

## CHAPTER 6

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# The Recovery Roadmap of the Tourism Industry Post-COVID-19 Pandemic: Literature-Based Recommendations

FARHAD NAZIR<sup>1</sup>, JEETESH KUMAR<sup>2</sup>,  
NEETHIAHNANTHAN ARI RAGAVAN<sup>3</sup>, and ANUKRATI SHARMA<sup>4</sup>

*<sup>1</sup>University of Coimbra, CEGOT, Faculty of Arts & Humanities, Portugal; University of Swat, Pakistan*

*<sup>2</sup>School of Hospitality, Tourism and Events; Centre for Research and Innovation in Tourism (CRiT); Sustainable Tourism Impact Lab, Taylor's University, Malaysia*

*<sup>3</sup>Faculty of Social Sciences & Leisure Management, Taylor's University, Malaysia*

*<sup>4</sup>Department of Commerce and Management, University of Kota, Kota, India*

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### ABSTRACT

In a very inclusive global business environment, a strong inclination toward the financial and employment dependence on the tourism industry exists quite visibly. Statistics revealed that every tenth job had been directly or indirectly associated with tourism and its ancillary segments. It is safe to argue that the economies of the specific countries entail a large chunk of revenue generated from the transactions of the tourism business. Considering this, a competitive setup has been created to have a more significant input to national economies due to tourism. Purposeful infrastructural development has been carried out in certain countries to dominate the tourism industry. Such maximum reliance

Dynamics of the Tourism Industry: Post-Pandemic and Post-Disaster Perspectives and Strategies.  
Gül Erkol Bayram and Anukrati Sharma (Eds.)

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has undergone unprecedented negative impacts, particularly in the ongoing emergency of the COVID-19 pandemic. Pandemic has introduced exemplary restrictions and stoppages to the tourism sector, completely halting the entire hustling happenings to the freezing zone. Unmatchable decline due to pandemics has caused massive economical outbursts and the loss of countless jobs. Furthermore, uncertainty regarding the mitigation and recovery toward the new normal exists due to the frequent prevailing layers of pandemic and novel mutated variants. However, this is not the first case of its kind, and the past literature shows that such health pandemics and disasters have occurred over time. Besides the devastating impacts of these pandemics and disasters, recovery of the tourism industry has been successfully planned and achieved. Embarking on the same, the current study highlights the recovery strategy of the tourism industry in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic through the extensive review of past studies. The archival analysis of the existing studies has enabled the researcher to set implications and recommendations for the speedy recovery of the tourism industry.

## 6.1 INTRODUCTION

The lucrative face of tourism has attracted the attention of investors and shareholders, eventually transforming this sector into a mega-industry (Camilleri, 2018). In addition to several other ancillary subsectors, hospitality and travel segments have become prominent, generating enough revenue (Thommandru et al., 2021; Vogel, 2021). A large chunk of revenue to the domestic, national, and regional economies have obligated the stakeholders to pool up and claim their shares from the transactions of tourism businesses. However, this hustling industry has a flip side in the form of natural calamities, natural health emergencies, and human-induced unrest and uprising situations (Cohen, 2012; Ozbay et al., 2021; Perles-Ribes et al., 2018; Ritchie, 2004). These unwanted circumstances have impacted tourism's happenings over a long period in the past and eventually left financial, social, cultural, environmental, and psychological impacts. Even the post-events scenarios have created negative imagery of destinations, eventually posing a solid barrier for potential tourists (Avraham, 2006; Avraham and Ketter, 2017; Li et al., 2018; Mair et al., 2016; Ryu et al., 2013; Selmi and Dornier, 2017; Wang, 2017; Wu and Shimizu, 2020). Scaling from least developed–developing–developed and up to the postdeveloped countries has further differences in tackling the impacts of such natural and human-induced unrest situations. Developed and postdeveloped countries seem to be more vigilant and swift in assessing and

analyzing the unrests situations (Blake and Sinclair, 2003; Chan et al., 2020; de Sausmarez, 2007; Pennington-Gray et al., 2011; Ritchie, 2008; Ritchie et al., 2004; Zeng et al., 2005). Moreover, these countries' mitigation and recovery strategy has been designed on a war footing, allowing them to recover from such situations and roll back the previous stages of tourism happenings. While in developing and underdeveloped countries, the two-fold consequence patterns of these situations seem to be a big challenge. In the first instance, such countries have to face the undesirable negative consequences of these situations. Later, in the post-events scenarios, a significant challenge of a negative image in the global face regarding threats and risks awaits the stakeholders. Overall to say, despite such devastating impacts, destination's stakeholders have struggled hard to regain their desired image through rebranding and other marketing mantras. To this end, utmost attention to mitigating these undesired situations and recovery strategy has been nominated as a powerful compulsion. Successful mitigation campaigns and recovery roadmaps have been structured in many countries, easing the tourist's decision-making process (Glyptou, 2021; Mansfeld, 1999; Pizam, 2006; Santana, 2004).

Interestingly, in the ongoing globalised milieu, even the developed countries count on mitigating impacts and recovery from pandemics in developing and least developed countries. Such dependence is the cross-overs of nations and exchange of industrial products and services among all scales of development. The unending pandemic—COVID-19 and its fast spread has justified this dependency and urged the shareholders to think as a whole rather than on a solitary and country-specific approach. Keeping with the current discussion, this study has attempted to unveil the theoretical endeavors and organizational frameworks crafted during the pandemic; also, comparatively with the past examples of inevitable pandemics and health emergencies which had affected the tourism industry. Doing so, in both academic and industrial discourse, through this study, an attempt has been made to sketch the potential roadmap for the recovery of tourism from such health outbreaks.

## 6.2 TOURISM INDUSTRY GLOBALLY

Tourism is a significant source of foreign exchange earnings, a generator of personal and corporate incomes, a creator of employment, and a contributor to government earnings. It is a dominant international activity, surpassing even trade oil and made products. International tourist arrivals grew 5% in

2018 to reach the 1.4 billion mark. This figure was reached 2 years ahead of the UNWTO forecast. At the same time, export earnings generated by tourism have grown to USD 1.7 trillion (UNWTO, 2021). This makes the sector a truly global force for economic growth and development, driving more and better jobs and serving as a catalyst for innovation and entrepreneurship. In short, tourism is helping build better lives for millions of individuals and transforming whole communities. Growth in international tourist arrivals and receipts continues to outpace the world economy, and emerging, and advanced economies benefit from rising tourism income. For the seventh year in a row, tourism exports grew faster than merchandise exports, reducing trade deficits in many countries.

Tourism is an essential component of export diversification for emerging and advanced economies, with a solid capacity to reduce trade deficits and compensate for weaker export revenues from other goods and services. There was an extra USD 121 billion in export revenues from international tourism (travel and passenger transport) for 2018. Export earnings from international tourism are an essential source of foreign revenues for many destinations in the world (UNWTO, 2019, 2020).

Having the 10th consecutive year of sustained growth, international tourist arrivals in 2019 touched 1.5 billion and millions of jobs with a high

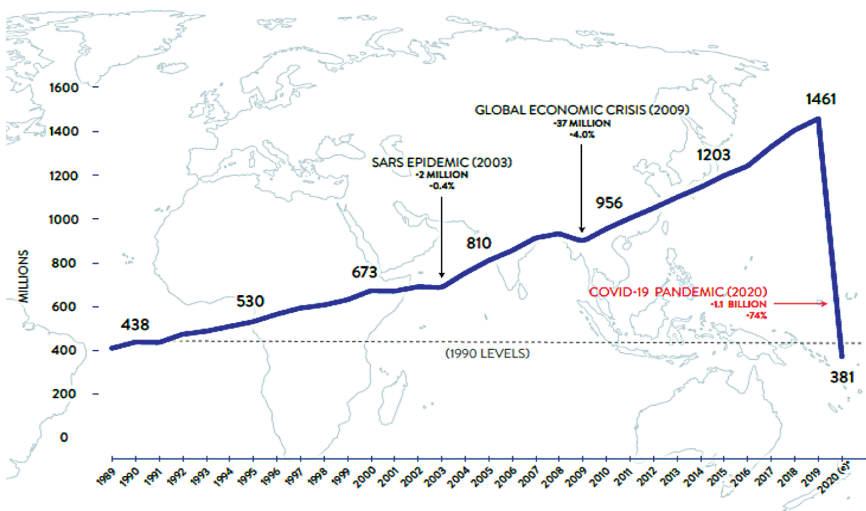


FIGURE 6.1 International tourists arrival (millions).

Source: Reprinted from UNWTO (2021).

share of women. In 2020, a vast downfall (−74%) was recorded for tourists' arrival because of COVID-19 forwarding back international tourism to the level of 30 years ago. This loss is too huge, including 1 billion international tourist arrivals, US\$ 1.3 trillion export revenue, over US\$ 2 trillion global GDP and 100–120 million direct tourism jobs are also at risk. The UNWTO world tourism barometer report confirms that most tourism experts expect international tourism to return to pre-COVID levels only in 2023 or after (UNWTO, 2021).

### **6.3 COVID-19 AND TOURISM INDUSTRY**

It is safe to state that the pandemic has affected the tourism industry almost in every geographical position. Every development in the face of the pandemic has been directly considered associated with the tourism industry. Vaccinated passports, automated security checks, and contactless hospitality services have all seen significant development and market demand due to changes in the behavior of tourists. National and international Destination Management Organizations DMOs have been entirely engaged in understanding these new tourists and a competitive environment created among several tourism subsectors to market the destinations as safer and more hygienic. Of course, in the post-pandemic era, the preferences of tourists and responsive products and services will have to be entirely dependent on these new health mantras. To furnish such health protocols and standards better, it is necessary to understand the nature of the pandemic's impacts on the tourism industry.

### **6.4 EFFECTS OF COVID-19 ON THE TOURISM INDUSTRY**

Layers of COVID-19 have brought some of the worst and unmatched consequences ever imagined and least expected, primarily for the supply and demand side of the tourism industry. The impact of a pandemic may be understandable in four major segments of the society, namely, financial, social, cultural, and psychological. Studies based on different geographical domains and stages of development have corroborated the impacts of a pandemic on these segments (Adom, 2020; Bukuluki et al., 2020; Craig, 2020; Renzaho, 2020). The financial crises chain has witnessed some of the most devastating impacts ranging from households to the national, regional, and global economic levels. The trade has suffered financial setbacks due to the pandemic (Mtimet et al., 2021). Severe damage has handicapped the

countries, particularly the developing ones disabling them to support the tourism sector. Besides, the developed countries have fueled a considerable number of financial resources to sustain several tourism sectors. For developing and least developed ones, this pandemic has compelled the states to shift on the backfoot and emphasize the essential segments (food, health, shelter) of the community, neglecting the importance of tourism and its ancillary sectors.

While arguing on the grounds of social and cultural frameworks, the pandemic has introduced some unexpected consequences and measures, disintegrating the populace ranging from tiny community segments to the significant global stage. Tourism is the reason for sociocultural get-togethers, maybe well-argued as the frontier sector in these effects. Stoppages of traveling and cancelation of tourism activities compromised sociocultural experiences and the financial shortages (Cooper and Alderman, 2020). Primarily to say, the pandemic has halted the phases of cultural exchange, including the cultural exposure and cultural awareness between the guest and host communities (Swaikoski, 2020: 2). Psychological wellbeing, an additional element of the human health system, has also suffered dramatically during the pandemic (Chua et al., 2021). The psychosomatic problems have surfaced either on the demand side or supply due to the pandemic's immense financial and social pressure. On side of demand avenue, pandemic has entirely transformed the psychological needs of tourists (Cheung et al., 2021), while on the supply side, employees' psychological capital suffered on a larger scale (Mao et al., 2020).

### **6.5 COVID-19: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR INNOVATION OR A CRISES?**

Undoubtedly, the pandemic has been and is expected to be a crisis in an exceptionally pretty long time ahead. However, it has also provided the shareholders and stakeholders of the tourism industry a pause and think time to reconsider their policies, operational setups, and safety procedures. During tourism, prior to pandemic, it was hard to sit back and reassess and reconsider the operational strategies in the past. Voluminous of academic endeavors have corroborated the association of pandemic and tourism more critically and highlighted the potential strategies for the endurance of the tourism industry (Seyfi et al., 2020; Yeh, 2021). Imperative to state the initiation of virtual gadgets while following the space restrictions and contactless compulsions have entirely refurbished the tourism industry.

## 6.6 CRISIS AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Considering this unhappy bond (tourism and crises/disasters) national and international agencies have been mobilized to counter and manage such unwanted situations. In academic discourse, the new terminology of tourism crises and disaster management (TDCM) has been introduced to explicitly address this sensitising element (Jiang et al., 2019). Based on the past literature, TCM (Theory-Context-Method) has proposed potential areas to be emphasized in the face of crises and disasters: theories of crises prevention and preparedness, risk communication, crises management education and training, risk assessment, crises events in the context of COVID-19, data privacy in hospitality and tourism, political-related crises events, digital media, and lastly the analytical methods and approaches (Wut et al., 2021). Similarly, learning from the past unwanted happenings and devising the coping and recovery strategies in a segregated framework has been documented as another viable approach in the face of crises and disasters in the tourism industry (Faulkner, 2001). From pre-crisis planning to implementation and feedback, the crises and disaster management in the tourism business has been argued as another proactive methodology (Ritchie, 2004). Combining the tourism business's sectors, an integrated line of action has been commented as adoptive and result-oriented in enabling the destination to recover from crises impacts (Hystad and Keller, 2008). Primarily, in the milieu of the pandemic, the engagement of multiple players and benefiting from their dynamic capabilities have been warranted as a deemed necessary approach for the sustenance of tourism in crises and disasters (Jiang et al., 2021).

## 6.7 INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

Considering the face of pandemic and involvement of different sectors to combat and curb its spread, it is safer to claim that pandemic has brought all these actors on the same schedule. In tourism, the pandemic has introduced some of the novel dependency of health and travel sectors. The mobility of domestic and cross-bordered tourists has been consistently relying on the national and international health agencies. This cross-disciplinary approach has pooled up tourism and health stakeholders, creating a new slogan of collective wisdom to tackle the pandemic (Wen et al., 2021). Health precautions including quarantine, COVID-Test, and vaccination have now taken a

position in almost every state's travel prerequisite. Assuredly, this pandemic has launched a paradigm shift in the tourism industry through a synergy of the health sector, media, medical academia, and many others.

## 6.8 CONCLUSIONS

In a more uncertain global scene, unwanted natural or human-induced happenings have impacted tourism and ancillary segments more than any other sector. Pandemic is one of the most suitable to quote in this regard, deserting the great hustle of tourism business to almost total stoppage. From local to national and regional to global, the financial loss has been immense and expected to continue before the new normal may introduce specific silver linings. The COVID-19 pandemic has wreaked havoc on the tourism industry, causing significant employment and business losses. The tourist industry was one of the first to be struck by the pandemic since measures to contain the virus resulted in a near-complete stoppage of tourism operations worldwide. With the current travel restrictions and the gloomy outlook, the sector risks becoming one of the last to recover. Each of the restrictions to curb the pandemic has been a significant setback for the functionality of tourism activities, despite the availability of management plans and policies at some destinations. The unprecedented launch of social distancing, travel closures, and standard operating procedures (SOPs) has caused the least anticipated consequences ever. Despite all these and past experiences of eventualities, the tourism sector seeks to recover from this global health crisis and longs for the new normal. This study has illuminated the theoretical contexts crafted for the management and recovery of crises and disasters in the tourism industry. Extensively, the existing literature has been brainstormed and discussed to unveil the pragmatic dimensions proposed in academia.

The government should improve its long-term recovery plan by addressing the lack of social protection in the tourism sector to mitigate the impact of a predicted downsizing. The government will be better positioned to deal with private actors after the social safety net is constructed. As we accept the new normal of increased technology disruption and drastic shifts in consumer behavior, the government should address the lack of innovation inside the industry. As a result, the government would have lowered industry players' fear of competition. They will resume making new investments as the tourist industry seizes chances created by changes in travel patterns and trends.



The government should think about adopting policies that provide more extensive social protection for tourism industry participants. In the tourism industry, the percentage of unorganized and seasonal labor is substantially higher. Within the new average, social protection should assist businesses and workers in adapting to new markets. By providing business loans and reskilling programmes, they can assist these players in adopting different business strategies and employment. As a result, strong welfare measures could be implemented to protect their livelihoods in times of uncertainty.

The government could consider fostering an environment in which businesses compete on an equal footing. For example, all industry players should be treated similarly regarding taxation policy and municipal regulations. On the other hand, any rules should be balanced, considering firm growth, and creating a level playing field. The government's involvement in the tourism industry should also be reconsidered. Instead of immediately competing with enterprises, it can assist Small Medium Enterprises SMEs in redeveloping their businesses to meet current and future trends. The government can transfer money to SMEs for programmes such as workforce upskilling.

## KEYWORDS

- **tourism industry**
- **pandemic**
- **disasters**
- **mitigation**
- **recovery**
- **restrictions**
- **COVID-19**

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