) and the respondents' choices regarding the chosen means of mobility when realising the trip was examined. As with economic experiments, the sample size (36) is lower than with ordinary quantitative research, so no generalisation of conclusions is used and the authors relate the results in accordance with the literature [88–90] only to the research sample studied.

4. Results

When travelling, Gen Z tourists most often choose those means of transport that ensure quick arrival at the destination, i.e., plane and train (Table 3). In contrast, less than 20% report using other means of transport.

Table 3. Respondents' preferred means of transport.

Mean of Transport	Plane	Car	Coach	Train	Bike	Carpooling	Other
Preferred means of transport (%)	88.9	16.7	13.9	69.4	2.8	0.0	13.9
Means of transport chosen when green travel lump sum for cost travel offered to tourists (%)	25.0	11.1	38.9	61.1	8.3	38.9	16.7

On the other hand, when analysing the means of transport in terms of their emissivity, it was found that means of high-emission transport are the most frequently chosen (Table 4). Nearly 64% of young tourists use a combination of means of high-emission and low-emission transport, and only 5.6% of them say they choose only means of low-emission transport when travelling. Among the low-emission ones, train, coach, and carpooling are preferred.

Table 4. High and low-emission means of transport versus form of travel in the Erasmus+ programme.

Specification	Type of Means of Transport			Percentage of the Total (in %)
	High-Emission Transport (in %)	Mix of High-Emission and Low-Emission Transport (in %)	Means of Low-Emission Transport (in %)	
Not using green travel	30.56	63.89	5.56	13.89
Green travel	13.89	19.44	66.67	86.11

Remarkably, the analysis indicated that if the same respondents are offered a subsidy to reduce their transport costs in the form of a so-called one-time payment of a green travel lump sum, then the preference of means of transport in terms of emissions changes completely. Gen Z tourists then choose low-emission transport (Table 4). It is worth noting that statistical verification of the null hypothesis using the Mann–Whitney U test, which states that the means of transport chosen by Gen Z tourists are evaluated in the same way regardless of the green travel lump sum offered to them, was negative ($U = 121.00$; $Z = -4.41$; $p\text{-value} = 0.00$).

As the data analysis was carried out using contingency tables, the evaluation of the relationship was carried out using the chi-square independence test. The value of statistics showed (Table 5) that there is a statistically significant relationship between the variables

under study, i.e., if Gen Z tourists are offered the opportunity to travel to a destination under the green travel programme, i.e., with a one-time payment, then tourists choose to travel using means of low-emission transport. Furthermore, an assessment of the strength of this relationship using Cramer's V test (0.64) indicated that there is a strong relationship between these variables, i.e., the travel cost reduction discount offered to tourists and the choice of means of low-emission transport by young tourists.

Table 5. Verification of the dependence and its strength between green travel (with lump sum) and the type of means of transport chosen by tourists—statistics.

Statistics	Value	df	<i>p</i> -Value
Pearson Chi-square	29.3987	2	<i>p</i> = 0.0000
Cramer's V	0.6390	-	-

This was followed by an examination of what factor is most important to the Gen Z tourists surveyed when deciding to travel using low-emission means of transport (Table 6).

Table 6. Factors that drive Gen Z tourists to travel abroad using low-emission means of transport (in %).

Type of Factor	Changing to Low-Emission Means of Transport						Total
	No		Partial Change, i.e., to a Mix of High- and Low-Emission Transport		Yes or Low-Emission Transport Is Still Preferred		
	of This Category	of Total	of This Category	of Total	of This Category	of Total	
Economic	60.00	8.33	100.00	19.44	50.00	33.33	61.11
Environmental	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	25.00	16.67	16.67
Cognitive landscape	40.00	5.56	0.00	0.00	25.00	16.67	22.22
Total	-	13.89	-	19.44	-	66.67	100.00

The results show that the most important factor for Gen Z tourists when travelling abroad under Erasmus+ for them to benefit from green travel is the economic factor. The economic factor, i.e., the cost of travel, is the main determinant in the choice of the means of transport. It should be noted that the majority of respondents (61.1%), regardless of which means of transport they use and whether they have taken advantage of green travel or not, pay attention primarily to the cost of travel. It should be added that the environmental factor, which is at the heart of Erasmus+ green travel, is of little importance. Only 16.7% of Gen Z tourists choosing to travel using low-emission means of transport do so out of concern for the environment. More important to them than the environmental factor is the cognitive landscape factor. It is comforting, however, that 86.1 percent of respondents either partially or completely switch from high-emission means of transport to low-emission ones when they are offered a subsidy to reduce their transport costs. This indicates that this green travel inducement tool is effective and ensures that the objective is achieved.

Analysis by using Pearson's chi-square test (Table 7) determines that there is no association between categorical variables (at a significance level of 5%). However, the results of this statistical verification indicate that with a probability of 89.13%, it can be concluded that these variables are dependent, with the highest probability of this relation being with the cognitive factor (89.13%), a slightly lower probability with the economic factor (88.64%), and the lowest with the environmental factor (83.47%). Meanwhile, the impact of these factors on respondents' propensity to change to low-emission means of transport was examined using logistic regression analysis. The type of regression results from the fact that the relationship between a set of independent variables and a qualitative (dichotomous) dependent variable was examined here. Clearly, the necessary assumptions for the use of logistic regression were met, including the fact that there was no

multicollinearity among the independent variables (the correlations between them ranged from 0.15 to 0.47) (see Table 8).

Table 7. Assessment of the dependence between selected factors and changing to low-emission means of transport—statistics.

Statistics	Value	df	p-Value
Pearson Chi-square	7.5682	4	$p = 0.1087$
Cramer's V	0.3242	-	-

Table 8. Correlation analysis between independent variables.

Specification	Economic Factor	Environmental Factor	Cognitive Factor
Economic factor (X1)	1.000000	−0.158114	−0.471405
Environmental factor (X2)	−0.158114	1.000000	−0.149071
Cognitive landscape factor (X3)	−0.471405	−0.149071	1.000000

As the estimation of the model estimators indicated that the p -value for the environmental factor was statistically insignificant, logistic regression analysis was conducted for two independent variables. Regression analysis confirmed that the influence is not exerted by all three factors but only by the economic (with probability at 94.24%) and cognitive landscape factors (see Table 9). The odds ratio that the respondent will choose to travel using low-emission means of transport was 7.69 for the economic factor and 9.77 for the cognitive landscape factor.

Table 9. Analysis of the influence of factors on the propensity of Gen Z tourists to green travel—logistic regression analysis statistics.

Specification	Estimate b	Standard Error	t-Statistic	p Value	ODDS RATIO
N = 36 Model: Logistic regression(logit) N of 0's: 23; N of 1's: 13; Final loss: 19.692264; Chi-sq.(2) = 7.7074; $p = 0.02121$					
Constant	−3.165313	1.161821	−2.724441	0.010220	0.042201
Economic factor (X1)	2.039521	1.036599	1.967511	0.057576	7.686923
Cognitive factor (X3)	2.279146	0.975151	2.337224	0.025644	9.768337

In the final stage of the analysis, the authors sought to answer the third research question: does tourists' risk aversion affect their choices? First, using the RT-18 risk-taking questionnaire, the respondents' vulnerability to risk taking was assessed. Table 10 shows the results of this analysis.

Table 10. Descriptive statistics for the level of risk aversion among surveyed Gen Z tourists.

Statistics	Structure of Level of Risk Taking (in %)			Mean	Median	Mode	Min.	Max.	Variance	Standard Deviation
	L	M	H							
Total risk taking (TRT)	22.2	69.4	8.3	8.36	8	8	2	15	8.52	2.92
Risk-taking behaviour (RTB)	13.9	66.7	19.4	5.19	4	4	2	9	4.39	2.10
Risk assessment (RA)	0.0	63.9	36.1	3.17	4	4	0	7	3.00	1.73

Abbreviations: L—low; M—medium; H—high. Scores on subgroups of risk-taking level: Low = 0–6 (TRT), 0–3 (RTB), 0–1 (RA); Medium = 7–12 (TRT), 4–7 (RTB), 2–5 (RA); High = 13–18 (TRT), 8–9 (RTB), 6–9 (RA).

It is worth noting that the surveyed Gen Z tourists travelling under the Erasmus+ programme, including green travel, are mostly characterised by a medium level of risk aversion. The average total risk taking among these young tourists is 8.36, which means that on a scale of 0–16, the level of risk aversion is $\alpha = 0.52$. However, it should be noted that they show slightly higher risk assessment than risk-taking behaviour. Similar conclusions are obtained by assessing the median and the mode.

Next, using contingency tables and Pearson's chi-square test of independence, it was examined whether there was a statistical dependence between the level of risk aversion and the respondents' choices of means of transport (high, mixed, and low emission). The results of this assessment are shown in Table 11.

Table 11. Statistical dependence between the level of risk aversion and the means of transport chosen by Gen Z tourists.

Form of Travel in the Erasmus+ Programme	Type of Means of Transport			Changing to Green Travel	
	High-Emission Transport (in %)	Mix of High-Emission and Low-Emission Transport (in %)	Low-Emission Transport (in %)	No	Yes
Low RT	60.00	40.00	0.00	60.00	16.13
Medium RT	0.00	85.71	14.29	40.00	74.19
High RT	20.83	70.83	8.33	0.00	9.68
Share in total	13.89	19.44	66.67	13.89	86.11
Statistics for the Pearson's chi-square independence test					
Statistics values	$\chi^2 = 6.3995$, df = 4, $p = 0.1712$			$\chi^2 = 4.9378$, df = 2, $p = 0.0847$	

The analysis indicated that those characterised by low risk taking were most likely to choose means of high-emission transport and that they were otherwise only marginally (16.1%) willing to use Erasmus+ travel when travelling. Moreover, if they did so, they were willing to use a mix of low- and high-emission transport means. It is also worth noting that the majority of respondents, when given the opportunity to use Erasmus+ green travel, did so (86.1%) and additionally declared using only means of low-emission transport (66.7%). It should be noted, however, that among such tourists, those characterised by medium or high risk taking predominate. At the 5% significance level, the analysis of the relation between risk aversion and the propensity to choose low-emission means of transport showed no statistically significant dependence (Table 12). However, it should be noted that with a probability of 82.9%, there is a relationship between the two variables, and with a probability of 91.5%, there is a relationship between higher levels of risk taking among young tourists and the propensity to take advantage of the Erasmus+ green travel programme and use means of low-emission transport. However, this relationship is low, with a correlation coefficient of $R = 0.19$.

Table 12. Use of means of transport depending on the level of risk taking.

Means of Transport	Plane	Car	Coach	Train	Bike	Carpooling	Other
Low RT	22.22	25.00	0.00	18.18	66.67	0.00	0.00
Medium RT	66.67	50.00	85.71	72.73	0.00	92.86	100.00
High RT	11.11	25.00	14.29	9.09	33.33	7.14	0.00

To conclude the study of this issue, an analysis was carried out with the help of contingency tables of how the structure of the use of means of transport depending on the level of risk taking develops (Table 12).

The analysis indicated that modes of transport such as the bike, plane, and car are chosen by people characterised by low risk taking. Apart from the bike, these are the means of transport considered as high emission. Meanwhile, coach and carpooling are means of transport chosen by people with medium or high risk taking.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

5.1. Theoretical Implications

The analysis of the attitudes of Gen Z tourists towards green travel offered by the EU's Erasmus+ programme conducted in this paper provided a number of theoretical implications. Key theoretical implications are as follows:

- The post-COVID-19 era was a kind of “return” to the environment, and there was an interest among researchers in the subject of responsible tourism, which takes the environmental aspect into account.
- The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the impact of green mobility in reducing GHG emissions.
- New publications are still appearing in the literature indicating the socio-economic effects of COVID-19 on welfare and health, which means that there are still no clear findings on the impact of this pandemic.
- In the literature, the term ‘green travel’ is often used as a synonym for ‘sustainable tourism’ or ‘ecotourism’. However, the concept of ‘green travel’ not only is about travelling to ecologically clean, environmental destinations but also takes into account the needs of the ecology and environment (travel using low-emission means of transport) [27–30].
- Publications on Gen Z are fragmented, with studies on young tourists focusing on Millennials. Gen Z has grown up in turbulent decades, making safety more of a value for representatives of this generation than for the post-previous generations [62,73].
- Gen Z has a high environmental awareness compared to previous generations.

5.2. Practical Implications and Findings

This study sought to explore the attitudes of young tourists (Generation Z tourists) towards green travel offered by the EU's Erasmus+ programme and means of low-emission transport. The analysis showed that surveyed Gen Z tourists, if they do not have additional incentives, usually choose the plane or secondarily the train as their means of long-distance travel. These findings coincide with the findings of Zhao et al. [54] that flying by plane is the most popular form of travel. Moreover, they do not pay attention to whether the means of transport are high or low emission. However, if they are given a financial incentive, even if only in the form of a one-time payment of a green travel lump sum, then most of them (around 86%) are willing to travel using means of low-emission transport or part of their trip in this way. The answer to the first research question of whether there is a relationship between these choices is positive ($r_{1xy} = 0.64$). If they do, however, it appears that the stimulus is not a desire to care for the environment but economic and cognitive landscape factors ($r_{2xy} = 0.32$). Thus, the answer to the second research question is that the economic factor plays a more important role than environmental awareness in the choice of means of transport (low emission). A finding can therefore be drawn for decision-makers that higher subsidies for green travel would encourage a higher proportion of people to use this form of transport. The findings in this study therefore coincide with those of Goulia and Henson [15] and Li and Wang [91] that tourists are not unanimous and consistent towards green travel. The results obtained in this study also partly coincide with the findings of Masiero and Zoltan [17] that many factors influence the choice of the means of transport. Similarly, the finding that an environmental factor, i.e., environmental awareness, does not influence the propensity of young tourists to choose means of low-emission transport may support the conclusion put forward by Juvan and Dolnicar [20] that tourists lack knowledge about the climate damage of travel. To answer the third research question, it was investigated whether the risk aversion of young tourists influences the

green travel choices they make. Their level of risk taking was found to be medium at $\alpha = 0.52$, and, to a slightly greater extent, their risk-taking assessment was higher than their risk-taking behaviour. However, it was found that at a significance level of 0.05, there was no basis for rejecting the null hypothesis of there being no statistically significant relationship between the level of risk aversion and the propensity to green travel, and the strength of the relationship was low ($r_{3xy} = 0.19$). Despite this, it was found that the majority of respondents using green travel were characterised by medium or high risk taking. In addition, it was found that with more than a 90 percent probability, there is such a relationship between the studied variables. An additional finding is that means of transport such as bike, plane, and car are chosen by those characterised by low risk taking, and coach and carpooling are chosen by those with medium or high risk taking. It is therefore difficult to assess whether the approximately 90% probability that a positive relationship exists between the level of risk taking of the travelling tourist and the propensity to green travel is not the result of an attitude towards a particular means of transport rather than the use of means of low-emission transport. So, are young tourists interested in green mobility? The answer is yes, but on the condition that low-emission transport is cost-competitive. The findings of this study partly correspond with the findings of Cavagnaro, Staffieri, and Postma [70] and Han, Kim, and Kiatkawsin [83], indicating that one of the motivations of young tourists to travel, including green travel, is the cognitive landscape factor, i.e., the desire to relax and enjoy tourist attractions while travelling.

In conclusion, it should be emphasised that this work has added value. It is firstly due to the fact that the attitudes of Gen Z tourists towards the green travel offered by the EU through the Erasmus+ programme have not been studied so far. The findings obtained are therefore a valuable basis for future in-depth research, especially after taking into account research limitations. Secondly, it confirms some of the findings already indicated in the literature with regard to young tourists' attitudes towards means of transport and green travel. Thirdly, it was pointed out that, although the level of risk taking of tourists is not a statistically significant factor influencing the propensity to green travel, such a relationship can be observed in the case of a significant proportion of young tourists.

5.3. Research Limitations and Main Future Lines of Research

The article also has some research limitations. The first research limitation is the sample size, as the Erasmus+ green travel programme is only in its initial stages of implementation. In the future, when this programme has been running for longer, it would be worthwhile to expand the sample size and investigate how the entire Gen Z tourist population in Poland and other EU countries relates to green mobility. It is also worth assessing in the future how these trends develop according to the country of origin of Gen Z tourists. As a future line of research, the authors also propose to assess which countries green travel tourists travel to.

The authors also point to the range of the research group as a research limitation. As green travel can be used not only by students but also by lecturers and administrative staff, it would be worthwhile in the future to investigate how the choice of green mobility depends on different generations. The authors therefore suggest conducting an extended study taking into account the following factors: gender, age, country of origin, mode of transport, and direction of travel.

As future lines of research, the authors point to repeating the study on green mobility in the post-COVID era. Its aim could be to investigate whether the popularity of green tourism has been maintained and what impact this has had on reducing the negative environmental and GHG impacts of tourism.

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