

# Chapter 31

## New Practices in the Tourism Sector During COVID-19

**Meral Büyükkuru**

*Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli University, Turkey*

**Neşe Yılmaz**

*Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli University, Turkey*

### **ABSTRACT**

*The tourism sector is one of the main economic sectors of both developed and developing countries. It is one of the sectors that feels the most destructive effects of COVID-19 in terms of generating income, providing employment, and covering many sub-sectors. A number of practices, recommendations, and decisions have been put forward to minimize the devastating effects of the pandemic by the international bodies. Although the COVID-19 epidemic has been brought under control in some countries with various vaccination practices and a new normalization process has been entered into, the traces of its destructive effects are still visible in the tourism industry. Therefore, this chapter draws the attention of the reader to comprehensive and up to the present unconventional practices in the industry due to the impacts of COVID-19 on the tourism and hospitality industry.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The global pandemic which started in Wuhan, China spread across countries through human-to-human transmission within a short period. Until now, over 136 million people were infected and more than 2.9 million died worldwide (Worldometers, 2021). Currently, the USA has the highest number of confirmed cases (31,895,939) and deaths (575,680) among 219 countries, followed by India (13,525,364 confirmed cases and 170,209 deaths), Brazil (13,445,006 confirmed cases and 351,469 deaths), France (5,058,680 confirmed cases and 98,750 deaths), Russia (4,641,390 confirmed cases and 102,986 deaths), the UK (4,369,775 confirmed cases and 127,087 deaths) and Turkey (3,849,011 confirmed cases and 33,939 deaths (Worldometers, 2021).

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The tourism sector, which has the most negative effects due to COVID-19, is one of the sectors whose activities are completely stopped in order to minimize the damages of COVID-19. In the tourism sector, the closure of borders, cruise ships leaving the open seas, stopping all air transport such as passenger, cargo, hot air ballooning, and closing hotels, restaurants and tourist areas due to COVID-19, are among the developments.

In international tourism it is claimed that all tourism businesses can reconsider their business models and then move with a 'new normality' era by changing their operational practices in line with government requirements and consumer expectations (Hall et al. 2020). While the travel, tourism and hospitality industries are slightly different, they are significantly interconnected and the World Bank (2020) highlights the negative impact of COVID-19 on the entire value chain of the tourism industry... airlines, bus and train companies, cruise lines, hotels, restaurants, tourist destinations, travel agents, tour operators, online travel organizations and others. The scale and rapid onset of the COVID-19 outbreak-travel bans, quarantine restrictions, border closures and accommodation, and flights around the world-have had devastating economic impacts on the tourism industry (Gössling et al., 2021). In addition, social impacts such as unpaid leaves and job losses are expected to spread in the tourism and hospitality industries, with the predictions that technology could play a more important role in the post-pandemic tourism world and potentially cause more job losses (Gretzel et al., 2020). Almost universally, national regulations are in place to control the rapid spread of COVID-19 and minimize harm. The first measures taken included closing ports (land, sea and air) and screening and testing infected people.

As of June 2020, some rules and practices have been adopted by the normalization process in the world. General practices include paying maximum attention to social distance, accepting a limited number of guests, removing food and beverage machines in common areas, making contactless payments, having masks and hand disinfectants to be given to tourists without masks, having a thermal camera and thermometer to measure the fever, which is the most common symptom of the disease, when entering the closed area.

With the COVID-19 outbreak, the way individuals see the world, their way of thinking and their way of living has changed. With the COVID-19 process, the risk community we are in has found the solutions it developed for social distance by using technology more. In this process, technological innovations have accelerated, and people's consumption trends have increased in the direction of online experience, online shopping, e-learning, digital payments and even digital examination (Kurt, 2020). Therefore, all touristic businesses and institutions in the tourism sector tend to carry out their operations and activities online as much as possible. New applications and methods have begun to be developed within the scope of digitalization in tourism. In this chapter of the book, new applications in the tourism sector will be covered under the titles of new applications in accommodation businesses, airlines, restaurants and recreation and events during COVID-19.

## **BACKGROUND**

In the past, there were other epidemics such as SARS, H1N1, Ebola, which the World Health Organization declared public health emergencies. Also, terrorist attacks around the world such as September 11, 2001, the global economic crisis in 2008 and 2009. But the impact of the current corona virus outbreak to date far surpassed those observed during other outbreaks. Following the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) outbreak in 2003, WHO published international travel advice to avoid high-risk areas

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