

CHAPTER 7

Pandemic Management in the Tourism Industry: The Role of Government in Mitigating COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

Recently, pandemic has affected the tourism industry globally. The COVID-19 pandemic has flourished across media and under several titles, including sanitary crisis, health emergency, natural disaster, etc. What outcomes are there to this selective outlining of the situation, and what can it tell us about the nature of the global response? Negative news about political, economic, or social status is distributed worldwide through numerous media channels. Generally, the key to success is creating a problem-solving action plan including prevention measures that combine all stakeholders' interests and activities. However, in the tourism industry, the equal integration of all stakeholders is most complicated. Crisis management, in general, can be described as measures of all types which allow a business to cope with a suddenly occurring danger or risk situation to return as quickly as possible to a regular business routine. Hence,

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it is necessary to have a systematic and conceptional approach to offer suitable solutions for stakeholders—how tourism businesses react to such crises and what measures should be taken; also, to understand how tourism businesses should prepare themselves for such crises and strategies to conquer them. In this context, the chapter aims to explore the literature on pandemic management in tourism and to identify the motivations of the current academic discourse.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Tourism contributes significantly to the global economy that accounts for 10.4% (2,9 trillion USD) of global gross domestic product (WTTC, 2019) which is a crucial source of income, jobs, and wealth creation in numerous countries. Tourism has tremendous relevance in numerous aspects of human life: economic, environmental, social, and cultural. Therefore, tourism cannot be seen as a stand-alone industry; its existence elicits infinity multiples in industry and other spheres. Tourism, in short, is turning into one of the foremost profitable growth engines for the worldwide economy. Despite occasional shocks, it sustained growth within the last ten consecutive years from 2009 to 2019 (UNWTO, 2020). Since 1995, the trend of international tourist arrivals has constantly increased, indicating promising tourism growth.

Tourism and pandemic have an unhappy bond predominantly in the postindustrial development milieu. In the twentieth century alone, a list of health pandemics outbreaks prevailed in the length and breadth of planet earth, in addition to the loss of lives, socioeconomic sufferings, and isolation. The positive side of communicational development has been a prominent reason for the fast spread of these pandemics. In similar regard, the travel sector was enacted as a medium for distributing these outbreaks into neighboring and regional entities, further worsening the impacts.

The COVID-19 crisis has authorities worldwide operating in a context of radical uncertainty and faced with difficult trade-offs given the health, economic, and social challenges it raises. Within the first three months of 2020, the novel coronavirus developed into a global pandemic. Schools and universities were closed in spring 2020 for more than one billion students of all ages. COVID-19 spread to almost all countries and affected more than 50 million people worldwide, resulting in more than 1.25 million deaths from November 2019 till the present (Ingravallo, 2020). More than half of the world's population has experienced a lockdown with strong containment

measures—the first time in history that such measures are applied on such a large scale.

In sudden, the Coronavirus pandemic has brought exceptional shocks to the travel and tourism industry universally since 2019, as worldwide governments constrain international travel, and even local movements are governed by state legislation. Tourism that works once people travel outside their residency automatically freezes and meets the needs of tourists' sectors both directly and indirectly. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) estimated that the loss suffered is 1.5% (1.2 trillion USD) of the global gross domestic product, and further UNCTAD estimates that for each 1 million USD lost in international tourism revenue, a country's value might decline by 2–3 million USD, with international tourist arrivals crashed to 74% less in 2020 which is equivalent to one billion tourists (UNWTO, 2020). UNWTO launched “One billion tourists: One Billion Opportunities” as a tourism campaign, to face this pandemic in 2020, UNWTO released “Restart Tourism” as the newest global travel campaign to stimulate tourism which has the facility to bring individuals back along, provide persistent experiences whereas additionally supporting jobs, serving to businesses and protective culture and natural heritage. The rise of tourism indicates any other business revivals. While considering the above issues, this chapter explores the relevant literature regarding pandemics history, global impacts on the tourism industry, and synching with the best practices adopted by state regimes in mitigating COVID-19 (Saarinen, 2019).

7.2 HISTORICAL CHRONOLOGY OF VIRAL PANDEMICS AND TOURISM

To recognize the pandemic impacts on the tourism industry, it is imperative to have a supervisory glance at the historical flow chart of these happenings in the last hundred years. The illustrative table below is the list of pandemics, their impacts, and steps taken to curb the spread.

Like all pandemics, COVID-19 has a spatial dimension that must be addressed. By November 2020, it will be evident that the COVID-19 crisis has had a significant impact on countries and regions and municipalities within countries in terms of declared cases and deaths. In the People's Republic of China (hereafter referred to as “China”), Hubei province accounted for 83%

TABLE 7.1 Major Health Outbreaks in the Last 100 Years.

Pathogen	Year	Fatality	Impacts on Tourism	Authors
Spanish Flu	1918–1920	50 million	Ban on leisure activities, mass gatherings, travel.	Gallo and Davis (2014); Nascimento (2020)
Asian Flu	1957–1957	02 million	Innovative restrictions on educational premises, travel, and social gatherings.	Henderson et al. (2009); Saunders-Hastings and Krewski (2016)
SARS	2002–2003	774	Decrease of 1.2% in international Tourism Arrival, Cancellation of sports tourism events, cancellation of conferences and business galas.	WHO (2015), Wilder-Smith (2006)
Swine Flu	2009	284,000	Travel advisories, quarantine, thermal screening.	WHO (2010), Page et al. (2012)
MERS	2012	858	Cease of international travel, quarantine.	WHO (2019), Choe et al. (2021)
COVID-19	2019–Present	4,539,723 & counting.	Ban on air, sea, and land travel within and across countries, closure of all public spaces, restaurants, hotels, destinations etc.	WHO (2021)

of confirmed cases. The north of Italy was the hardest hit, with Lombardy, one of Europe’s wealthiest areas, recording the highest number of cases (47% as of November) (COVID-19, Italian Government.). New York had the highest percentage of federal cases (14.6%) in the United States, followed by Texas (8%). As of November, the provinces of Quebec and Ontario accounted for 61 and 31% of total cases in Canada, respectively. As of November, metropolitan Santiago accounted for 70% of all cases in Chile. As of November, Sao Paulo, Brazil, had recorded 25% of the cases. In India, Maharashtra accounted for 21% of confirmed cases, while Moscow accounted for 24% of total cases in Russia as of November. COVID-19-related death rates show an intense regional concentration as well. COVID-19 deaths per 100 000 people vary significantly from nation to country, especially in the most hard-hit countries. Calabria, for example, is the least impacted region in Italy, with 5.5 deaths per 100,000 people compared to 171 deaths per 100,000

in Lombardy. In the United States, Vermont had 9.3 fatalities per 100,000 people compared to 184 in New Jersey. In Brazil, Minas Gerais had 41.8 fatalities per 100,000 people, while the mortality rate in the Distrito General was 120. South Korea and New Zealand were less affected than the rest of the world. In Sejong, there were no deaths per 100,000, while in Daegu, there were 8.1 deaths per 100,000 (Ministry of Health of Chile, 2020).

7.3 THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN MITIGATING COVID-19

7.3.1 PREVACCINE MEASURE

In the face of health emergencies, primarily, as evident from the ongoing pandemic, the state fronts have been the focal spheres facing the impacts and devising the management for the mitigation. The unprecedented outcomes of a pandemic have necessitated the state actors to take some of the least expected movement restrictions and lockdowns. Considering the authoritative mandate of regimes, the imposition of mobility control notifications and do and don'ts implementations have been noticeably observed and practised by the populace. However, criticism has been equally echoed on these state restrictions in the context of different countries (Berman, 2020; Geloso and Murtazashvili, 2020; Mendolia et al., 2021; Moser and Yared, 2020; Shaw et al., 2006). The states are in a constant dual push in imposing the restrictions, and in case of easing these. Compromise on social distancing has resulted in economic downfall. In developing and least developed countries, additional socioeconomic exertion has obliged the governments to take unwelcomed decisions (Gronbach and Seekings, 2021).

Contrary to this, in developed countries, two-way communication has been initiated to synchronize the restrictions with the economic needs of residents (Choi et al., 2021). Similarly, the developed regimes have introduced and handed over the economic stimulus packages for the economic sustenance of their citizens (Kaplan et al., 2020). While for some nation-states, bare minimum mobility has been permitted to maintain the operational cycle (Dobusch and Kreissl, 2020).

Hotel and restaurant restrictions have been another contested debate in the academic archives in the hospitality sector alone. Controlled Dining and No-Dining in restaurants and minimum occupational protocols for hotels and periodic operational timings have been devised and implemented by governments across the globe (Bharwani and Mathews, 2021; Brizek et al., 2021; Hoang et al., 2021; Milwood and Crick, 2021; Nhamo et al., 2020;

Singh et al., 2021). On one side, these restraints have deleteriously affected the hospitality business. On the other side, it has obliged the stakeholders to modify their operational models to be more contactless and digital (Byrd et al., 2021; Lai et al., 2020; Sirimongkol, 2021). The travel side being pivotal on mobility has been the leading one in the face of pandemic consequences. All three segments of travel, including the terrestrial, marine, and air, have been equally affected and cancellation and ban imposed on inbound and outbound arrivals.

7.3.2 POSTVACCINE MEASURES

In the contest of vaccination production, several pharmaceutical companies have been consistently competing to launch the vaccine for pandemics as early as possible. Vaccination has been foreseen as another essential entity in reverting the pandemic and a license for a new normal (Ahuja et al., 2021; Rouatbi et al., 2021; Turhan et al., 2021). On the side of supply, there has been a collaborative approach followed by the countries in rolling out the vaccines. Soon after distributing vaccines, countries have revisited their plans and restrictions. To this end, the inaugural of specific travel prerequisites has also been made mandatory for the mobility of travelers. Vaccination Passports, Digital Vaccination Credentials/Certificates, among many others, have been the more pertinent ones to mention. In addition, vaccination proof has been set conditional for dining in restaurants, accommodation in lodging facilities, boarding in terrestrial, marine and air transportation. Regionally, some integrated portals, for example, European Union Digital Certificate, have also been introduced to allow the smooth travel of residing population among member states.

Interestingly, there has been extensive debate made on the pros and cons of these health or immunisation certificates and their acceptability and credibility around the global arena (Corpuz, 2021; Liew and Flaherty, 2021; Mbunge et al., 2021; Satria et al., 2021; Voo et al., 2020). Some riots and protests have been observed against these updated travel and tourism prerequisites in some countries. Moreover, excluding some vaccines brands not approved by the European Medicine Agency EMA has also created severe uncertainties for tourists who have already jabbed these nonapproved shots.

7.3.4 LOCKDOWN—MOVEMENT CONTROL ORDER

To reduce the enormous expenses of national incarceration, many governments have implemented localized lockdown measures. This is true, for

example, in Aberdeen (Scotland), Auckland (New Zealand), Barcelona (Spain), Melbourne (Australia), various Indian provinces, and some German districts. Such a territorially differentiated approach can avoid the high costs of national confinement while allowing more tailored remedies to problems where they emerge. Policies in federal countries are defined at the state level and hence differ (Castex, 2020). Effective collaboration between local authorities, health agencies, and the federal government is required to handle local outbreaks.

7.3.5 TESTING AND TRACKING

Exit plans from confinement must include testing as a critical component. The WHO advises widespread testing to combat the coronavirus because the pandemic is still in its early stages. Frequent viral testing aids in identifying and isolating infected persons before symptoms appear, reducing the likelihood of second waves. To decrease the danger of future COVID-19 outbreaks, the OECD recommends that 70–90% of all persons who have come into contact with an infected person be tracked, tested, and isolated if infected (OECD, 2020). This necessitates a significant increase in testing, which can be costly. However, the difficulties and expenses of doing so pale in contrast to the costs of lockdowns (OECD, 2020).

The WHO proposes testing by detecting infectious persons and isolating contact cases before symptoms appear (WHO, 2020). Korea's effective strategy in managing the first wave of infections and preventing a second was based on testing and contact tracing, with local governments accountable for COVID-19 screening stations that allowed for rapid and safe testing and monitoring of people in self-quarantine. Between April and October 2020, European nations significantly boosted their capacity and broadened their testing for suspected instances. Official data from the EU27 reveals that over 6 million RT-PCR tests were performed per week in October (ECDC, 2020; Government of the United States of America—White House, 2020).

Subnational governments are at the forefront of putting the “track, isolate, test, and treat” policy into action. While central governments must provide financial resources and coordination in more decentralized situations, regional and local governments will be responsible for policy implementation. Local and regional governments help organize testing and isolation measures in nations with more centralized health service delivery. It is critical to provide an opportunity for local initiatives and experimentation in either

a decentralized or a centralized setting. This helps manage the pandemic's asymmetric impact, which frequently necessitates a fast local-level reaction to identify and control clusters.

7.3.6 SPANNING THE EMERGENCY

The COVID-19 epidemic is putting pressure on all levels of government to respond in an environment of enormous uncertainty and economic, budgetary, and social pressure. A new problem has emerged since mid-2020, particularly with the start of the second wave of infections in many countries: the restricted ability to sequence policy action. To manage, escape, and recover from the crisis, national, regional, and municipal governments have discovered that they cannot rely on a straight or linear route of policy action. Governments must instead act in lockstep on all fronts simultaneously (SKYtg24, 2020).

Governments are rethinking their multi-level governance structures, reevaluating their policy instruments, and rethinking their regional development goals in response to this requirement for flexibility and adaptation. The adoption of a place-based strategy and mobilizing and coordinating different policy sectors and all levels of government are required for success. It requires strong leadership and sound coordination, consultation, and collaboration between government and nongovernment players.

It also depends on regaining public trust and making the most of continuing engagement with stakeholders and people (CoR-OECD, 2020). The responses to COVID-19 show promise in terms of regional development goals, with more accessible essential services, fewer digital divides, changed global value chains and industrial policies, and more excellent climate action, among other things, is highlighted.

7.3.7 EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT

In this epidemic, effective government public communication is critical to ensure that the official message is consistent internally and with the public and civil society. Behavioral communication initiatives have aided in implementing rules by encouraging or teaching large parts of the community to comply with needed procedures, such as hand washing and observing lockdown and social separation restrictions (Government of United Kingdom, 2020).

Citizens' faith in and participation in government policy may be strengthened via effective communication. In the battle against deception and misinformation, it is critical. Finally, it may assist in reaching out to specific demographic groups and facilitating discussion with individuals to ensure that policies and services are tailored to their needs and expectations.

7.3.8 POST-COVID-19 DEVELOPMENT

COVID-19's differing effects on individuals, communities, and regions and the possibility of exacerbating territorial imbalances provide a place-based approach to regional development and greater inclusivity a new urgency. The necessity of a balance between top-down and bottom-up activities, the need for successful relationships and trust across various actors, flexibility and adaptation, and the value of a balance between top-down and bottom-up actions contribute to this urgency. It's also reignited policy debates on regional resilience. As a result of the epidemic and the pressures it throws on all levels of government, regional development objectives are shifting to bolstering regional resilience (OECD Trento Centre for Local development, 2020). To create more resilient regions, first, ensure that they can absorb, recover (or bounce back) from, and/or adapt to the impact of economic, financial, environmental, political, and social shocks or chronic pressure; and then ensure that they can continue to meet the needs of citizens and businesses at least as well as—and ideally better than—before the crisis. Building more resilient regions after COVID-19 may increase national and subnational investment in health care and other public services.

In the EU, 76% of regional and municipal governments questioned agree that regional development policies should prioritize access to high-quality public services, including health, across all regions. It is also likely to lead to a re-evaluation of regional policy objectives, including their urban/rural balance, the digital divide, the balance between tangible and intangible assets (infrastructure such as broadband, public transportation, and social housing), R&D, innovation, well-being, and culture, productivity, and industrial profiles, and how to best meet higher-level aims, in addition to other issues.

In a crisis, the most typical focus of government centers is on managing and coordinating government operations. According to the OECD's 2017 Survey on the Organisation and Functions of the Centre of Government, 83% of CoGs have some risk management responsibilities, with over a third

having primary responsibility. Despite these numbers, only around 10% of CoGs identified “risk management and strategic foresight for the whole government” as a critical role of the Centre (OECD, 2018). The government’s reaction to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic illustrates how it adapts its crisis management to a complex crisis and institutional context. Governments have frequently created supplementary ways to standard emergency management processes, which are generally led or backed by the center of authority. They had no choice since they were up against a slew of “unknown unknowns.”

7.3.9 TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

The majority of the UNWTO Panel of tourism impacts of COVID-19 estimate international tourists may only be bound in 2024 or later. To accelerate the rebound of tourism, the role of the Government in Mitigating COVID-19 is very crucial, not only to keep people safe but also to keep businesses functional, as suggested by UNWTO as follows; build recovery strategies, speed up the pace of worldwide vaccination, functioning on effective coordination and communication on dynamical travel restrictions whereas advancing digital tools to facilitate quality are going to be crucial in building tourists’ trust to restart tourism as fast as possible by having best global health and prudent guidelines so that tourists can start arriving (Devi, 2020). Restarting tourism requires many adjustments of health infrastructure for tourism destinations and businesses, which costs money. Grants and low-cost loans from regional and international financial institutions can offer the necessary resources to make such changes and increase visitor appeal. Small, local businesses should be the focus of such programs. Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation (COMCEC) suggests more than just financial aids but also stimulating demand aids, legal aids, and operational aids.

One of the critical steps to keep tourism alive during this pandemic is adapting to a changing environment by applying travel restrictions. As a result of the pandemic, 96% of all worldwide destinations have imposed travel restrictions since April 2020, where the restrictions given are also continuously updated with new virus variants. In most cases, one mandatory travel restriction is in the form of vaccination requirements (tourists completed two doses of associate approved vaccine) and health protocol application during stays (wear a double mask, maintain physical distance, and clean hand frequently); other restrictions are according to their respective destinations (Vaidya et al., 2020).

7.3.10 TRAVEL BUBBLE

One more step to stimulate tourism as quickly as possible is called a travel bubble. A travel bubble is a travel corridor between countries amid a pandemic based on neighboring nations' agreement that has successfully controlled the COVID-19 to allow community travels across their borders only. Hence, the community is free to move about within the bubble, but they cannot enter outside (Yu et al., 2020). The goal is to provide more freedom without inflicting more harm. One of the advantages of the travel bubble approach is that the measurements used in each bubble may be modified to equalize infection risk efficiently and risk levels across origin and destination nations and empower businesses to restart. There are three main types of travel bubbles: The Basic Travel Bubble (BTB), which includes a basic set of standards, The Limited Travel Bubble (LTB) with additional test within 24–48 after departure, The Extended Travel Bubble (ETB) with two additional tests; 24–48 h after departure and 24–48 h after the arrival.

7.4 CONCLUSIONS

COVID-19, which seriously harms human health, has spread to a large part of the world in a concise time and has put countries in difficulties in health and many areas. Countries have tried to save both their public health and their economies with their measures and the bans they have implemented. One of the most sectors by the COVID-19 outbreak is the tourism sector. Tourism has been affected by COVID-19 in two different ways. The first effect is the inability to carry out tourism due to travel restrictions and quarantines. The second effect is that individuals in economic distress cannot participate in tourism activities.

Both reasons have brought tourism activities to a standstill. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) reports, there has been a rapid decline in tourist arrival in COVID-19. According to Dwyer et al. (2006), COVID-19 caused a much sharper decline than the previous crises, such as the 2008 economic crisis, the Iraq War, and the SARS virus. The primary way to get out of the crisis with minimum damage is the directing and protective tourism policies that the governments will take. When the measures for tourism and the national economy of the countries in the top ten in international tourist arrivals are examined, it is seen that applications are made in favor of citizens and businesses by giving up. However, in this process, countries reduced taxes or did not take them entirely temporarily, helping

to allocate and amount of loan interest rates, and postponing the overdue debts. The personnel were exempted from other taxes by partially paying their salaries and supporting their insurance expenses to reduce employment. It has secured its expenses with cash assistance to those in need.

According to Evans (2020), the common points of the measures taken by other countries such as England, Australia, Greece, Malaysia, and the Netherlands, which are in the first place in tourist arrivals; partial payment of employee salaries by the state, tax exemptions, granting vouchers with state guarantee instead of cancellation of reservations, increasing the rate of state guarantee applied on loans, allocating funds to cover cash expenses, and not applying taxes in different categories in 2020. States' policies and plans in times of crisis have made this process healthier and more resilient (Gopinath, 2020).

As it has been explained in the chapter, the process related to COVID-19 continues, and the necessity of taking the activities to be carried out, the measures to be taken, and the plans to be implemented in this axis should be revealed. In this context, a more advanced inspection of hygiene and distance rules in every layer of the tourism sector will sustainably increase tourist mobility. However, extending the economic support packages of the states to a longer term will significantly reduce the effects of the current crisis. The resilience of destinations and their capacity to crises is a necessary and needed issue for sustainable tourism. The implementation of the standards set by institutions such as UNWTO and WWTC, together with the individual measures of the countries, can reduce the spread of the virus and accelerate the tourist flow.

KEYWORDS

- **COVID-19**
- **pandemic**
- **tourism industry**
- **role of government**
- **vaccine**
- **movement control order**

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