The Effect of Covid-19 on Intention to Travel during the Pandemic

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Abstract: Covid-19 epidemic has been leaving many severe consequences for the economy, including the tourism industry. The present study attempts to design a research model forinvestigating the factors affecting the intention to travel during the Covid-19 epidemic. In the study, knowledge, perceived risk and social concern are the factors used to examine the influence of covid-19 epidemic on the traveling intention during the pandemic. Designed questionnaires are distributed to the target respondents who are living in an emerging country, Vietnam. Both online and offline survey are made to gather the necessary data. SPSS and AMOS will be utilized to process and analyze the collected data to test the relationship between knowledge, perceived risk and social concern and intention to travel during the pandemic.
Keywords: Covid-19 epidemic, Intention to Travel, Vietnam.

I. Introduction

Research Background

Unlike previous epidemic outbreaks like SARS, Ebola, and H1N1, the coronavirus (COVID-19) threatens to be the world's worst epidemic outbreak, accompanied by a systemic global healthcare crisis, financial crisis, and economic catastrophe known as the COVID-19 recession.Governments all across the world have taken exceptional measures to stop the spread of COVID-19, including closing entire nations or the worst-affected cities and preventing entry into their borders. These actions have had a significant negative impact on the global tourism industry. The tourist sector is reeling from a series of disasters. According to World Tourism Organization statistics, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) caused a 9% drop in the overall number of visitors in Asia (World Tourism Organization, 2004). COVID-19 will have an impact on the tourist sector in the global economy and society, based on recent experience with SARS. According to (Wen et al., 2021), travel limitations imposed by some areas as part of COVID-19 avoidance behaviors have wreaked havoc on the global tourism industry.

Despite the fact that certain regions of the globe are improving, the new variation has a significant influence on human health and well-being, posing a risk of additional COVID-19 waves. Touring during the pandemic is perilous, with the likelihood of unfavorable outcomes, as shown by COVID-19's detrimental impact on health and the uncertainty that passengers may face on their route (Chang, 2009). Furthermore, social separation has compelled many to avoid traveling and has thwarted trip plans (Wen et al., 2021). Furthermore, the resurgence of tourism may bring with it potential threats that passengers are unaware of, as well as the prevalence of confusing information disseminated from a number of sources, putting tourists at greater risk (Omori et al., 2020).

In the regard of tourism industry during the pandemic, previous research has primarily been carried out as the examination on recovery patterns (Cheer, 2020), investigation into the relationship between infectious diseases and tourist movements (Shi et al., 2020), analysis of how each COVID-19 outbreak can alter tourists' preferences (Wen et al., 2021), or the assessment regarding their economic and social repercussions. Despite numerous studies as mentioned, it is recorded that only a few are looking into travel intention in the light of pandemic risk (Wen et al., 2021) and how travelers' decision-making process is formed. This topic needs to be exploited further to obtain insights from travelers in the attempt to facilitate demands for tourism.

Research Objectives

The main purpose of the study is to investigate the impact of knowledge, social concern, and perception of risk on the plans to travel during Covid-19. As a consequence, the following objectives are defined to assist in the achievement of these goals:
- To determine the factors affecting the intention to travel during the Covid-19 epidemic.
- To examine the impact of the factors including knowledge, social concern, perceived risk on intention to travel.

- To provide tourist planners at the government and private resort management levels with useful information and recommendations.

II. Literature Review

Theory of Planned Behavior in the Context of the Covid-19Epidemic

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is a theory that explains how attitudes influence behavioral intention, and consequently actual behavior (Juschten et al., 2019). TPB was proposed by Ajzen (1991) based upon Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) by Ajzen and Fishbein (1975). People' intents are shaped by their attitudes and subjective norms, according to TRA. Subjective norms are the manner in which society stimulates or discourages people to engage in a certain action (Ajzen, 1991). Han (2015) defined attitudes as positive or negative sentiments about a certain event or person. TPB used TRA as a foundation and incorporated perceived behavioral control, which is defined as a self-evaluation of one's capacity to carry out a certain activity in terms of skill or capabilities (Juschten et al., 2019). The Theory of Planned Behavior, as stated in Wang and Wong (2020), has enhanced behavioral intention predictions by merging volitional and non-volitional elements. Individuals' desire to act is said to be enhanced by attitudes and supporting subjective standards, although their perceived behavioral control has a substantial effect on intentions (Ajzen, 2020). The impacts of attitude, subjective norm, and behavioral control on pandemic travel intention will be investigated in this research.

Attitude

Fabrigar et al. (2005) claimed that evaluating attitude remains focused on a single subject is more important than examining the whole issue or scenario. Evaluative property, according to their article, is "the most general notion utilized in gauging attitude." Agarwal (2014) revealed that when a person feels favorably about an action, he or she would engage in it.

In the context of behavior, an individual's favorable or negative opinion on a certain activity is referred to as attitude. It is decided by the outcomes of one's actions when they are carried out (Ajzen, 1991). In TPB, attitude is the most important factor in deciding one's action since it has the most impact on intention (Ajzen, 1991). This variable is defined as the expression of views about the repercussions of one's activities. A person will adopt a specific attitude if they are confident in the positive or negative effects of their activities. When a person knows that refraining from traveling is a necessary aspect of avoiding infection and transmission of Covid-19, he or she will refrain from traveling. Salient beliefs are the views that lead a person to act in a specific way (Fishbein and Ajzen, 2011)

Subjective Norm

Individuals believe they should act in a certain way depending on how others assess or evaluate that action (Ajzen, 1991). It is an external factor in which individuals seek validation from others, particularly their family and friends, prior to actually making any choices (Ho et al., 2017). The approbation of others in one's physical surroundings has a significant impact on one's behavioral intention and actual conduct. In contrast to social norms, Yuzhanin and Fisher (2016) stressed that it is "social pressure experienced by people" to behave in specific ways, rather than the truth of what others believe.

Perceived Behavioral Control

Perceived behavioral control refers to one's capacity and desire to carry out certain actions, which determines one's intention (Ajzen, 2002). As a result, the extent to which tourists are highly motivated to travel again in a pandemic scenario is assessed, as well as whether they find it simple to travel after the limitation is soften.

Since the initial breakout of Covid-19 in Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh City has been the country's greatest COVID-19 hotspot (Vietnamplus, 2021). While the current number of COVID-19-infected patients varies between 6000 and 7000 per day, and the whole lockdown lasted more than three months last year, the government and authorities have agreed to remove travel restrictions and implement them in stages. The first phase allows fully vaccinated visitors to travel locally and internationally for business purposes. As a result, this studydiscovers how visitors felt about visiting during the epidemic when the travel restriction was partly eased. Furthermore, researchers have shown that attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control all have positive effects on behavioral intention (Liu et al., 2021). Hypotheses are given based on the Theory of Planned Behavior inside the COVID-19 scenario:

H1: Subjective norm has positive impact on traveling intention during Covid-19
H2: Attitude has positive impact on traveling intention during Covid-19
H3: Perceived behavioral control has positive impact on traveling intention during Covid-19

The Extension of TPB and COVID-19

Customers' intentions in the tourism sector have been studied using the Theory of Planned Behavior (Choi and Park, 2017; Shen and Shen, 2020), with topics ranging from re-visit intend (Huang et al., 2019), environmental-driven behavior (Wang and Wong, 2020), health tourism (Seow et al., 2020), and locals' intentions toward domestic tourism (Erul et al., 2020). Numerous studies have used the TPB framework to investigate the beneficial impacts of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavior control on visitors' behavioral intentions (Liu et al., 2021). These three characteristics, according to Meng and Cui (2020), influence tourists' intentions to return to home-based lodging facilities. Furthermore, according to Juschten et al. (2019), subjective norms and perceived behavioural control had a significant role in urban inhabitants' willingness to accept adjacent places. However, because of the unique nature of COVID-19, the tourism sector faces challenges and developments that need more research into consumers' intentions to travel again. In order to thoroughly investigate TPB in the post - COVID-19 period, the author sought to include aspects such as perceived risk, social concern, and pandemic knowledge into the suggested framework.

Perceived Risk

Fuchs and Reichel (2006) definedperceived riskas the potential danger that a person could face when traveling. When a possible danger is likely to surpass a traveler's tolerance level, risk perception alters travel intention. The epidemic has lasted over three years from the initial breakout of COVID-19, and it has crippled economies all around the globe. Due of its quick spread via close encounters, an international travel ban was imposed in all nations, and internal travel was limited; as a result, tourism has seen a severe downturn (Postma et al., 2020). Furthermore, activities throughout the globe have been canceled or postponed until further notice (Niewiadomski, 2020), and all service outlets demand clients and service employees to maintain a safe distance from one another (Galvani et al., 2020). Many nations began to relax their bans and open their borders when vaccines were introduced to the market (World Nomads, 2021). Nonetheless, visitors continue to be concerned about being infected while on vacation, owing to the lack of certainty about vaccine efficacy (Esterman, 2020). Perceived risk is thought to have a role in influencing tourists' travel behavior (Reichel et al., 2007). While some people are afraid of illness and uncertainty, others have a propensity to dismiss the probability of catastrophe and disobey safety recommendations, posing a serious danger while traveling (Mansfeld, 2006). As reported by Zhu & Deng (2020), perceived risk in the tourist industry is the subjective judgment made by consumers that leads to negative impacts for tourism as a result of the objective imbalance in tourist safety data and the subjective perception that tourists have.The below hypothesis is established.

H4: Perceived risk has a negative impact on traveling intention during Covid-19

Tasci & Sönmez (2019) mentioned that a person's attitudes are shaped by their perspective. Visitors, according to (B. Rittichainuwat et al., 2018), are more likely to make judgments based on how they view the scenario rather than what really occurs. Risk perception varies depending on the circumstances; nevertheless, when people anticipate the occurrence of potential danger, it has a negative impact on their decision to act in specific ways (Quintal et al., 2010). As a consequence, the purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of COVID-19 risk perception on travel attitudes during the pandemic. The greater the danger of catching the illness when traveling during COVID-19, the more likely tourists will remain from home, practice social distancing, and avoid visiting tourist attractions. The next hypothesis is developed as follows.

H5: Perceived risk has a negative impact on attitude toward the traveling intention during Covid-19

Perceived behavioral control (PBC), as described by (Han, 2015), is an internal component that measures the incentive to conduct a certain action. The link between PBC and perceived risk is described in this research as how risk perception guides one's own action. Quintal et al. (2010), on the other hand, suggested that perceived risk seems to have no effect on PBC since potential threat is unrelated to an individual's sense of risk in managing their behavior. Ajzen (1991) stated explicitly that "PBC comprises of controllability and self-efficacy" according to the TPB framework. Furthermore, Hansen et al. (2018) shown that PBC is substantially influenced by perceived risk. When hazards and dangers are possible, visitors are discouraged from exercising more self-control (Rahmafitria et al., 2021). Tourists will avoid traveling during COVID-19 due to their fear of being infected. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H6: Perceived risk has a negative impact on perceived behavioral control toward the intention to travel during Covid-19

Social Concern

Inherited dispositions to prioritize others' needs above one's own are referred to as social concern. These impulses include caring for others, forming close ties with and partnering with others, obeying particular moral

intuitions, and conformity.People who are socially concerned have a collection of traits that push them to prioritize the needs of others above their needs (Agnew, 2014). (Agnew, 2014) also stated that caring for the well-being of others is one of the incentives for social activity. Conformist conduct will result from the motivations. Furthermore, kindness and understanding are the basis for caring for others, according to (Agnew, 2011)and Batson (2010), since humans understand the feelings of other people. However, in reality, this societal responsibility usually conflicts with personal interests, especially when it comes to high costs(Agnew, 2011).

In this study, social concern is defined as a person's interest in the welfare of others. A person with a high level of social concern is prepared to forego their desire to take a trip if they believe it might damage others. There are probably not many publications that discuss how societal issues affected TPB development. The hypothesis evolved from this scenario is:

H7: Social concern has a positive impact on attitude toward traveling intention during Covid-19

Knowledge

In the decision-making procedure, context awareness is crucial. Knowledge about an issue, according to (B. N. Rittichainuwat & Chakraborty, 2009), influences one's view of it. Tourists create their perception of the risk of visiting based on information presented about the pandemic, vaccination system, travel laws and limitations, as well as the current condition (Cavlek, 2002). Tourists select the amount of danger and safety after analyzing their gained information, which leads to their behavioral desire to travel (Mansfeld, 2006); (B. N. Rittichainuwat & Chakraborty, 2009).

COVID-19, on the other hand, has spread wildly over the globe, causing unintended effects and providing ambiguous and questionable information. In a prior study on the swine flu pandemic, Holland et al. (2012) found that the unexpected nature of the swine virus increased uncertainty among Australians. Uncertainty and a lack of understanding may lead to a misleading risk assessment of a situation. Despite the fact that everyone is fully aware of the dangers of COVID-19, there seems to be little information provided for residents and visitors on how the pandemic is handled as the present COVID-19 situation in Vietnamhappens. Inadequate information and awareness may result in erroneous risk perceptions and attitudes. In the framework of TPB, hypothesis of knowledge isexamined:

H8: Knowledge has a positive impact on perceived risk of Covid-19

III. Methodology

Research Design

The quantitative research method is often used in instances when issues may be quantified using numerical data. It may be used to examine attitudes, views, and actions, among other things. Quantitative research has the advantage of being able to be extended to a broader population. The ability to collect a large number of data (Kotler, 2006) or assuring the aims and conclusions are both advantages of using this approach (Harwell, 2011). Data collecting is considered to be more structured. A variety of methods may be used to perform quantitative research, including surveys via phone, e-mail, internet or offline encounters such as surveys at home, outside, shopping mall, etc.

Sample and Sampling Method

In this research, the convenience sampling approach is used. To ensure dependability, Sarstedt & Christian M. Ringle (2017) advised that the number of samples must be at least five times the number of observed variables. Because there are 7 variables and 16 observations in this research model, the sample size must be at least 80. However, according to (Andrew L. Comrey, 1992)study, "sample sizes of 50, 100, 200, and 300 may provide extremely bad, poor, fair, and satisfactory results, respectively". As a consequence, a sample size of 350 will be needed in order to provide an appreciable result.

Convenient sampling is used in this study. Convenient sampling, according to Cooper, D., and Schindler (2008), is non-probability sampling that enables scientists to pick their respondents at their convenience. The range of 200-300 samples is good enough to make study findings academically legitimate using this sampling approach (Andrew L. Comrey, 1992).

Data Collection

The target respondentsareVietnamese inhabitants who have been suffering from the severe effects of COVID-19 and who may travel once the situation with COVID-19 seems to be significantly improved, despite the pandemic's continued existence. Because of the nature of this study, convenience sampling is used, with data obtained via a self-monitored survey. Because the Covid was still present throughout the data collecting timeframe, the questionnaire was sent entirely online via a Google form link.

Variable Measurement

A seven-point Likert - type scale, ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), was used to assess all key factors, including knowledge, social matters, self-efficacy, and TPB characteristics (strongly agree). Because it may uncover concepts based on judgment or viewpoint on social problems, psychological scale is an acceptable tool for social research (Djamba, Y. K., & Neuman, 2014). The seven-point Likert scale is selected since it is a more powerful and accurate measuring method that gives greater perceived reliability of a participant's rating, easy to use, and unattended usability surveys (Finstad, 2010)

In the present study, knowledge is evaluated using the items that are developed by Klerck & Sweeney (2007) and Rahmafitria et al. (2021). Social concern is assessed by the items fromBalkhy et al. (2010) and Rahmafitria et al. (2021). Perceived risks is measured by the items adapted from et. al. (2006) and Rahmafitria et al. (2021). Attitude is measured by the items adapted from Fabrigar et. al. (n.d.). Perceived behavioral control is assessed by the scale developed byAjzen (2006). Subjective norm is measured by the items designed by Tuu et al.(2008). Intention to travel is assessed by the scale from Tuu et al. (2008).

Data Analysis

Smart PLS 3.2.8 is used to analyze the latent variable and examine the hypotheses. Since the population of visitors is unknown in the tourism context, it is impossible to tell if the data will be distributed normally. "Partial least squares-structural equation modeling" (PLS-SEM) was selected. Even though one of the benefits of PLS-SEM is that it can analyze a large amount of data in a short period of time, as many samples as possible are expected to be collected to boost the model's relevance in case the coefficient is modest. According to (Kock & Hadaya, 2018), owing to the increased number of samples, a model with a small path coefficient may have a large significant value in SEM PLS analysis. This argument is built on the high-power value norm to prevent bias caused by incorrect capitalization.

IV. Conclusion

Tourism is one of the world's major economic sectors and one of the sectors most affected by the Covid-19 pandemic as well. The current study aims to establish a research framework for discovering the impact of Covid-19 epidemic on the intention to travel during the pandemic in the context of an emerging country as well as a new tourist destination in Southeast Asia. Vietnam.In the current study, Covid-19 epidemic is assessed by knowledge, perceived risk, social concern. Inhabitants who are living in Vietnam will be approached to complete the designed questionnaires. Necessary data will be gathered using convenient sampling method. The collected data is then processed and analyzed utilizing SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), and AMOS (Analysis of a Moment Structures) statistical in order to discover the relationship between knowledge, perceived risk, social concern and intention to travel in the situation of Covid-19 pandemic.

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