


Chapter 24

Innovation in Sustainability of Tourism After the COVID-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

The tourism industry includes air, sea, and land transportation; food supply chain; accommodation; entertainment; recreation; etc. services. Hence, tourism businesses are proposing changes, and post-COVID tourists will not be the same as pre-COVID ones. Innovative solutions regarding safety and hygiene measures as well as the proximity of medical facilities will be of key importance in meeting the tourist expectations and sustainability of the tourism industry. In addition, it is possible to state that the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the whole world. This situation caused the economic balances of countries to deteriorate and some sectors to be adversely affected. The most affected sector is undoubtedly the tourism industry. Innovation has gained more importance in the tourism industry in the context of sustainability of tourism with the COVID-19 pandemic process. In this context, this chapter aimed to examine how innovation can contribute to the sustainability of post-COVID tourism.

INTRODUCTION

Defined as the “Novel Coronavirus Disease”, “Covid-19” is a group of viruses first defined in Wuhan, China, 1 December 2019, as a result of research completed on a specific group of patients with symptoms such as fever, cough, shortness of breath (Pal et al., 2020). The Covid-19 virus was first detected in seafood and people in the animal market in the Wuhan region. Afterwards, it spread through person-to-person transmission to other cities in Hubei, with Wuhan being the first, and from there to other provinces in China and other world countries (Zhu, Wei & Niu, 2020).

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines the official name of the Covid-19 virus as “SARS-CoV-2 (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome-Coronavirus-2)” (Lopes et al., 2020). The term “Covid-19”

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is used by the WHO to describe the disease state caused by the coronavirus. On January 30, 2020, Covid-19 was declared as a “global health emergency” by the WHO, and on March 11, 2020, the virus was declared as a “pandemic” (Ali, 2020).

It is obvious that there is a close relationship between pandemics and tourism (Henderson & Ng, 2004). While the spread of diseases from the origin country to other countries may be the issue due to tourism movements, the measures taken to prevent the risk of transmission as a result of the spread of the pandemic may cause tourism movements to be adversely affected. It is stated that Covid-19 pandemic has some differences in terms of its effects and spread on world economies that have faced various pandemics in the past. It is also stated that Covid-19 pandemic, which spreads very rapidly from China to the whole world, brought all industries to the point of completion in the economic context, but it affected the tourism industry quite significantly compared to other industries. National and international travel restrictions, which countries had to apply, stopped tourist movements, and the tourism industry had to face a “sudden” and “indefinite” crisis before the season (Pacific Asia Travel Association, 2020).

The Covid-19 vaccine, which started to be applied in the UK for the first time in December 2020, is currently being applied all over the world. It has been emphasized that the discovery of the vaccine and the initiation of vaccination are a very important development for the immunization of communities, stopping the Covid-19 pandemic, reviving the global economy, and resuming travel and tourism activities (OECD, 2020a).

Although it is difficult, it is necessary to start tourism after the Covid-19 pandemic, to manage it in a controlled way, in short, to ensure sustainability in tourism (Gössling, Scott & Hall, 2020). Otherwise, closing the borders and dealing with the Covid-19 epidemic, in the long run, is not a viable solution. On the contrary, it has to be foreseen that the economic crisis that will follow may lead to worse results than all the negative effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. As it is known, tourism, by its nature, is a industry that requires touching, feeling, in other words, experiencing it. This feature of tourism adds value to human relations. Kılıç (2020) examined the possible effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the tourism industry and tried to predict possible tourist behaviors based on the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) data and the struggles against the pandemic in the world. In the study, she stated that contactless transactions will come to the fore in the tourism industry, digitalization will become widespread, predicts that social distance tours and more isolated holiday preferences will increase. In order to prevent the Covid-19 pandemic and other possible future viruses and to ensure the continuity of tourism, innovation needs to be integrated into every possible area of the tourism industry (Wyman, 2020). In this context, this chapter aims to examine the subject of innovation in sustainability of tourism after Covid-19 pandemic. From this point, firstly, the subject of the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on the tourism industry will be explained to the readers. This will be followed by the innovation subject in the sustainability of tourism which covers the social, economic, political, and environmental aspects of the sector. The chapter concludes with recommendations for future research and conclusion.

BACKGROUND

The pandemic, known as Covid-19, has made it mandatory to take measures such as travel restrictions, quarantines and social distance rules all over the World (Wasdani & Prasad, 2020). It caused serious disruptions in the global economy in a short time. Tourism is a sector where human relations are intensely experienced. For this reason, it was one of the sectors most affected by the Covid-19 pandemic,

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