

THE EVOLVING LANDSCAPE OF 21ST CENTURY BUSINESS TRAVEL: BLEISURE, DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION, AND RESILIENCE AMIDST GLOBAL CRISES

Phermphoon ASACHAI¹, Sudawan SOMAJI², Rachata CHAIMUANG³ and Thongvanh SIRIVANH⁴

1 Khon Kaen Business School, Khon Kaen University, Thailand;
phermphoon.a@kkumail.com

2 College of Integrative Medicine, Dhurakij Pundit University, Thailand;
sudawan.som@dpu.ac.th

3 Faculty of Tourism and Hotel, Chiang Rai Rajabhat University, Thailand;
rachata.cha@crru.ac.th

4 Faculty of Economics & Business Management, National University of Laos, Lao PDR.; thongvanh@nuol.edu.la

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received: 9 January 2026

Revised: 23 January 2026

Published: 13 February 2026

ABSTRACT

Business travel has been a cornerstone of the global economy in the 21st century, undergoing profound transformations driven by technological advancements, evolving workforce demands, and the burgeoning Bleisure travel phenomenon. Valued at \$1.28 trillion in 2019, this sector disproportionately contributes to tourism revenues despite its lower volume. This article systematically reviews the evolution, adaptation, and future trends of business travel from 2001-2025. It employs a multi-dimensional framework—covering economic, technological, psychological, legal, and sustainability dimensions—to analyze three key periods: pre-COVID-19 (2001-2019), during crisis (2020-2021), and post-COVID-19 (2021-2025). The pre-pandemic era saw robust growth and the nascent emergence of Bleisure, blending business with leisure pursuits. The COVID-19 crisis prompted massive disruptions but also catalyzed rapid digital transformation, accelerating remote work and virtual meetings, further embedding Bleisure as a viable travel modality. The post-pandemic landscape is characterized by uneven recovery, a sustained embrace of Bleisure travel and digital nomadism, smart airport ecosystems, and an intensified focus on sustainability and duty of care. The article synthesizes lessons learned, emphasizing the need to balance economic growth with social and environmental responsibility, strategic technology leverage, and adaptability to new traveler behaviors to build a resilient, future-ready business travel sector.

Keywords: Business Travel, Bleisure Travel, COVID-19 Impact, Digital Transformation, Sustainability

CITATION INFORMATION: Asachai, P., Somaji, S., Chaimuang, R., & Sirivanh, T. (2026). The Evolving Landscape of 21st Century Business Travel: Bleisure, Digital Transformation, and Resilience Amidst Global Crises. *Procedia of Multidisciplinary Research*, 4(2), 47.

Data Availability Statement: The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Publisher's Note: All claims expressed in this article are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of their affiliated organizations, or those of the publisher, the editors and the reviewers. Any product that may be evaluated in this article, or claim that may be made by its manufacturer, is not guaranteed or endorsed by the publisher.



Copyright: © 2026 by the authors. This is a fully open-access article distributed under the terms of the Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0).