

## Chapter 22

# Socio–Cultural Impacts of the Pandemic on Tourism: The Case of COVID-`9

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### ABSTRACT

*During the pandemic, global life has been adversely affected. These negativities have been observed in different dimensions, especially in health, economy, and education. The pandemic has also deeply affected many industries such as tourism. With the pandemic, damages have increased gradually in terms of both supply and demand. In this process, the view of the local people, one of the most important stakeholders of the tourism, towards tourism and tourists is very important. As a matter of fact, while there are health problems and social distance obligations that dominate the whole world on the one hand, economic concerns are dominant on the other hand. In this dilemma, the question that arises is whether COVID-`9 is a new barrier to local community interaction. In this study, based on this question, pandemic-induced social changes are evaluated in the context of local people tourism and tourist.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Throughout history, mankind has experienced countless setbacks and tried to deal with these socially. The relationship between man and nature is multifaceted and complex. The relationship between human and nature has changed over time, but the effort of man to control nature has always continued. This situation has caused serious damage to nature. As a matter of fact, nowadays climate change makes its effect felt, forest areas decrease, nuclear energy accidents occur, disasters and epidemics are increasing. All of these reminds us of an important fact in the human-nature conflict: A single event that takes place in the microenvironment can become a major global problem after a while (Turan & Çelikyay, 2020). The current COVID-19 pandemic is a dramatic example of this situation, and whether it will come to an end is an uncertain global problem for our world (Atay, 2020). Most countries close their borders and strict measures such as home isolation, quarantine, etc., social distancing obligation, closure shutdowning of schools, universities and workplaces, cancellation or postponement of events (conferences, commercial activities, concerts and festivals, elections, Olympics) (Gossling, Scott & Hall, 2021) have been prominent indicators of this problem. It is clear that the pandemic, which affects the whole world in biological, psychological, social and economic terms, initiated a rapid transformation in social life. There are limited predictions about how the “new” social order that will occur after the pandemic and what will meet humanity (Öztürk et al., 2020). Therefore, it is possible to say that the COVID-19 pandemic has created a new normal and a new paradigm all over the world and this will create a new world order (Bozkurt, 2020). It should be noted that COVID-19 virus has negatively democratized the health and financial well-being of people around the world; it did not distinguish between rich, poor, strong or weak in terms of transmission and prevalence (Carr, 2020). Similarly, the fact that the virus threatens everyone regardless of identities and status has been a global security problem (Okur, 2020). Nevertheless, we must state that, in general, it has had the most negative economic impact on middle- and lower-income people, who make up the world’s largest population.

As is known, COVID-19 is the main topic of discussion in all areas of life today. At this point, although the restrictions that hinder individuals’ desire for mobility and the reactions to them (Weed, 2020) are an important subject of investigation, the most significant effects of these restrictions are observed in tourism mobility. However, the unexpected in terms of tourism has happened and the sector has entered a sudden collapse. Sub-sectors related to tourism and tourism have faced a crisis due to global measures, travel restrictions, prohibited social activities, home calls and pandemic fight strategies (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020). Consequently, large-volume businesses such as hotels and airlines and activities that provide significant economic inputs such as cruises have suffered (Sharma & Nicolau, 2020).

The crisis caused by the pandemic and currently experienced by the whole humanity is in fact the reality of tourism. Because every resource that builds tourism is the same as the common life resources of human beings without exception, and no tourism resource is independent from the others (Liu, 2003). Therefore, it is necessary to take new steps, develop strong strategies and implement functional policies in order to ensure global resource sustainability and strengthen contentious tourism behaviour. On the other hand, it is a matter of curiosity how the pandemic will play a role in the local public-visitor relationship. For example, will the virus make the people of the region more protective and distant? Will this cause cross-cultural bias? In this sense, it is necessary to analyse the pandemic in terms of social tendency and dimension of thought and to interpret it from a socio-cultural perspective in order to understand the current state of inter-communal interaction in tourism.

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