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# Hotel Academy Multiplier Event

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# **Hospitality & Tourism and use of Technology (Digital Tools/Socia Media-Virtual Learning) Pre and Post-Covid period**

- Vassos Ioannou
- 24/7 Mediterranean Travel Ltd



# Hospitality & Tourism and use of Technology (Digital Tools/Social Media-Virtual Learning) Pre and Post-Covid period

Overall, COVID-19 tourism research should not only be the mean to overcome the crisis and resume previously chartered economic growth trajectories. It should lead the refocusing, repurposing, reframing and re-interpretation of research questions, methodologies and outcomes, so that tourism stakeholders can in turn re-direct their actioning, conduct and evolution. To that end, COVID-19 tourism research will be benefited by embedding, adapting, reflecting and expanding the theoretical lenses and perspectives of a much greater plurality of disciplines and constructs to guide and implement research. Transformative (service) research, philosophy, criminology, ethics, law, anthropology, behavioural and religious studies, political science and diplomacy, governance, bioethics, rhetoric. Researching within unchartered waters, COVID-19 tourism research may also need to apply new methodological approaches and tools that are capable to combat roots and not symptoms of tourism crises and use the latter as transformational opportunity to reset research agendas and re-imagine and re-shape unthinkable tourism futures. Due to the newness of the field qualitative approaches such as (cyber)ethnography and the need for urgent, fast and real-time research processes and outcomes, COVID-19 tourism research may also need to intensify and advance “new” methods of (big) data collection, analysis and interpretation/visualization, such as participatory sensing (i.e. using tourists as sensors for data collection).



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However, as the present and post COVID-19 era is a fertile ground of persistent and new paradoxes in tourism, tourism researchers should seriously consider adopting. For example, the Circumstances of COVID-19 (e.g. stay at home lockdowns, social distancing) have necessitated and accelerated the use of technologies by both tourists (e.g. information about travel restrictions, online crisis communication, online COVID-19 alerts and hygiene measures) and businesses (e.g. online food delivery, virtual dining, virtual wine experiences, festivals/events, virtual visits of museums, destinations). However, persistent increase use of social media and loneliness, democratization of information accessibility and information darkness, technology and (small) business empowerment/equalizing competition rules) are questioning the effectiveness of such technology solutions and have fuelled debates on whether they are a 'cure' or a 'fertilizer' and "diffuser' of the pandemic. Not everyone has access to technology and those that they have do not necessarily have the capabilities and knowledge to effectively use the technology tools and information. The persistent digital divide found in consumers and businesses (which mainly represents a socio-economic divide of citizens and size of businesses), has converted the pandemic to an infodemic (e.g. lack or misinformation, diffusion of fake COVID-19 news and advices, emotional contagion of global depression and mental health) and a tool deepening the economic divide and competitive gap between larger and smaller tourism operators.



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Digital inequalities in tourists potentiated their vulnerability to COVID-19 (e.g. putting themselves and their loved one in health risk while traveling or willing to travel during and after the COVID-19), while COVID-19 vulnerability potentiate to enlarge the digital inequalities [e.g. those who have the tools and means to easier go through the COVID-19 impacts will also be the only ones who can pay and access virtual tourism experiences, who will be well informed on how, where and when travel and who will be able to afford to travel in the future, as increased (hygiene and technology) operating costs and transportation oligopolies may increase costs of tourism]. Similarly, digital inequalities in tourism businesses potentiate COVID-19 vulnerability (as larger operators that were technology ready and ‘inherited’ by size resilience, were the first and maybe the only ones to be able to virtualize operations and experiences for maintaining business liquidity, surviving, re-opening and recovering post COVID-19), while COVID-19 vulnerability increases digital and economic inequalities in the tourism competitive landscape (e.g. larger companies/destinations which are characterized by greater cash liquidity, know-how, technology readiness and resilience and so, have lower COVID-19 vulnerability, will be the ones to survive and thrive post COVID-19). Paradox research that can investigate such contradictions between the abovementioned distinct and oppositional, but also elements interdependent elements can better define, understand, manage and address their concepts and the dynamics of their web of eternal mutuality.



# Hospitality & Tourism and use of Technology (Digital Tools/Social Media-Virtual Learning) Pre and Post-Covid period

## Privacy and obscurity

- Technology adoption by tourists (e.g. mobility tracking applications and other surveillance systems)
- Design and ethics of tourism technology applications novelty and usefulness
- Innovating from necessity: types, processes, capabilities, facilitators and/or inhibitors of 'innovation' adopted by tourism firms to ensure business continuity and survival during COVID-19



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## Cooperation and competition

- Practices and strategies of destinations and policy makers to combat and re-open their economies, e.g. Inter-governmental and destinations initiatives and bilateral, multilateral (biosecurity) agreements to create 'travel bubbles' for re-opening tourism across countries global and local
- Configuration of tourism supply chains (e.g. local Vs global sourcing of food supplies, human resources, capital resources)
- Design of transportation – travel motilities: e.g. airport and destination hubs, airline route design
- Tourism policies and strategies, e.g. allocation of governmental interventions and subsidies between national and international firms to enable them to survive the COVID-19 self-focus and other-focus
- Tourists' decision-making, quality evaluations and satisfaction from destinations and tourism providers under COVID-19 settings and conditions whereby self-presentation and self-safety may prevail over others' and common good

## Stability and change

- Type and processes of change (of tourism firms, destinations and tourists) supported and led by the COVID-19
- Factors inhibiting and / or facilitating change due to COVID-19



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## Self-preservation and self-actualization

- Motivations driving tourists'/human motivation and behavior
- Tourists' engagement with local communities and employees within a COVID-19 setting
- Employees' engagement and behavior towards tourists and organizations within a COVID-19 setting

## High-tech and high-touch tourism services and experiences

- Re-engineering of service delivery operations to make them touch free but highly personalized and human-centred experiences
- Re-design of travelers' journeys and experiences

## Profits and purpose

- Aims and scope of response and recovery strategies of tourism operators and destinations within COVID-19
- Social Corporate Responsibility of tourism operators and destinations within COVID-19 settings
- Resetting of tourism strategies in the post COVID-19 era
- Tourism sustainability policies, strategies and practices in the post COVID-19 era





# Hospitality & Tourism and use of Technology (Digital Tools/Social Media-Virtual Learning) Pre and Post-Covid period

## **COVID19: Dismantling and re-mantling tourism in three stages**

It is widely accepted that crisis management needs to be implemented before, during and after a crisis. Table 2 provides an overview of the impacts and implications of COVID-19 on three major stakeholders (tourism demand, tourism operators, destinations and policy makers) under three stages (representing the respond, recovery and restart stage from the pandemic) to incorporate a transformational stage envisioned in the post COVID-19 era. COVID-19 tourism research does not have to address issues in the last stage in order to be transformative. It can equally be transformative if it re-examines 'existing' issues and relations but through new theoretical lenses and/or methodological approaches by embedding a plurality of 'new' disciplines into the research designs. By doing this, one can significantly unravel unknown issues and dynamics, provide a better explanatory power and understanding of concepts and relations as well as identify and test new 'remedies'.



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- Respond Stage
- Recovery stage
- Restart, reform and reset reimagine

## **Tourism demand: Tourists' and/or their loved ones affected by COVID-19 and experiencing traumatic tourism experiences**

- Trip cancelations
- Loss of money paid for travel-tourism
- Trip disruptions
- Loss of travel loyalty benefits and points
- Quarantines and social distancing / lockdowns



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**Travellers reading and viewing traumatic COVID-19 tourism experiences lived by others (media communication and user-generated content)**

Travel restrictions and travel bans

Use of technology for crisis alerts and communication

Panic buying and stockpiling

Experience of trauma on tourists' travel attitudes, future intentions, decision – making and experiences

Impact of crisis communication on tourists' perceived risks, decision-making, future travel intentions and service quality evaluations

Impact of fake news and misinformation on tourists' perceived risks and destination image



# Hospitality & Tourism and use of Technology (Digital Tools/Social Media-Virtual Learning) Pre and Post-Covid period

**Impact of booking restrictions and firms' cancelation policies on tourists' attitudes and behavior towards booking restrictions and booking patterns:**

- Social distancing
- Lockdowns and stay at home
- Choosing self-isolation
- (excess) Use of technology (apps) for contactless services:
  - Shopping
  - Working
  - Information updates
  - Studying



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**Experiencing a global travel slow down resulting in reduced environmental pollution and over tourism phenomena**

- Multi-functional homes: remote working, home schooling, virtual social behaviors:
- Virtual entertainment
- Virtual social drinks
- Virtual parties
- Virtual events/festivals
- Virtual dining
- Virtual visitation of destinations and attractions
- Impact of safety and health concerns on tourists' attitudes, decision-making, and behaviors
- Impact of reflecting on personal values, lifestyles and priorities on tourists' behavior (tourism segmentation strategies and criteria)
- Issues of social isolation and excess use of social media/technology, on mental and psychological health, tourists' attitudes, travel intentions and behaviors
- Increased priority in localism and impacts on geographies and motilities of travel behavior and preference
- Tourists' understanding of tourism's impact on climate change and over tourism problems



# Hospitality & Tourism and use of Technology (Digital Tools/Social Media-Virtual Learning) Pre and Post-Covid period

## Experiencing a new tourism service and experience:

- Digital health passport and certifications
- Digital identity apps
- Travelers' mobility tracing apps
- Crowd and social distancing technology solutions and restrictions
- Contact free travelers' journey management solutions
- New hygiene standards
- Social distancing redefining service etiquettes



# Hospitality & Tourism and use of Technology (Digital Tools/Social Media-Virtual Learning) Pre and Post-Covid period

**Setting new priorities determining tourists' selection, evaluation of services and consumption behavior, e.g.: Self-care, safety, hygiene**

- Tourists recalibrating priorities, changing lifestyles, e.g.
  - Re-assessing what is essential for happiness
  - Deepening personal relations
  - Embracing a health-first mindset
  - New criteria for decision making
- Travel Better not less
- Travel for a purpose-meaning
- Experience the other side of the common destinations
- Redefinition of luxury tourism to include hygiene first, well-being?
- Impact of COVID-19 economic recession on tourism demand
- Impact of COVID-19 depression on tourism demand
- Investigating the impact of the new psychology and behaviour of tourists on:
  - Pricing strategies
  - Booking patterns



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## Segmentation and promotion strategies

- Tourists' attitudes, use, adoption and satisfaction from virtual tourism experiences
- Tourists' acceptance and use of (new) technologies

## Tourism supply – Businesses, Managing the safety and health of tourists and employees

## Handling customer communication and requests for:

- Changing travel itineraries and bookings
- Cancellations of bookings
- Refunds and compensations





# Hospitality & Tourism and use of Technology (Digital Tools/Social Media-Virtual Learning) Pre and Post-Covid period

**Engagement with tourists for ensuring: individual safety, security and stability (e.g. distress, emotional support), promoting and shifting customers to online channels and virtual experiences, building emotional bonds, trust and brand values**

- Employee communication and care for ensuring health, emotional stability and engagement
- Ensuring cash liquidity (negative revenues: no income cash returns)

## **Ensure business continuity and building resilience**

- Repurpose of resources, e.g. staff, space and food-cleaning supplies
- Innovation from necessity, e.g.: virtualization of experiences, remote working, innovation of business models
- Acceleration of digital adoption
- Customer engagement
- Employee engagement
- Mitigate crisis impacts

## **Brand communication for building brand values, e.g. messages like ‘we are all together’**

- Digital and economic divide within the industry



# Hospitality & Tourism and use of Technology (Digital Tools/Social Media-Virtual Learning) Pre and Post-Covid period

## Resetting the new business normal

- Re-opening: learning's from essential healthcare operators
- New cleaning and hygiene protocols: protective equipment, masks, sanitizers, disinfecting wipes
- Crowd management and social distancing practices
- Re-design and re-imagine the customer journey to make it contactless
- Redesign of tourism experiences
- Redesign of workspace and service scape
- Re-engineering business operations
- Rethink of business ecosystems and partnerships
- Contact free business models
- Mobility tracing apps for employees and customers
- Technology solutions for hygiene, health and safety control.



# Hospitality & Tourism and use of Technology (Digital Tools/Social Media-Virtual Learning) Pre and Post-Covid period

## Resetting the new business normal

- Lead with purpose: association of brands with good
- Update and redesign of booking forecasting, revenue management and pricing systems
- Capture new demand
- Accelerate digital and data analytics
- New competitors
- Virtual tourism experiences: a substitute or a complement of tourism experiences, blended operating business models.
- New start-ups and disruptors in the tourism value chain
- Digital and economic divide
- Surviving the COVID-19 recession and new operational standards, costs and requirements
- Abilities to address the sophisticated and new tourists market segments
- Impact of COVID-19 economic recession on the tourism industry and structure



# Hospitality & Tourism and use of Technology (Digital Tools/Social Media-Virtual Learning) Pre and Post-Covid period

## Destination and Policy Makers

- Ensuring health and safety of tourists
- Managing repatriation of citizens
- Interventions to support vulnerable employees and tourism businesses
- Crisis communication
- Accountability, effectiveness and fairness of increased public expenditure
- Politics – pressures and lobbying for resource allocation
- Impact of crisis communication and user-generated-content on destination brand image
- Securing and building the destination image
- Keeping tourists informed and interested: Promotion and visibility of destinations
- Virtual visits of destinations



# Hospitality & Tourism and use of Technology (Digital Tools/Social Media-Virtual Learning) Pre and Post-Covid period

## Destination and Policy Makers

- Engaging with destination partners and stakeholders
- Provision of training and business consulting services to tourism operators
- Interventions to support tourism industry and jobs
- Crisis communication: promote a positive and uplifting message, build and associate destination brands with good values,
- Impact and effectiveness of governmental interventions on building resilience and recovery abilities
- Impact of crisis communication on tourists' attitudes, travel intentions and destination image perceptions
- Reimagine the new types of sustainable and responsible tourism
- Setting safety and health regulations and safety standards



# Hospitality & Tourism and use of Technology (Digital Tools/Social Media-Virtual Learning) Pre and Post-Covid period

## Destination and Policy Makers

- Develop strategies for staged re-opening: relaxation of travel restrictions, creation of travel bubbles, re-opening of tourism businesses
- Promotion and motivation to tourists, e.g. travel vouchers and incentives
- Health passports and health identities

## Nationalization of tourism infrastructure, superstructure and tourism operators (e.g. airlines, ferry companies, train operators)

- Global cooperation for addressing climate change and sustainability issues
- Impact of public interventions on functioning and structure of tourism industry
- Impact of public spending and interventions on austerity measures



# Hospitality & Tourism and use of Technology (Digital Tools/Social Media-Virtual Learning) Pre and Post-Covid period

## Tourism Demand

Tourists have experienced themselves, through their loved ones and/or through the shared experiences of others (e.g. user-generated-content) significant disruptions and health-risks in their travel and bookings plans. The tourists' experiences and/or exposure to others' experiences (that are also magnified through the emotional contagion and information diffusion of the social media) can have a significant impact on their travel attitudes, intentions and future behaviors. Psychiatric research investigating the impact of traumatic experiences on people's life, behaviors and experiences of places and services can provide useful theoretical lenses for understanding the travel behavior and attitudes of tourists that have been exposed to own or others' COVID-19 travel trauma. Tourism research has mainly focused on studying how tourists develop their perceived risk and the impacts of the latter on tourists' decision-making processes, future intentions and segmentation profiles.



# Hospitality & Tourism and use of Technology (Digital Tools/Social Media-Virtual Learning) Pre and Post-Covid period

## Tourism Demand

Others have also examined the impact of the tourists' perception of crisis management preparedness certification on their travel intentions. Such research is important, as risk perceptions are important for predicting future tourism demand and drafting appropriate recovery strategies. It is also relevant for COVID-19 tourism research because of the new COVID-19 standards and certification rules that companies are now required to adopt. Research has shown that perceptions of risks may differ between tourists with different origin-country, final destination, age, sex and the typology of travel. However, the impact of crisis communication and social media on perceived risk has been totally ignored. Some research is done for examining the impact of social media use on tourists' mental health and crisis information systems and communication – social media – however, given the increasing role and impact of social media on crisis communication and people's health and risks perceptions, this is an area where more research is granted. As a vaccine for COVID-19 may take long to be developed and travelers may need to live with it, tourism research might benefit from medical and health research investigating how people behave, live and cope with chronic and lifestyle-related diseases.





# Hospitality & Tourism and use of Technology (Digital Tools/Social Media-Virtual Learning) Pre and Post-Covid period

## Tourism Demand

During lockdowns, people have experienced and become familiar with virtual services and tourism experiences. Research in technology adoption would claim that increased technology familiarity and trialability will increase its adoption. But will this apply for the controversial technologies introduced by COVID-19? Political economy and law research explaining how people react and accept human rights 'violations' (e.g. surveillance measures, freedom of speech, lockdowns) under conditions of 'state of exception' like terrorism or the COVID-19 can provide a new lenses for studying adoption of the COVID-19 controversial technologies and restrictions Research on political ideologies could further enlighten why people's ideologies and political values may further perplex their reactions and behaviours to such interventions in their human rights.



# Hospitality & Tourism and use of Technology (Digital Tools/Social Media-Virtual Learning) Pre and Post-Covid period

## Tourism Demand

It is claimed that while experiencing low pace, new lifestyles and working patterns, people are reflecting and recalibrating their priorities and social values. Is that true in relation to their travel behavior? Would people require and expect greater responsibility and sustainability from tourism operators and destinations? Would they be motivated to travel more but for a meaningful purpose? Or would people go back to their previous travel behaviours and preferences? Past research has shown that consumers face a “material trap” in which materialism fosters social isolation and which in turn reinforces materialism. This might explain why during lockdowns people increased their online shopping and consumption of virtual entertainment and probably they might not have reflected and reset their values. Is that true and what is its impact on tourists’ behaviours? Consumer psychology and behavioural science explaining how people wish to align the time they spend with their values can provide useful insights into such investigations. In addition, religion and spirituality studies can further enlighten the impact of COVID-19’s living conditions on tourists’ tourism sustainability preferences and attitudes as well as responses to tourism operators’ and destination sustainability practices and communications. This is because religion and spirituality is found to play an important role in influencing individuals’ thoughts and behaviors



# Hospitality & Tourism and use of Technology (Digital Tools/Social Media-Virtual Learning) Pre and Post-Covid period

## Tourism Demand

Social distancing imposed by COVID-19 includes actions such as, reducing social contact, avoiding crowded places, or minimizing travel. Social distancing can significantly impact how people experience and evaluate leisure and travel activities like hiking, outdoor activities and nature-based tourism or even personal services like spas, dining, concierge services. Social distancing or better physical distancing may influence tourists' perceptions of health hazards, insecurity and unpleasant tourism experiences. But how 'far' away is enough for tourism employees and other customers to be from each other without compromising sociality, personal service and perceptions of social distancing measures? Social distancing has not been studied before in service provision, while law and criminology research on 'sexual' consent may provide a different perspective on how people define social space and the 'invasion' or not of others into it.



# Hospitality & Tourism and use of Technology (Digital Tools/Social Media-Virtual Learning) Pre and Post-Covid period

## Tourism Demand

Tourism is heavily a hedonic and sensorial experience. Service scape design plays a major role in tourism experience by influencing customers' emotions, behaviors, attitudes and service evaluations. However, COVID-19 operating standards require services capes to be redesigned eliminating or inhibiting sensorial elements and 'changing' tourism experiences, e.g.: smell of cleanliness instead of fragrance; social distancing and number of co-presence of clients in restaurants, festivals and other tourism settings will influence new standards of psychological comfort and acceptable levels of perceived crowedness; raised voices may generate a wider "moist breath zone" increasing viral spread; warmer temperatures create relaxing environments encouraging customers to stay and spend more, but poorly ventilated or air-conditioned indoor spaces may spread COVID-19. Would tourists and tourism firms change their behaviour and attitudes towards these new COVID-19 servicescapes? What new service etiquettes, customer expectations, behaviours and experiences would COVID-19 determined servicescapes and operational procedures may generate?

These and many other fields of research have been raised due to COVID-19 conditions, and as explained a plurality of theoretical lenses can be beneficial to provide a better understanding of these new concepts introduced in tourism research.



# Hospitality & Tourism and use of Technology (Digital Tools/Social Media-Virtual Learning) Pre and Post-Covid period

## Tourism Supply-Businesses

Tourism businesses have been racing to ensure the safety of their employees, customers, brand image and cash liquidity. To re-start, tourism companies are re-designing experiences (e.g. winery experiences, museum visits, tours, sports events, in-room dining and entertainment instead of hotel facilities) to feature smaller groups of tourists, outdoor activities and/or private experiences complying with social distancing and gathering restrictions and travellers' expectations. Tourism companies have already upgraded their cleaning procedures by adopting new standards and restraining staff. Many of companies promote their hygiene certifications accredited by health expert associations. Tourism professionals are being trained to become 'contact tracers' obtaining relevant certifications confirming their skills to identify cases, build rapport and community with cases, identify their contact and stop community transmission.



# Hospitality & Tourism and use of Technology (Digital Tools/Social Media-Virtual Learning) Pre and Post-Covid period

## Tourism Supply-Businesses

Restaurants, hotels, airports, public spaces are re-engineering their operations to make them contact-free or contactless. Mobile apps (for check-in, check-out, room keys, mobile payments, bookings-purchases), self-service kiosks, in-room technologies for entertainment and destination e-shopping (e.g. virtual reality for destination virtual visits to museums, attractions and destinations, movies), robots (for reception and concierge services, food delivery museum guides), artificial intelligence enabled websites and chatbox for customer communication and services, digital payments (e.g. digital wallets, paypal, credit cards).

In addition, the new operating environment enforced by COVID-19 measures require firms to adopt new technologies and applications to ensure management of crowds and number of people gathered in public spaces (e.g. airports, shopping malls, museums, restaurants, hotels), human disinfectors and hand sanitiser equipment, applications identifying and managing people's health identity and profiles.



# Hospitality & Tourism and use of Technology (Digital Tools/Social Media-Virtual Learning) Pre and Post-Covid period

## Tourism Supply-Businesses

Research can conduct a reality check and benchmarking of the effectiveness of the various respond and recovery strategies adopted by tourism operators. Research can also investigate the role and the way to build resilience to fast develop and implement such strategies. However, such research is useful and important but probably not enough for investigating the resetting of the next tourism industry normal. Transformative COVID-19 research should help industry to reimagine and implement an operating environment that is human-centred and responsible to sustainability and well-being values.



# Hospitality & Tourism and use of Technology (Digital Tools/Social Media-Virtual Learning) Pre and Post-Covid period

## Destination Management Organization and Policy Makers

Governments and destinations have been providing stimulus packages and interventions (e.g. tax reliefs, subsidies, deferrals of payments) to ensure the viability and continuity of tourism firms and jobs. Governments have intervened in mobility restriction and closures of businesses. Because of these, COVID-19 has resulted in a greater intervention of governments in the functioning and operations of the tourism industry. The government has also become a much bigger actor in the tourism economy (e.g. re-nationalisation of airlines and other tourism firms and tourism infrastructure like airports).

This is very unique for COVID-19, as previous crises have generated research and institutional interest, but they did not have policy impact, specifically in tourism (Hall et al., 2020). Would such government interventions and role sustain in the future? How will this influence the structure and functioning of the industry at a national and global level? Debates have already started questioning the effectiveness of such interventions, their fairness and equal distribution amongst tourism stakeholders their long-term impacts in terms of austerity and cuts of public expenditures.





# Hospitality & Tourism and use of Technology (Digital Tools/Social Media-Virtual Learning) Pre and Post-Covid period

## Destination Management Organization and Policy Makers

Future research looking into these issues is highly warranted. In their COVID-19 reactions and responses governments and destinations seem to have acted individually and nationalistic and recently selectively (e.g. bilateral and multilateral agreements amongst tourism bubbles). However, systems theory and crisis management, would argue that crises need to be addressed collectively. What would be the impact of such governmental behaviours on the future of tourism and destinations tourism policy making and strategies? As it seems, COVID-19 has raised political, geopolitical and governance issues that frameworks and concepts from these disciplines would need to be used to enlighten such research.



# Hospitality & Tourism and use of Technology (Digital Tools/Social Media-Virtual Learning) Pre and Post-Covid period

## Conclusions: What is more and what is next

COVID-19 resulted in numerous socio-cultural, economic and psychological impacts on various tourism stakeholders, some of them for years to stay. Consequently, the pandemic has created a 'fertile' new context whereby tourism researchers can conduct research with valuable end-user benefits. However, COVID-19 tourism research should try to avoid the 'publish or perish' old mantra that has been driving and mushrooming tourism research. Although studies conducting a reality check of impacts, predicting tourism demand, and benchmarking good and best practices are very useful and contextually interesting to assess COVID-19 impacts on various geographies sectors and stakeholders, they potentially offer limited scope to advance our knowledge on crisis management as well as to potentiate the pandemic's affordance to reset our research agendas and expand the contribution and frontiers of tourism research and industry.



# Hospitality & Tourism and use of Technology (Digital Tools/Social Media-Virtual Learning) Pre and Post-Covid period

## Conclusions: What is more and what is next

It is the aim of this paper to inspire tourism scholars to view and use the COVID-19 as a transformational opportunity for reforming their mindsets in designing and conducting research and for the tourism institutions to reset their standards and metrics for motivating and evaluating the purpose, role and impact of tourism research. In addition, crises also accelerate technology innovation and change. However, these should not be viewed as inevitable, unquestionable and impossible to re-shape and re-adjust to serve real needs and meaningful values. It is the responsibility of scholars to ensure that COVID-19 tourism research can ensure the latter.

The present analysis is not exhaustive in terms of the COVID-19 impacts, while impacts may not be uniform across all the actors of the same tourism stakeholder group. For example, the COVID-19 has different impacts on tourism operators based on their characteristics such as, the nature of the tourism sector (intermediaries, event organizers, transportation, type of accommodation or attraction provider), their size, location, management and ownership style.



# Hospitality & Tourism and use of Technology (Digital Tools/Social Media-Virtual Learning) Pre and Post-Covid period

## Conclusions: What is more and what is next

Similarly, the highly heterogeneous tourism demand (e.g. leisure and business travelers, group and independent tourists, special interest tourists such as religious, gay & lesbian, corporate travelers) also means that different COVID-19 impacts and implications are anticipated and worthy to be investigated for different market segments. COVID-19 tourism research should not only disclose such differentiated COVID-19 impacts, but it should also provide an enriched explanatory power about the roots of such disparities with the scope to envision and/or test any suggestions on how to address any inequalities and disadvantages that they may cause to various groups of tourism stakeholders. The analysis did not also include other major tourism stakeholders such as tourism employees, local communities, tourism entrepreneurs and tourism education (scholars, students and institutions alike). Recent developments and pressures faced by some of these tourism stakeholders were further strengthened by the COVID-19, which in turn place them in a more disadvantaged situation. COVID-19 research related to these stakeholders is equally important.



# Hospitality & Tourism and use of Technology (Digital Tools/Social Media-Virtual Learning) Pre and Post-Covid period

## Conclusions: What is more and what is next

The COVID-19 impacts on tourism employment create further pressures on tourism education that has severely affected by the pandemic. Apart from the virtualization of teaching and learning processes, tourism students and graduates have to also address the halt of industry internships, recruitment and questionable career paths. Tourism programs and universities are faced with reduced students' intakes, industry and government sponsorship and research funding. Tourism researchers need to find new ways and sources for conducting research addressing social distancing, respecting the mental health and privacy issues of COVID-19 affected stakeholders. Investigating pedagogical issues such as how to make the design and delivery of tourism curricula more 'resilient', agile and updated to develop graduates with flexible and transferable skills to other industries is also equally important. For example, new online and offline courses and certifications have already emerged training graduates to become professional 'contact tracer' possessing the technical, emotional/social and ethical skills to manage customers and employees in situations of contact tracing, isolation, and quarantine (e.g. how contact tracing is done, how to build rapport with cases, identify their contacts, and support both cases and their contacts to stop transmission in their communities).



# Hospitality & Tourism and use of Technology (Digital Tools/Social Media-Virtual Learning) Pre and Post-Covid period

## Conclusions: What is more and what is next

However, is that just an opportunistic educational offering and/or a new 'skill and qualification standard' that tourism industry and demand would expect alike?

Many other specialized topics also warrant research within the domain of COVID-19. For example, the social entrepreneurship has been booming in tourism during the last decade for several reasons including the 2008 economic recession. COVID-19 has boosted such tourism social ventures aiming to create social value, solve social problems created by the COVID-19 and provide help to people in need (e.g. marketplaces enabling the repurposing of various tourism unutilized resources such as labour, hotel and function space, food, cleaning material, e.g. HospitalityHelps.org). The mushrooming of COVID-19 related tourism social ventures provides many opportunities to study and better understand this phenomenon within new and various ecosystems, stakeholders and circumstances.



# Hospitality & Tourism and use of Technology (Digital Tools/Social Media-Virtual Learning) Pre and Post-Covid period

## Top Digital Transformation Trends in Hospitality and Tourism

Today, we look at an industry that's been completely turned on its head in recent years, due to extreme digital transformation: tourism and hospitality.

It used to be that we'd visit a brick-and-mortar travel agent every time we needed to plan a family vacation or work trip. (Granted, some of you may not remember that.) But today, thanks to mobility, travelers are playing a much larger role in the experience. They want to find a hotel that matches their style—on their terms—the very moment they need it. And thanks to players Online booking engines which set the stage for a completely new era of travel, they can. Indeed, when it comes to the hospitality business, digital transformation is a mix of greater customer demands—and the technology that can help meet them. Let's take a look at the top trends impacting the hospitality and tourism industry.



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## Mobile Integration-AI and Chatbots

The digital transformation is a dream come true for introverts who like to travel. With mobile-first and mobile-only brands continuing to grow, customers can do practically anything on their phone, from checking in—to ordering room service—to unlocking the room door itself. In fact, one can plan an entire trip—from booking to bedtime and home again—without ever talking to a live human.

Remember when all hotels used to have clunky welcome binders on the desks, outlining where to eat, what to see, and what to do in the area—everything you needed to know? Today, hotels can provide all that information—and more—via AI-powered apps and technology. Guests can access the information at any time they need, right from their phones in the form of an e-concierge. They can even access voice-activated chat bots to open the curtains, set the alarm, or order breakfast, without ever talking to a human being. you can even [text a robot at any time, 24/7](#), and she'll find a way to fill your request, fast. Meanwhile nearly 5,000 hotels to do things like make reservation changes, and check on account balances or redemption vouchers





# Hospitality & Tourism and use of Technology (Digital Tools/Social Media-Virtual Learning) Pre and Post-Covid period

## Integration OF INTERNET-Focus on Data

As more and more devices get connected to the Internet of Things it makes sense that the tourism and hospitality industry would begin to harness that data to improve the customer experience. After all, the more they know about their guests, the better they can please them. If the IoT data tells them the customer has visited their resort every year for the last three years, it can automatically send a message proactively asking the guest if they'd like to make another booking this year. You just saved your customer a step—and guaranteed a booked room—without ever lifting a finger. The same could be said by harnessing information about food selection, excursions, and in-room amenities.

As noted above, data is going to play a huge part in the new era of hospitality and tourism. In the case of AirBnB, [they were able to use customer data](#) to determine that guests who chose not to book were doing so because they were discouraged by hosts who failed to respond to their inquiries. (I've been there—it's annoying.) By offering instant booking feature to guarantee their reservation, they helped alleviate many of the customers' concerns and helped automate what had previously been an incredibly arduous part of their business model. Data didn't just improve CX. It improves the bottom line, as well.



# Hospitality & Tourism and use of Technology (Digital Tools/Social Media-Virtual Learning) Pre and Post-Covid period

## Reputation-Virtual Reality

The fact that guests can book instantly also means they can share their opinions instantly via Facebook, Yelp, TripAdvisor and other travel review websites. That's why technology has pushed hotels and restaurants to focus even more on providing quality customer service. Yes, there are outliers. I've experienced them myself. But there is no doubt the trend is toward better service for guests—not just a better return for operators.

Whether it's a hotel property, museum, or a tourist destination, guests can take a look without even leaving their living room via virtual reality. The goal is either to offer a preview of what guests will experience—or offer the next-best-thing to visiting at all. (For instance, would you rather pay \$4,000 to visit Paris in real life, or \$200 to take the same trip in a virtual world?) This isn't being done on a widespread scale yet, but some major operators are offering guests the chance to experience at least a snippet of their travel experience—offering greater piece of mind especially to those planning a visit to a faraway destination.

The travel and tourism business is a \$1.3 trillion industry. Clearly, there is incentive to invest to grow it even more. Convincing someone to take their first overseas trip, there is truly no end to the value tech can add to travel. They just need to be careful it doesn't become so good that guests prefer the tech over the real thing.



# Hospitality & Tourism and use of Technology (Digital Tools/Social Media-Virtual Learning) Pre and Post-Covid period

## Social Media Management and Sound of Voice/Presentation

When we hear the term “social media” we tend to think about Facebook and Instagram; however, there are many, many other platforms out there. Finding which ones can help you interact best with your customers is key

Your brand identity needs to be present at the core of all our efforts. From helping you pick the right username to deciding which channels are most appropriate in reaching your audience...

Every business is unique and uses social media differently. Making sure that your business “sounds «and presented exactly how you envisioned

## Social Monitoring

Keep a close eye on all your social networks, giving you feedback on who’s talking about you, what they’re saying, how much of it is positive/negative. That way you can always make quick adjustments to your efforts .....



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