

Research Proposal

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WOX 7001 - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

MANAGEMENT OF TOURISM INDUSTRY IN A PANDEMIC

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Executive Summary

The outbreak of COVID-19 has brought the world economy to a standstill, and tourism has been the worst affected amongst other industries. With the closing of borders and restrictions on travel, international tourism has shown a sharp decrease of 22% in the first quarter of 2020, with a possible decline of 60-80% by the end of the year (UNWTO, 2020).

It is obvious that the tourism industry must make a change to survive this difficult time. This research aims to analyze the organization management of travel and tourism related companies in the pandemic environment. By looking at the confidence of company stakeholders and the actual financial results, we can have a bigger picture of the effectiveness of the applied policies.

Past studies related to the topic were reviewed and certain research gaps were found. As pandemics are difficult to be detected, most of the developed management strategies are focused in the recovery phase. The existing policies may be efficient, but there is a need for organizations to look into the long term effects of their actions and find a sustainable way to ensure their survival and the control of pandemic. This research will be focused on companies with a wide range of income to provide a solid image on the relationship between business size and policies applied. In the midst of technology advancement, there is an opportunity to consider factors such as utilizing social media as a tool in communication.

By collecting opinions of major tourism related stakeholders and the financial data of organizations, this research will involve the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data. The findings are expected to be segregated into the internal and external changes implemented, taking into consideration the performance and goals of the companies. The start of the pandemic may be bad news to all, but it can also be a motivation for the tourism industry to evolve and change for the greater good.

Introduction

Introduction and Research Background

Since COVID-19 broke out in December last year and was first reported in Wuhan, China, the virus has spread to more than 220 countries. By June 2020, it had infected 7 million people. Although the number of infectious cases is still increasing, considering the limited testing capabilities in most countries, some cases remain unknown. Besides, a long-term pandemic will continue for months or even years. Governments around the world have taken active measures to curb the spread of the virus.³⁴ The most common measures taken by some countries, such as limited airline tickets, restrict foreigners from entering the country, and cities lockdown. These measures have taken effect to contain the spread of virus, while some aggressive measures have quickly affected the global economy and brought harm to the tourism industry. Many people have to cancel air tickets and accommodation bookings to comply with the preventive instructions or guidelines recommended by the World Health Organization. These instructions or guidelines help people maintain social distance and reduce mobility. However, the tourism industry is suffering an unprecedented challenge and it has to face revenue plunging. Seriously, future uncertainties have also worsened the consumer confidence index, which means that these tourism organizations or companies will have difficulty in earning income or profits during the pandemic. The decreasing number of tourists gives these tourism organizations or companies much pressure on how to survive during the crisis. These companies have to suspend some of their services or close their shops and lay off their staff. The chain reactions significantly influence the economy and impact the governments' measures on curbing the virus. The study would research the policies and the impacts on these organizations and find out the most suitable measures to assist them to survive during the pandemic. There are several successful experiences in handling the pandemic:

Thailand Hotel: Folinis and Metaxas illustrated in their paper that some hotels in Thailand have conducted a new strategy to continue their hotel reception for people who needed 14 days of self-isolation entering their country. Tenants in these hotels could receive daily food or deliver food to meet their demands during the quarantine period. The

waiter would help them test their temperature and check their symptoms. Tenants would pay for their services, and the hotel could still maintain revenue during the disaster for changing their targeted groups (Folinas & Metaxas, 2020).

Government's measures: Another example is the financial measures conducted by governments. The actions could be classified as three categories: e.g.

- low-interest loans provided by the government
- tax and debt reduction for the tourism companies
- reactivation of tourism recovery

The business strategy conducted by these tourism companies could help them survive and run normally until the pandemic end (Thams et al., 2020).

However, research conducted publicly before the study rarely focused on small companies, such as restaurants or private car hailing. Since the previous studies mainly reported the losses of large companies, there is a research gap, that is, a large number of small companies have not been studied and taken financial aid or effective measures during the pandemic. The study would compare the policies and measures targeted on different sizes of companies to fill the gap.

Problem Statement

As the spread of the COVID-19, most individuals, organizations, and governments related to the tourism industry must face the challenge of the negative impact caused by the pandemic crisis. The main problem of the study is what measures, policies, or management methods can help the tourism industry survive and reduce the negative effects of the crisis, such as unemployment, falling income, or bankruptcy. This problem has challenged many departments, governments, and companies simultaneously. For example, the airline company has to obey the government's policy and stop its services because of the decreasing travelers. The individuals like the staff have to face the unemployment crisis because of the revenue decline in companies. Consequently, each

participant in the tourism sector has to offer their solution to survive during the disaster. Fortunately, because COVID-19 is not the first pandemic that appeared in human history, we could find the measures taken during the period that previous diseases outbroke.

Research Objective

The deteriorating conditions during the pandemic have caused difficulties like business shrinks or unemployment in the tourism industry. To cope with the pandemic disaster and reduce the negative impact caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the main objective of the study is to focus on the policies and measures that assist different sizes of organizations to survive and keep revenue during the pandemic. Besides, the research objectives could also help to answer the question of what measures, policies, or management methods can help the different sizes of companies belonging to the tourism industry survive and reduce the negative effects of the crisis.¹⁴

We would also compare the current financial measures among different sizes of tourism companies. The performance during the pandemic could be reflected using the stock price or revenue. To achieve our objective, we would collect embedded data from public databases like Kaggle or previous journals, or questionnaires to find out the management measures that had been successfully carried out during the last pandemic. After the research design and analysis, we could find suitable management for the pandemic environment.

Research Output

Today, the tourism industry has suffered a financial loss during the pandemic, and some governments have provided financial measures to help organizations or companies survive. While there are little journals shows that these measures could help the small organization survive and keep their profits. In this study, we would distinguish these measures or policies conducted by different sizes of participants. In this research design, the different sizes of organizations would be scaled using nominal values. These policies

or measures would also be analyzed to match the nominal value. We would compare the performance to find out the most suitable management for these organizations.

If this research can be carried out successfully, then the first major contribution of this research is that a large number of the smaller size of tourism companies would benefit from this research, and these smaller companies could also survive during the crisis if they could apply the suitable management methods. These measures would facilitate the collaboration between governments and smaller companies, and individuals in the tourism sectors would have less chance to lose their jobs.

Literature Review

A study by Brown et al. (2017) explores the concept resilience, which in the context of the hotel sector disaster management, refers to the ability to resume back to normalcy. Different dimensions of resilience are being discussed, namely system resilience, organisational resilience, economic resilience and community resilience. Hotel industries are encouraged to establish resiliency programs that will strengthen disaster preparedness and resilience. Training is provided by international NGOs to guide hoteliers in disaster risk reduction strategies and management risk reduction planning components. Emphasis is placed on organisation resilience, the organisation structure, flexibility and adaptive capacity. To promote building resilience, all stakeholders at every level must be involved.

Morakabati et al. (2017) explores the emergency management for tourism stakeholders in the event of a disaster scenario. International emergency management and policies have been developed since the 1970s as a result of disasters happening around the world. Since then the importance of emergency management has continued to grow with increase in activity throughout the 1980s and 1990s. A survey was conducted on high level tourism industry stakeholders ranging from airlines, tour operators, hotels, cruise ships, politicians, academics and consultants around the world. The findings of the survey reveal that while different bodies will have different opinions, the overall consensus is that collaborative approach is important with the public sector holding more responsibility.

Hung et al. (2018) did a case study on the SARS epidemic and the H1N1 swine flu in Hong Kong, focusing on the hotel industry. In the case of SARS in 2003 at the Metropole Hotel, the chain of transmission of the outbreak resulted in the index cases in several countries. Another case study is done on the H1N1 swine flu at the Metropark Hotel. Several measures such as quarantine, contact tracing and disinfection of nearby surroundings were taken immediately at the Metropark Hotel after the discovery of an infection. The application of appropriate measures in the case of swine flu has been shown to reduce the infected cases during the outbreak. However, the action of having a quarantine at the Metropark Hotel raises controversy on the need to safeguard civil

liberties or to protect public health. The authors addressed the need for collaboration between the hotel industry and the government to act as an additional line of defense beyond the entry screening in case of missed symptoms during the incubation period.

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Ritchie and Jiang (2019) reviewed 142 papers on tourism risk, crisis and disaster management to identify the current research gaps. The nature of crises and disasters is important in management planning. However, there were only discussions of the response and recovery of individual crisis and disaster events. In future research, management strategies should be computed by taking note of the nature, typology and scale of crises and disasters. Multiple case studies or linked crisis events can be studied to provide external validity. Another critique identified is the lack of framework testing. Prescriptive management frameworks can provide guidelines in the management of crises and disasters, but most developed models were not tested. They encourage that future research can be focused on model building, testing and modifying. Models from other disciplines can be applied in a portion of macro-level frameworks.

In the review, the authors noticed the unbalance in research themes with a majority of studies on the response and recovery phase of disaster management. In the prevention and planning process, the tourism industry should be better integrated into a country's emergency management. For response and recovery, future studies are encouraged to be done on small and medium-sized businesses as they are more susceptible to disaster impact. The study on human resource management is needed to solve the common issue of temporary worker dismissal in a crisis. The use of social media as a crisis communication tool can be expanded. In the resolution and feedback phase, future research can be done on knowledge management between tourism organizations. Performance measurement tools can be developed to both use and generate past incident knowledge to build resilience.

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International tourism has been identified as one of the most significant driving forces to the world economy since the 1950s (Deegan, 2020). Wasiul Karim et al. (2020) studies the impact of COVID-19 on tourism related industries. Since the outbreak of the disease, passenger demand in flight has reduced by around 20% (Tan, 2020). Malaysia Airlines reacted quickly by urging workers to take unpaid leave voluntarily (AFP, 2020). At the

same time, the number of flights operating is reduced to less than 50 flights a day. On the other side, Malaysia Association of Hotels reported an estimated loss of RM560.72 million incurred during the MCO period. To cope with the loss, the local hotel industry laid off its workers with further unpaid leave and wage cuts. It can be said that the tourism sectors are being affected the most by the coronavirus. Airlines and accommodations take the initiative to recommend travellers avoid non-essential travel. It is recommended that all service providers related to the tourism industry encourage customers to follow NPIs to keep themselves safe.

Thams et al. (2020) conducted an assessment on the challenges that the tourism industry would face during the COVID-19 pandemic and provided several measures to assist their recovery. Most countries have cut off global traffic transportation and have taken preventive measures to reduce the spreading of the deadly virus. Tourist attraction sites have also been temporarily closed to reduce mobility. The consumer confidence index in Germany has decreased since July of 2018 while the COVID-19 is currently worsening the economic condition. In response to the crisis, the researchers have proposed actions such as low-interest loans provided by the government, tax and debt reduction for the tourism companies, and the reactivation of tourism recovery. Since COVID-19 may last for several years, and the impact may still exist for a longer period, measures to help the tourism industry should be adjusted according to the existing pandemic situation. To ensure the recovery of the tourism industry, long-term measures should be considered.

According to the study by Folinas and Metaxas (2020), the limited number of research articles increase the difficulty of studying the specific losses of tourism during the COVID-19 pandemic. The first consequence caused by COVID-19 is in the airline sector. Governments have issued travel warnings to curb this viral spread. The suspension of transportation has also affected China's tourism industry. Hotel and travel reservations were cancelled, and public places were closed. Due to the sudden drop in tourism revenue, the world economy is facing a decline. According to the estimation of the World Travel and Tourism Council, job opportunities would be significantly reduced. Considering the restrictive measures to contain the virus, people have cancelled meetings and travel. These deteriorating conditions cause the tourism industry to plunge. For some hotels,

they have new opportunities to maintain profits. The strategy they adopted was to provide service packages for people who needed 14 days of self-isolation. Tenants in these hotels can receive meals and deliver food to meet their daily demands. Waiters will help tenants test the body temperature and check for any symptoms. These actions and services can help hotels generate revenue and survive during the crisis.

After World War II, the world was in a highly globalized process (Niewiadomski, 2020). Distance between places have shrunk, living standards are increasing and barriers to economic, social and cultural development are diminishing. The author identified that national administrations stated travel as a main factor facilitating the outbreak of COVID-19 starting in January 2020. In order to overcome this problem, national borders had been closed while international movement had been restricted. All factors that make international travel easy have been stopped. Hotels, restaurants and entertainment are all closed in this pandemic. While there is no perfect solution for COVID-19, the world is sacrificing a lot. But it could be a good chance for the tourism industry to re-develop in order for future sustainability. The pandemic condition may motivate the world to change from an existing system to a new configuration. When the crisis has been resolved, tourism will face more opportunities as well as challenges. Changes are conceivable but how to change to bring positive effect is still a question.

Since the spread of COVID-19, Ranasinghe (2020) found that countries are limiting mobility and this decision has impacted businesses such as restaurants, transportation, and accommodation. At Sri Lanka, arrangement of medical support and quarantine facilities are provided even for foreigners. These policies are expected to earn a better reputation in the tourism industry for the future. The author suggested steps that can be taken to control the transmission, such as establishing quarantine camps, using thermo scanners in the airport, empowering the local health care industry and identifying the network of patients. The tourism industry needs to rethink the future to reconstruct the sector. National tourism bodies should employ a system that can evaluate and review places in the country on the policies applied. The article suggested ways of recovery for the tourism industry such as spreading information through social media platforms, maintaining international advertising campaigns to promote tourism, promoting flexi-rates

for booking, and modifying existing hotel policies. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) formed a Global Tourism Crisis Committee to guide this sector and prepare for the future.

Ayurveda medicine and traditional medicine are getting more attention because of their immunity against viruses, while Sri Lanka is considered to be in abundance of herbs. Governments are attempting to invite medical experts to explore possible medical solutions for COVID-19. The Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) industry is also strongly affected while events are cancelled. Virtual events may be the way to overcome this issue. While the airline industry is having huge losses, they are seeking financial assistance from the government to compensate for loss in revenue and liquidity due to the travel restrictions imposed.

In the study by Hall (2020), the possibility of a comprehensive transformation of the tourism system to adapt to the pandemic situation remains extremely difficult. The capacity for tourism recovery is determined by consumer confidence and the imposition of non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPI) which the government aims to restrict mobility and to prevent the spread of diseases. Four broad areas of NPIs that affect tourism are social distancing, curbs on crowding, restrictions on domestic and international travel, and quarantine. In the article, the primary stage of recovery is assumed to be focusing on domestic tourism to stimulate the recessed economy while ensuring the control of disease transmission.

It is likely to see a scenario in which strict medical clearance is required for travel. International destinations identified as high-risk will have higher risk perceptions for travel insurance, biosecurity and re-entry to home countries. It is suggested to have restrictions on eco-tourism and travel to certain areas with limited health resources to cope with the outbreak (ABC Kimberley, 2020). The overall recovery rate for tourism will be highly dependent on the interplay of economic and health interventions that include travel restrictions. It can be foreseen that a new sustainable tourism trajectory with positive implications might be created for lower emissions, place-based economic development and travel and tourism practices.

Research Gap

Most of the research gap can be identified in the article by Ritchie and Jiang (2019), where there is a need to focus in identifying the nature and typology of case study done in the future, with a consideration of linked cases as an improvement. Framework testing should be done to modify and refine a developed framework according to the crisis at hand. With past research mostly conducted on well-known companies, it is believed that future studies should be more focused on the management of small and medium enterprises, particularly on human resource management as the current solution to minimize loss is the dismissal of employees. ¹⁰ The use of social media as a tool to spread information can be further studied. There are also opportunities to further study on knowledge management in the aspect of partnerships between organizations for future decision making.

In addition, Brown et al. (2017) stated the need for organizations to establish resilience programs with the involvement of all stakeholders. According to Hung et al. (2018), more research can be done in hotel resource utilization as quarantine and control facilities during the pandemic. There should be more studies on creating a new configuration for global tourism to bring upon some positive effects in this period of uncertainty (Niewiadomski, 2020).

Critical Analysis

Collaborative approach

A few of the articles mentioned the importance of collaboration between different parties in organization management for the tourism industry. Morakabati et al. (2017) found in general the industry prefers to incorporate collaboration, in particular with the public sector. ²⁶ Hung et al. (2018) shows the ability of the tourism industry in detecting potential events, and emphasized the collaboration with the local government and emergency management agencies to shorten the period to recovery. Ritchie and Jiang (2019) mentioned the need for collaboration between tourism organizations for better knowledge

management in a pandemic environment. Brown et al. (2020) suggested that training can be provided by NGOs for hoteliers in the aspect of risk management strategies to build resilience in an organization. According to Folinis and Metaxas (2020), hotels are providing service packages for people in quarantine. These actions and services can help hotels generate revenue while contributing their resources in pandemic control.

Developing resilience

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In the aspect of resilience, Brown et al. (2017) discussed the importance of developing resilience in the hotel sector for better preparation in facing disasters in the long run. Ritchie and Jiang (2019) stated that performance measurement tools to obtain knowledge about past and present events should be focused in future studies as these information can help in building resilience for the tourism industry.

Government policies

Thams et al. (2020) stated the need for government policies in the road to recovery and in the monetary aspect that can possibly reduce the burden of the tourism industry. Ranasinghe et al. (2020) suggested direct financial assistance from the government to compensate the loss during the period of restricted mobility. In the study by Hall (2020) and Ranasinghe et al. (2020), a gradual recovery phase is assumed to be done by the government to stimulate the recessed economy in the tourism industry, starting with the reopening of domestic tourism.

Reform in tourism

To overcome the problem of social distancing, Ranasinghe et al. (2020) suggested alternative formats such as virtual and hybrid events to be developed for people to interact remotely. Demand for rural locations will be increased compared to the crowded urban areas with high population density. During challenging times, the world may be motivated to change the existing tourism system to a new configuration (Niewiadomski, 2020). Hall (2020) proposed a possible new sustainable tourism trajectory with positive implications such as lower emissions travel and tourism practices.

Tourism industry as tool of communication

Wasiul Karim et al. (2020) mentioned the opportunity for organizations in the tourism industry to provide precautionary information for potential travellers. With the advancement of social media, Ritchie and Jiang (2020) proposed the expansion of social media usage in crisis communication.

Methodology

Justification of Choosing the Methodology

The methodology chosen for this research will be a mixed mode research method. Mixed mode refers to using both quantitative and qualitative data within a single research. While reason for us to choose mixed mode are:

Showing effect of qualitative data on quantitative outcomes

Purpose of this study is mainly on how policy changes made by management of the company (qualitative data) will affect their financial performance (quantitative).

Reflects participants' point of view

Through this research, we are not only dealing with numbers, we are focusing on the stakeholder of the tourism company's view on this pandemic condition and also any solution or changes that they are going to implement.

Collect rich, comprehensive data

Information of changes made by different companies may be more informative, easier to classify and tabulate if it is in both words and numbers.

Quantitatively analysing qualitative data

Code qualitative data (what they have done, their expectation and view, etc..) and classify them into different themes.

Mixed mode research may be more suitable compared to qualitative or quantitative research alone.

Research Design

We will carry out research in embedded design.

Data collection will be done in two phase

Phase I – information from questionnaires and financial information.

Phase II – financial information after pandemic will be collected at this phase.

Research Instruments

Phase I

Questionnaires are structured in a way to collect both quantitative and qualitative data from the respondents, the respondents are given the initial choice of answering the questions in a yes or no format, or with multiple choice answers, of which data collected will be used for quantitative analysis.

Some of the questions also give the respondents the opportunity to explain further the justification of their yes or no answer, should the respondents be willing to do it, this will be the data for qualitative analysis.

Questions	Justification
How long has your company been in business (in years)?	This is to study if business experience may be a factor of a company's resilience.
What is the size of your workforce?	This is to study if company size may be a factor of a company's resilience.
What is the value and nature of your company's assets (vehicles, properties, etc.)?	This is to study if a company's assets may be a factor of a company's resilience.

<p>Does your company management have a contingency plan in anticipation of a crisis such as a pandemic? (If yes, kindly elaborate in general)</p>	<p>This is to study if the company's management performance may be a factor of a company's resilience.</p>
<p>Does your company have allocated rainy day funds in anticipation of a crisis such as a pandemic? (If yes, kindly elaborate on the percentage or the nature of the funds.)</p>	<p>This is to study if a company's cash reserve may be a factor of a company's resilience.</p>
<p>Does the pandemic lockdown cause an economic strain on your company? (If yes, kindly elaborate on how it impacts your company.)</p>	<p>This is to study if a company is affected by the lockdown.</p>
<p>Are your company's assets fully utilized during peak travel season (before the pandemic)?</p>	<p>This is to understand if the company's unused assets become a liability during the pandemic lockdown.</p>

<p>Is your company able to reduce operational cost during the pandemic lockdown? (If yes, kindly elaborate on the method and also the percentage in savings to the company.)</p>	<p>This is to understand if a company is flexible enough to adapt to the pandemic lockdown.</p>
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<p>Did your company reduce the salary of employees during the pandemic lockdown? (If yes, kindly elaborate by how much and if the rate is different according to seniority.)</p>	<p>This is to study if reducing salary helps in a company's resilience.</p>
<p>Did your company lay off employees during the pandemic lockdown? (If yes, kindly elaborate by how many and the type of jobs being laid off.)</p>	<p>This is a clue to a company's financial wellbeing during the pandemic lockdown.</p>
<p>Did your company issue furlough to employees (unpaid leave) during the pandemic lockdown? (If yes, for how long and the type of jobs.)</p>	<p>This is to understand a company's business activity and financial health during the pandemic lockdown.</p>
<p>Did your company scale down on operation during the pandemic lockdown? (If yes, kindly elaborate the nature of the work being scaled down.)</p>	<p>This is to understand a company's business activity during the pandemic lockdown.</p>
<p>Did your company shut down temporarily during the pandemic lockdown? (If yes, for how long?)</p>	<p>This is a clear indication of a company's income during the pandemic lockdown.</p>

Is the government's economic assistance package sufficient to allow your company to still remain in business?	This is to understand if the government's financial assistance is sufficient for the company.
Are you optimistic that your company's business will survive through the pandemic lockdown?	This is to gauge if a company is still able to remain in business after the pandemic lockdown.

Table 1: Questionnaire to be answered by participants

Research Participants

This survey will target stakeholders, senior managers or private business owners in the tourism industry. The tourism industry here covers the airline sector, cruise operators, tour operators, hoteliers, diving schools, etc. Basically any sector that relies heavily on tourism activity for its main source of revenue.

For this research, we tried to reach out as diverse a range as possible the source of data or respondents to interview. For every sector such as the hotel sectors, we will be interviewing stakeholders from five star hotels all the way to two star hotels and also the boutique hotels such as those in commercial shop lots. We wanted to explore the possible range of answers from different companies within the same sector with different ranges of income.

This will be true for all business sectors in the tourism industry where we will collect data of all players from big to small. This will allow us to understand if company size can also be a variable that affects how a business owner makes decisions.

The questionnaires will then be distributed to each and every company in the tourism industry via email or any other convenient mode of electronic communications. This method is very effective in reaching out to as many of the targeted audience as possible,

given the likelihood that many people tend to ignore questionnaires, unless certain incentives are given.

Financial data (before pandemic) will be requested from the company.

Phase II

We will request for financial data (after pandemic) from each company and proceed to data analysis.

Data Analysis

From the dataset, we will split each answer set from the respondents into quantitative and qualitative data.

Qualitative data will be collected from questions that require the respondents to explain subjectively, from the explanations, we will look for themes or keywords being mentioned in the answers.

We will be using qualitative research tools such as content analysis, discourse analysis and relational analysis. These tools will be used to quantify the occurrence of any notable key words, phrases or concepts. From there we can identify any main themes and how they were expressed. We will also be exploring any relationship between the concepts, if any.

Quantitative data collected from the dataset are usually in a yes or no answer, or answers with multiple choices for the respondents to select from. These answers can be compiled and be analysed with statistical methods for further analysis.

For quantitative data, we will use descriptive analysis to study the dataset. Categorical data can be displayed in simple charts such as histogram and pie chart to find the frequency or percentage of the variables. Continuous data can be studied with finding the mean, mode, median and standard deviation to understand more the distribution or dispersion of the data.

We will also use statistical tools for further analysis of quantitative data, inferential statistics will be used to identify the probability as a result to occur whether by chance or not, this is a method for making predictions. Bivariate data analysis is used to identify the interaction between two variables by comparing their distribution and central tendency. Cross tabulation data analysis will be used to examine relationships among multiple categorical variables that may not be apparent from the start.

1. We will measure the effectiveness of the policies that have been taken by businesses during a pandemic situation.
2. Divided companies in tourism into different sectors such as the hotel sector, airline.
3. Financial report provided by companies before and after pandemic.
4. By using statistical tools to examine the policy taken has a significant positive effect on the business.

Company	Sector	Category of Policy	Performance (Pre Pandemic)	Performance (Post Pandemic)

Table 2: An estimated form of data collected

We will be using the data collected and tabulated in the form above. Analysis is computed to figure out the relationship between the new policy implemented and the performance of the company after a pandemic.

Proposed Research Validity and Reliability

Reliability

In order to make sure the results we get are consistent, questionnaires are distributed to more than one person in the same company. Results will be determined after comparison between questionnaires.

Validity

In order to ensure validity, our strategy is by:

- Member checking

After analysing the questionnaire from different respondents in the same company, we will construct a general conclusion on what we understand and make a follow up phone call on the respondent. By this strategy, we may give respondents an opportunity to comment, or either correct our findings.

- Factor analysis

While we are focusing on the company, we implement a new policy to overcome the pandemic condition. Answers from respondents may diverge from what we want thus we will carry out an analysis on all questionnaires and figure out which answer may not be related to what we want and remove it.

We assume that there is no bias from respondents as they are working in a profitable company.

Findings

The interview questions focus on three areas, which are the internal and the external changes made by the tourism business during a pandemic environment in order to adapt to the difficult situation and its overall performance. Below here are the possible findings.

Internal

- With little to no revenue due to the pandemic, industries will normally reduce its operational costs by cutting down unnecessary expenses. Common actions are cut wages or impose unpaid leave, shorter the work time of employees to keep everyone jobs.
- The organization will ensure orderliness in sanitation, health, safety and operational procedures. For example, rotation of working hours to minimize the number of employees to fulfil the standard operating procedure set up by the government. The organization also needs to establish and provide best practices of social distancing.
- The organization will proactively communicate with the stakeholders and employees to ensure the business stability and able to survive through this pandemic. Technological tools are used to keep everyone updated for all the changes and well prepared to face the external parties so that they would not feel distanced if work from home.
- To support the business, some businesses will prepare to transform in order to explore new markets and find alternative ways to boost up the revenue. For example, Malaysia' government has partnered with some hotels by using them as the quarantine centers for Malaysians returning from abroad (Ruzki, R.M., 2020) Hotels are promised with a subsidy of RM150 per night as a return. Cargo flights, charter flights and repatriation flights have been operating more frequently by airlines during the low mobility period.
- The organization will always be prepared for the rebound. Businesses use this time-out period as a chance to reevaluate their past performance and review their long-term plan for future. They must include the element of pandemic environment into the one of the focuses during planning. When the travel bans are lifted, only

the well-prepared businesses can grab the early opportunities to attract new guests from the markets while the rest can only react passively.

External

- Organization will reevaluate their cancellation policies and improve its flexibility in the reservations or bookings. Travelers can postpone their plan instead of cancelling them and they can request for a refund for the cost of future stays if they decide to cancel a trip.
- The organizations will have to get the detailed information of the travellers and screen about it to identify if they belong to a high-risk contaminated group. It is very important to keep detailed information of every customer, especially their contact number or emails.
- Cooperation between different sectors such as airlines, hotels, and other tourism related companies to offer joint travel packages. It aims to reduce the cost of each business operation and revitalize the tourism industry again by attracting more visitors to the country.
- The organization will market for the new normal, as the pandemic normally would not disappear in short while. They must transmit a clear message to the public about their safety protocols and how the maximum hygiene measures are being implemented during the pandemic environment.
- The organization will get economic and financial assistance to help alleviate the short-term cash flow problems. For example, they can reschedule or restructuring loans, offering payment moratoriums as well as short-term financing. Government also offers stimulus packages to help the organization to counter the economic impact of the pandemic.

Performance and goals

- It does not aim to earn profit during this difficult situation, but mainly focuses on surviving the pandemic situation. They will not only pay attention to their short-term impact, but also their long-term, structural impact, impact on tourism practitioners, international impact, and indirect impact.

- Organizations will continuously understand the extent of the impacts could be brought by the pandemic to their businesses. Revaluation must be performed regularly to understand their up-to-date market share and source market during the competitive period. This enables them to react quickly to any changes and reduce the impacts in time.
- Organizations will develop “alternative tourisms” in response to pandemic. They will identify the new challenges and also the opportunities faced by different industries due to pandemic. Adopting products and services of tourism will allow the organization to survive despite the critical condition.

Discussions About the Findings

The implementation of new changes within the organization

- Cutting wages does little to help ease the burden of cash flow. According to The Star (2020), the payroll costs of 25%, 32% and 29% of revenue for budget hotels, mid-range hotels, and high-end hotels respectively. However, a lot of hotels cannot afford this due to other financial debt and commitments. As a result, they must lay off some employees and even close completely to stop the loss.
- To build confidence, organizations need to ensure all efforts to clean and sanitize the business common area. This is to reassure and restore customers' confidence by demonstrating a strong commitment to provide services under strict hygienic standards. However, this would incur additional cost operations and increase the financial burden already faced by the organization.
- Considering the human aspect, it should be the top priority for every company to protect their employees. To safeguard the employee's health and minimize the exposure risk, a work-from-home arrangement is to be implemented for administrative staff. On the other hand, for the staff who must be present in the business operations, the company must minimize the number of employees in a shift and implement virtual handovers to reduce the contact among them.

The implementation of new policies to external parties

- Due to the different kinds of travel restrictions implemented by each country, many travellers may want to cancel or postpone their trips. Pandemic has brought foreboding feelings about the future. A study showed that 63.8% of the travellers will reduce their travel plans in the next 12 months (Ali & Cobanoglu, 2020). In response to such restrictions, hotels or airlines can offer certain flexibility by allowing customers to cancel or postpone the reservation. This allows the customers who are worried about the possible isolation situations, closing of borders, and flight cancellations to have a degree of confidence to start planning their trips. Cancellation and deferment policies need to be up-to-date and must be

accessible easily on the website. This does not only save the customers' browsing time to get this information, it could also increase the likelihood that the customers will re-book in the future due to the positive experience.

- The reason behind the strict adherence to sanitation is due to the fact that any reported incidents of spread of the virus in an organization will seriously affect the brand image and the destination. In the new normal, safety and hygiene measures become the top priority when travellers and guests choose their accommodation. They do have the right to demand the organization implement strict cleaning protocols during the pandemic period.
- To market the new normal, crucial information on the listing of hotels must be displayed by the online travel agencies. In addition to the basic information such as the hotel's current situation and security measures, clear explanations and advice on local measures pertaining to the pandemic environment must be provided to help travellers avoid unnecessary trouble. All the mentioned points will now be the main key to boost up the reservations.
- Getting financial assistance doesn't mean that one is in trouble. It helps an organization to see its own position, plan their financial resource ahead, and evaluate the chances to survive through the pandemic. It enables those businesses which have financial difficulties, especially the small and medium-size companies in the sector to retain their employees and keep the industry going.

Performance and goals

Organizations must embrace the new business' paradigm, maintaining the balance between public service, environmental and commercial goals in response to the new risk environment. They must repurpose their goal to incorporate with the three values. For example, according to the New Straits Times (2020), the Save Our Shops (SOS) campaign launched by Air Asia enables small e-merchants to sell products without listing fees on their website. Another real case is where the usage of cargo flights to deliver essential medical supplies was implemented by Qantas and Air New Zealand. Running a sustainable business has emerged as one of the bigger challenges due to the pandemic.

It has now become crucial for the organization to adapt to the critical environment and recharge their foundations to help survive in these challenging times.

1 Conclusion

Pandemics are an important issue for society. It is important to acknowledge that no one can escape from the impacts brought by a pandemic environment. The spread of diseases has always dramatically derailed businesses, communities and livelihoods across the globe. Lot of businesses are affected and might even go bankrupt due to the crisis, especially for the travel and tourism industry where the profit highly relies on the crowds. There is no perfect solution or strategy for business to survive the crisis. Thus, comprehensive risk management plays a crucial role for the organizations, one might lose more if they do not invest in survival strategies. Every organization must consider all the possible options and their return on investment before making any important decisions or changes to the business operations. They must deploy the strategy which suits them the best and are able to maximize their profit as the result. Organizations must actively respond to the changes in the pandemic environment. It is not encouraged to do nothing and wait for the crisis to be over. They must accept the new “normal” and start convincing the ideas to the public to increase its profits.

Tourism related business and organizations will seek to transform and change the ways how they have been conducted in the last decades. The nature of their tourism industry must be reconsidered, and it is a necessity to switch the focus to more on local and sustainable forms of tourism. The interplay of economic and health intervention will primarily determine the overall recovery of the tourism industry. The biggest challenge to revitalize the tourism industry is to build the trust of tourists. Despite all the risks and stress, it is important to remember that similar crises happened in the past and will always repeat the cycle once in a while. It will always be a huge challenge for the organization's culture and management practices. At a difficult time like this, it is important to support each other so that the industry is able to make a way out from this difficult situation and become more dynamic and successful than before.

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