

Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the hospitality and tourism industry

When the calendars showed December 31st in 2019, and the world was welcoming the new year, the World Health Organization (WHO) Country Office in China reported pneumonia from an unknown cause. Just one month later, on January 30th in 2020, the outbreak was declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. Finally, on February 11th in 2020, WHO announced a name for the new coronavirus disease: COVID-19. The hospitality and tourism industry is one of the sectors most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The impact has been detrimental to operations, economies, and livelihoods for millions of employees. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNTWO) estimated a loss of US\$910 billion to US\$1.2 trillion in export from tourism based on international visitors' spending. Even as countries gradually lift travel restrictions and tourism slowly restarts in many parts of the world, the impact of the pandemic is long-lasting.

This special issue aimed to investigate the short-term and long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the hospitality and tourism industry from different perspectives. We invited researchers and scholars to work on different ideas to engage actively with this situation. We received both empirical and theoretical research papers that focused on the positive/negative impact of COVID-19 on various hospitality and tourism industry sectors. The guest editors and authors gratefully acknowledge the valuable comments and encouraging support of Dr. Jinlin Zhao (editor-in-chief of IHR) and the entire editorial team during the preparation of this special issue. We also extend our heartfelt appreciation to the reviewers for their detailed and constructive contribution to the quality of this special issue.

C.L. Norris, S.Taylor. Jr and D.C. Taylor provided interesting insights on the modifications undertaken by the restaurant industry to accommodate the COVID-19 restrictions. Their systematic review, "Pivot! How the restaurant industry adapted during COVID-19 restrictions," highlighted some operational changes undertaken by restaurants, bars and beverage producers to serve their customers better and safely during the pandemic. R.R. Peterson and R.B. Dipietro contributed an article, "Exploring the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the perceptions and sentiments of tourism employees: evidence from a small island tourism economy in the Caribbean," aiming to capture tourism employees' sentiments during the pandemic. Their study highlighted the negative sentiments expressed by the tourism industry employees compared to non-tourism industry employees in Aruba.

K. Ghaharian, B. Abarbanel, M. Soligo and B. Bernhard focused their research on gambling-related hospitality businesses. Their article, "Crisis management practices in the hospitality and gambling industry during COVID-19," assessed crisis management practices focusing on preparedness, response and future strategies. A. Kong, J-E. Oh and T. Lam contributed an article titled "Face mask effects during COVID-19: perspectives of managers, practitioners and customers in the hotel industry." Their research proposed a conceptual model of face mask effects and also analyzed the effects of wearing face masks during the



pandemic. Their qualitative research findings offer insights from both hospitality industry practitioners and customers.

“Travel booking intentions and information searching during COVID-19,” authored by S. MacSween and B. Canziani examined customers’ information resources and intentions to book future travel during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their research highlighted the importance of the choice of messages being imparted during the pandemic since health stressors did not influence travel research activity. J.S.H. Lee and C. Deals focused their research on the shared accommodations industry in their article, “Consumers’ perceptions of risks associated with the use of Airbnb before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.” Their research aimed to compare customers’ perceptions of risks in using shared accommodations before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A.J. Templeton, K. Goonan and A. Fyall focused their research on the national parks sector in their article, “COVID-19 and its impact on visitation and management at US national parks.” They utilized a descriptive case study approach to assess the various challenges faced by the national parks due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on future management. “Restaurant proactive philanthropic activities and customer loyalty: a scenario-based study during the COVID-19 pandemic period” authored by L. Ding and C. Jiang assessed the relationships between customer awareness of corporate philanthropic activities, customer social benevolence trust, customer-perceived corporate reputation, customer-effective commitment and customer loyalty.

V.P. Magnini, J.C. Crotts and E. Calvert contributed a conceptual paper offering various recommendations about best practices for creating and observing revenue-related key performance indicators during the COVID-19 recovery phase. Their paper, titled “The increased importance of competitor benchmarking as a strategic management tool during COVID-19 recovery,” offers practical implications to the hospitality and tourism industry during and following the pandemic. “Contactless hospitality in a post-Covid-19 world” authored by S. Rahimizhian and F. Irani focuses on the importance of innovative technologies in hospitality operations during and following the COVID-19 pandemic. They assessed the relationships between tourism inclinations, innovativeness and revisit intention among potential tourists.

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