The impact of the covid- 19 pandemic on the life cycle of tourist Destinations from tour operators and hoteliers' perspectives

ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study explores the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism sector and tourist destinations by expanding the Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) model, thus providing a more comprehensive understanding of the pandemic's influence on destination and insights for developing effective revitalization strategies for tourism destinations. Design/methodology/approach: Employing a qualitative research approach, the study utilizes the TALC model to conduct qualitative interviews with tour operators and hoteliers, aiming to gather nuanced insights into the impacts of the pandemic on tourism destinations. Nine tour operators and four hoteliers participated in the online interviews. Data analysis was driven by the interview responses, and thematic analysis was guided by concepts of the COVID-19 pandemic impacts and the six stages of Butler's TALC model. Findings: Severe impact of the pandemic on tourism businesses, encompassing a decline in tourist arrivals, business closures, and substantial job and income loss. Tourist destination impacts can be classified into four distinct stages— stagnation, exploration, involvement, development, and consolidation providing a structured framework for inter — - preting the evolving dynamics of tourism destinations. Contextual issues and diverse approaches are suggested to revitalize tourist destinations in order remain attractive, competitive, and sustainable. Research limitations/implications: The restriction of the sample size to only two tourism sectors and generalizing findings due to the exploratory and qualitative nature of the research. Originality/value: It provides insightful of pandemic impacts on tourist destination and relevant strategies, drawing upon Butler's theory. The practical implications for destination management and stakeholder engagement are instrumental in shaping the development of effective destination management strategies.