

SIGNIFICANT IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON TRAVEL AND TOURISM INDUSTRY

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Abstract

From times immemorial travel and tourism have been an important social activity of human beings. Putting it in simple terms tourism is the act of travel for the purpose of leisure, pleasure or business and also provision of services for this act. The present paper discusses why and how Covid 19 can be a transformational opportunity by discussing the circumstances and also questions raised by the pandemic. The paper identifies fundamental values, institutions and pre-assumptions that tourism industry and academia should actually challenge and also breakthrough to advance and advance and reset research and practice frontiers. Tourism can be viewed from various perspectives, from a geographer's perspective the main concern of tourism is to look into aspects like the geographical location of a place, climate and the landscape physical planning as a result of providing tourism facilities and amenities. The objectives of the study is to study and analyze various concepts of travel and tourism industry, to understand strategies devised by travel and tourism industry to resume operations during Covid, to understand developmental prospects and trends shaping travel and tourism industry and to know major impact of Covid 19 on inbound and outbound travel operations for tourism and hospitality sector. Indian association of tour operators (IATO) estimates that hotel; aviation and travel sector together may incur loss of about 85 billion due to travel restrictions and also impose on foreign tourists. Descriptive research is used for the purpose of research and data is collected with the help of secondary data. The findings and suggestions of the study might assist tourist operators to devise strategies to overcome problems arise due to Covid 19. The paper concludes that Covid 19 outbreak will lose tourist traffic from other countries to India and this study might be very much helpful for prevention of Covid 19 measures.

Keywords: *Travel and tourism, leisure, hospitality sector, outbound travel operations, amenities, Covid 19, developmental prospects*

INTRODUCTION

Travel refers to the act of moving from one location to another. This can refer to long distance travel, short distance travel, overseas travel, domestic travel and various other forms. Crucially, travel also includes both round trips and one way journeys, and it covers a wide variety of different travel purposes. The travel industry, therefore, refers to the numerous aspects of the wider service industry which cater for the needs and desires of those who have travelled from one the world to another. Health communication strategies and measures (e.g. social distancing, travel and mobility bans, community lockdowns, stay at home campaigns, self- or mandatory-quarantine, curbs on crowding) have halted global travel, tourism and leisure. Being a highly vulnerable industry to numerous environmental, political, socio-economic risks, tourism is used to and has become resilient in bouncing back from various crises and outbreaks like terrorism, earthquakes etc. Covid 19 tourism certainly impacts uneven in space and time and apart from

human tool estimates does show that an enormous and international economic impact international tourist arrivals are estimated to drop around 78% causing loss of US\$ 1.2 trillion in export revenues from tourism and also around 120 million direct tourism job cuts the largest decline in history.

Within the burgeoning industry discussions and research about tourism and COVID-19, there is a unanimous call to see and use the pandemic as a transformative opportunity (Mair, 2020). Industry should not only recover but also reimagine and reform the next normal and economic order (McKinsey, 2020), while researchers should not solely use COVID-19 as another context to replicate existing knowledge for measuring and predicting tourism impacts (Gössling, Scott, & Hall, 2020; Hall, Scott, & Gössling, 2020). Although such studies are important for managing the pandemic, they do not advance knowledge and/or guide the industry to a step beyond. Moreover, because of the interlinked socio-cultural, economic, psychological and political impacts of COVID-19 of this magnitude, unforeseen trajectories instead of historical trends are expected and the predictive power of 'old' explanatory models may not work. Moreover, the economic system and mindset contributing to the COVID-19 has also been guiding and shaping the COVID-19 response and recovery strategies of governments, institutions, businesses and people alike. This can significantly perpetuate and repeat crises as we are treating their symptoms and not their roots. For example, economic priorities for maintaining business continuity and jobs, resume and recovering to the old 'economic success growth', have been driving governments' policies and practices such as: economic support (e.g. subsidies, tax reliefs) to tourism businesses and employees; debates for relaxation of restrictions for re-opening and re-starting economies at the expense of a second way and human lives. Similarly, people have engaged in panic buying and (over)-consumption of online experiences (e.g. virtual entertainment, dining, drinking, and traveling) during lockdowns that demonstrate their persistence, preference and fear of losing to their 'consumerism' traditional lifestyles deemed essential for their success and happiness. Early COVID-19 tourism research also reinforces a similar mindset, e.g. many studies trying to measure the economic impacts of COVID-19 trading them off to socio-cultural and biological impacts, studies aiming to predict and measure when tourists will start traveling again and when we can reach the old tourism targets.

COVID-19, the disease caused by a new strain of corona virus called severe acute respiratory syndrome corona virus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) has had a greater impact on tourism and travel behavior than any disease outbreak in living memory. Outside the public health sphere tourism has become one of the main public faces of COVID-19 in the international media. The nature of the tourism system means that tourism has both contributed to the spread of the disease and experienced the repercussions of the disease along all parts of the tourism value and supply chains. The disease's global reach and the application of classic disease controls in the form of quarantine, reduced mobility and isolation have had a dramatic effect on international and domestic tourism alike along with a range of sector specific impacts, including transport, travel and booking agencies, hospitality, restaurants, conventions and events, and attractions.

In particular, the indirect effects of COVID-19 are likely to be considerably higher than with SARS. The governments have taken drastic measures to control the epidemic. The affected provinces were immediately sealed off from the rest of the countries or quarantine, and isolation rules started to be implemented. Besides, any form of a gathering of people is avoided. Many

public and private institutions, including schools, restaurants, hotels, convention centers, have been temporarily closed. Another channel of impact, which in principle already worked during the SARS epidemic, but which is likely to have become more critical, is the rapid dissemination of reports (and false reports) about the COVID-19 pandemic on social media. It may unsettle consumers even in countries that are only marginally affected by the pandemic and can also dampen economic activity there. Risk communication can be regarded as a good start point to evaluate the change in the mobility plans of potential travelers and reveal a meaningful forecast for the tourism industry. Risk communication is intended to explain, educate, or warn about potential risks, but also denotes a process that is selective in several respects. This is due to several factors, such as the information-sharing social groups (politics, health workers and individuals), the technical dissemination processes, or the risk perception influenced by various factors (experience, background knowledge, interests, and attitudes) on the part of the information recipients. It should also be taken into account that different risk characteristics and the quality of the information transmitted have an impact on risk acceptance and thus, on the assessments regarding the impending extent of damage and its probability of occurrence.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study and analyze various concepts of travel and tourism industry with reference to Indian context.
2. To access the impact of Covid19 on travel and tourism Industry in Current context.
3. To understand strategies devised by travel and tourism industry to resume operations during Covid19outbreak.
4. To understand future developmental prospects and trend shaping travel and tourism industry in India.
5. To study major impact of Covid19 on inbound and outbound travel operations for tourism and hospitality sector.

Tourism has two types and many forms on the bases of the purpose of visit and alternative forms of tourism. Tourism can be categorized as international and domestic tourism. Tourism has two types and various forms. On the basis of the movement of people tourism categorized into two types. These are:

INTERNATIONAL TOURISM

When people visit a foreign country, it is referred to as International Tourism. In order to travel to a foreign country, one need to have a valid passport, visa, health documents, foreign exchange, etc. International tourism is further divided into two types; Inbound Tourism & Outbound Tourism.

INBOUND TOURISM

This refers to tourists of outside origin entering a particular country. When people travel outside their host/native country to another country, then it is called inbound tourism for that country where he/she is traveling. For example, when a tourist from Indian origin travels to Japan then it is inbound tourism for Japan because foreign tourist comes to Japan.

OUTBOUND TOURISM

This refers to tourists traveling from the country of their origin to another country. When

tourists

travel a foreign region than it is outbound tourism for his own country because he/she is going outside their country. For Instance, when a tourist from India travels to Japan then it is

outbound tourism for India and Inbound tourism for Japan.

DOMESTIC TOURISM

The tourism activity of the people within their own country is known as domestic tourism. Traveling within the same country is easier because it does not require formal travel documents and tedious formalities like compulsory health check and foreign exchange. In domestic tourism, a traveler generally does not face much language problems or currency exchange issues.

- The World Travel and Tourism Council have warned the COVID-19 pandemic could cut 50 million jobs worldwide in the travel and tourism industry.
- Asia is expected to be the worst affected.
- Once the outbreak is over, it could take up to 10 months for the industry to recover.
- The tourism industry currently accounts for 10% of global GDP.

The corona virus epidemic is putting up to 50 million jobs in the global travel and tourism sector at risk, with travel likely to slump by a quarter this year, Asia being the most affected continent, the World Travel and Tourism Council has said.

Research investigating, measuring and predicting the COVID-19 tourism impacts is important in order to eliminate 'casualties', draft, monitor and improve response strategies (i.e. you cannot manage what you cannot measure). However, research focusing on the features and impacts of crises instead of their structural roots tends to conceal and stabilize the conditions and corollary social structures through which crises are produced (Barrios, 2017: 151). Investigating the real roots of COVID-19 may go beyond the boundaries and scope of tourism research. Yet, the latter needs to look into and challenge the tourism 'circumstances' and structures that have enabled and sometimes accelerated the global spread and impact of COVID-19. Unfortunately, the economists downplay the pandemic as a purely natural event originating and operating outside of the economic system (Nowlin, 2017). But, treating COVID-19 as an exogenous shock and phenomenon that has nothing to do with socio-economic structures and values, can perpetuate and strengthen the pandemic roots during the post COVID-era as well as constrain change and transformational processes. COVID-19 is a crisis of the economized societies rooted in the growth-paradigm (Ötsch, 2020). COVID-19 is also a result of the intersection of broader processes of urbanization, globalization, environmental change, agribusiness and contemporary capitalism (Allen et al., 2017). The nature of tourism (requiring traveling) and its evolution and growth paradigms are a significant contributor to such circumstances and the current socio-economic system accelerating the spread and impact of this contagious and infectious virus. Tourism is a result but also responsible for: our highly interconnected and global world; pollution, waste and climate change; global, national and regional economic development and growth; superiority of capitalism values in people's and business decision-making but also policy and politics formulations. As climate change increases the frequency of pandemics and outbreaks, pandemics are expected to become more common in the future (World Economic Forum (2019) (2019), 2019), which in turn highlights the interwoven nature and vicious circle forces between the biological, physical and socio-economic systems. Moreover, the economic

system and mindset contributing to the COVID-19 has also been guiding and shaping the COVID-19 response and recovery strategies of governments, institutions, businesses and people alike. This can significantly perpetuate and repeat crises as we are treating their symptoms and not their roots. For example, economic priorities for maintaining business continuity and jobs resume and recovering to the old 'economic success growth', have been driving governments' policies and practices such as: economic support (e.g. subsidies, tax reliefs) to tourism businesses and employees; debates for relaxation of restrictions for re-opening and re-starting economies at the expense of a second wave and human lives. Similarly, people have engaged in panic buying and (over)-consumption of online experiences (e.g. virtual entertainment, dining, drinking, and traveling) during lockdowns that demonstrate their persistence, preference and fear of losing to their 'consumerism' traditional lifestyles deemed essential for their success and happiness. Early COVID-19 tourism research also reinforces a similar mindset, e.g. many studies trying to measure the economic impacts of COVID-19 trading them off to socio-cultural and biological impacts, studies aiming to predict and measure when tourists will start traveling again and when we can reach the old tourism targets. As governments race to minimize economic losses, and be the first to reopen borders and (tourism) businesses, and financial markets, investors, cash liquidity and financial survival are equally pressing multinational and small tourism enterprises, they are all also looking for tourism research that can 'feed' and 'reconfirm' their mindset and help them resume operations based on the old paradigms and business models they are founded. Debates and research are based on trading between economic benefits and losses in exchange of human rights, lives, morals and ethics. There is no discussion why trade-offs are the best methodology and mindset to decide, no one has re-imagined 'solutions' enabling co-existence or regenerative forces between these concepts.

At a micro-level, COVID-19 tourism research should question and reset why tourism is viewed, practiced and managed as a way to 'escape', 'relax', 'socialize', 'construct identities/status', 'learn' and reward themselves from a routine, unpleasant and meaningless life. Why tourism should be researched and practiced as an escape from a boring life, instead of life being rewarding and meaningful itself? Why people have to travel thousands of miles away from home to 'learn' and 'be happy'? Why companies have to commercialize and commoditize communities, people and their tangible and intangible resources as tourism attractions 'please' the tourists' needs and drive economic development? Tourism paradigms and mindsets like this have led and intensified crises like COVID-19 and this cannot be sustainable for much longer. Consumerism and tourism should not be seen as the sole way to achieve happiness, self-expression, and (economic) development. COVID-19 tourism research should inspire tourists; how to study and practice environmental/sustainable management not as a legal necessity for lobbying and formulating policies, not as marketing tool to build brands' and people's identities, not as an expense to be minimized, but as a mindful business investment and personal lifestyle for a responsible future. Significant considerations to be kept in mind while preparing a digital strategy for rise in travel demand:

1. Travel search stats- A 30,000 foot view:

According to Google research, 55% of leisure travelers go on just one or two trips a year. But they do a lot of research before booking those trips. Every month millions of people search variety of travel keywords. As Bing research found during a recent six month period 33 million people searched for airline ticket or reservations, 29 million people searched for hotel reservations, 16 million people searched for various vacation

packages, 14 million people searched for car rentals and 10 million people searched for cruises. Many travel consumers certainly plan far ahead and travel agencies should make sure they have offers that which appeal to people who are ready to book long before they travel as well also be aware of last minute travelers also.

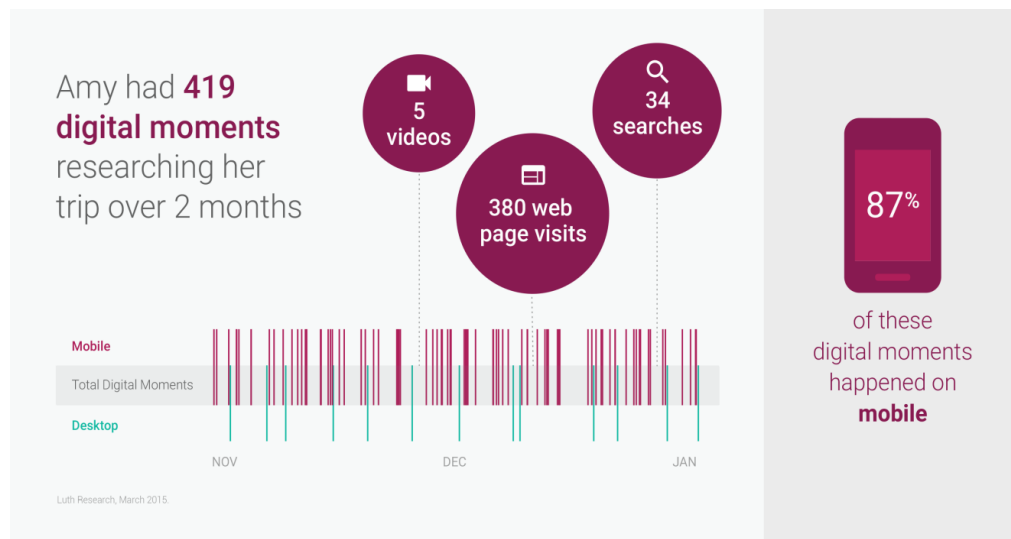


69%

of leisure travelers are concerned that they are not finding the best price or making the best decision while booking a trip.

2. Understand and respond to traveling customer's journey:

Wouldn't it be great if someone did a search on a travel keyword, saw your paid search ad, clicked, and immediately converted? Unfortunately, today's customer journey is often far more complex. In fact, as detailed by Think with Google, one person can have hundreds of interactions with brands while researching their travel. In one case, a woman named Amy did 34 searches, watched five videos, and visited 380 web pages while researching her trip to Disney World.



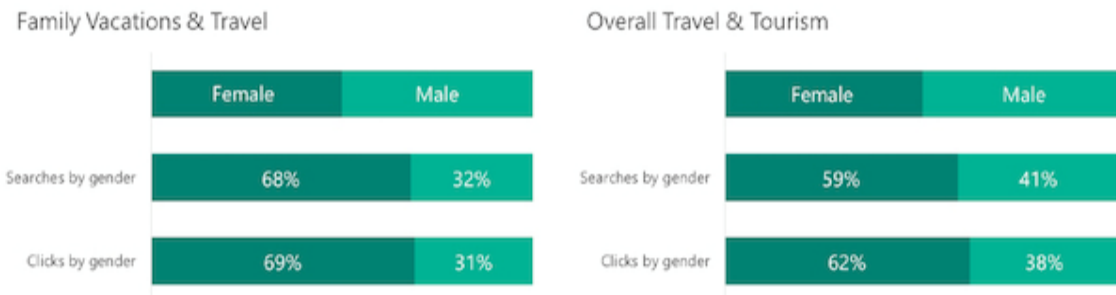
3. Define your target audience:

The demographics of the customers you want to reach should be your first consideration. Who are they? For example, we know from the same Bing travel industry research that women conduct 68% of [family vacation ideas] searches and account for 69% of clicks. In fact, **women account for 59% of all travel-related searches and 62% of clicks.** Based on this research, if your target market is family travel, we know that we want to primarily target women between the ages of 35 to 49. Your demographics will vary, obviously, depending on

target audience.

Women are more likely than men to plan family travel

Women perform the majority of searches for family vacation ideas and general travel on the Bing Network.

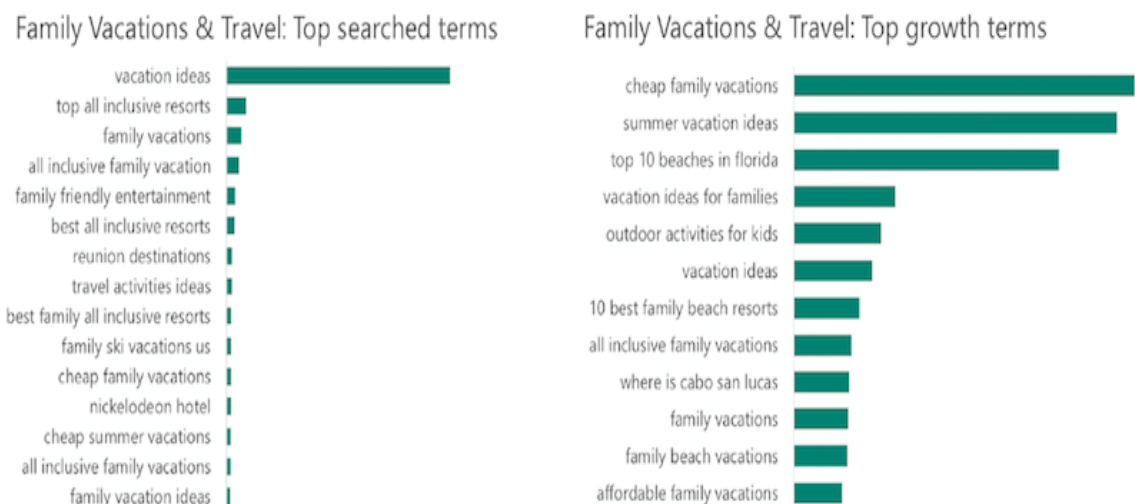


4. Give them what they want:

It's time to focus on what audience wants once you know who you are targeting. According to Bing's search the biggest vacation ideas search trends include all inclusive resorts, family-friendly vacations and also cheap vacations. The trip organizer should make sure the offer clearly tells people that you have what they want or even need for their trip. That could essentially mean tailoring your message for people who need affordable deals, want an all-inclusive resort or even seek outdoor activities.

Searchers want vacation ideas and all inclusive resorts

There's also growing interest in affordable vacations and outdoor activities.



5. Get tourists where they want to go:

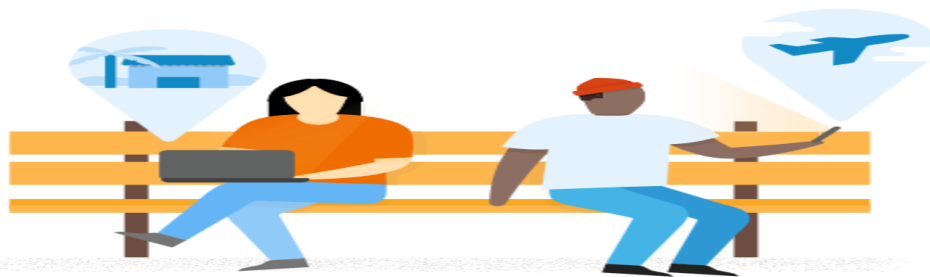
Summer is a great time to go on road trips and cruises, head to national and state parks or amusement and theme parks, or visit international destinations. Top destinations in the U.S. include Savannah, Georgia, and Washington, D.C. New Zealand and Singapore are

also popular travel destination this year. People know where they want to go, which means they have higher purchase intent. So get them there – push your hard offers and deals.



6. Pay attention to how people search for travel:

People are switching between mobile and desktop. In general, most mobile travel searchers are looking for ideas and to compare prices, while the majority of desktop travel searchers are ready (or nearly ready) to purchase or book a reservation. Although people are primarily searching for travel on mobile, Google's research found that 75% of travelers ended up purchasing on a desktop or laptop. (A different Google study said 90% of bookings happen on desktop.) Nearly two-thirds of people double-check flight prices and half double-check hotel prices on a computer after shopping on a smartphone.

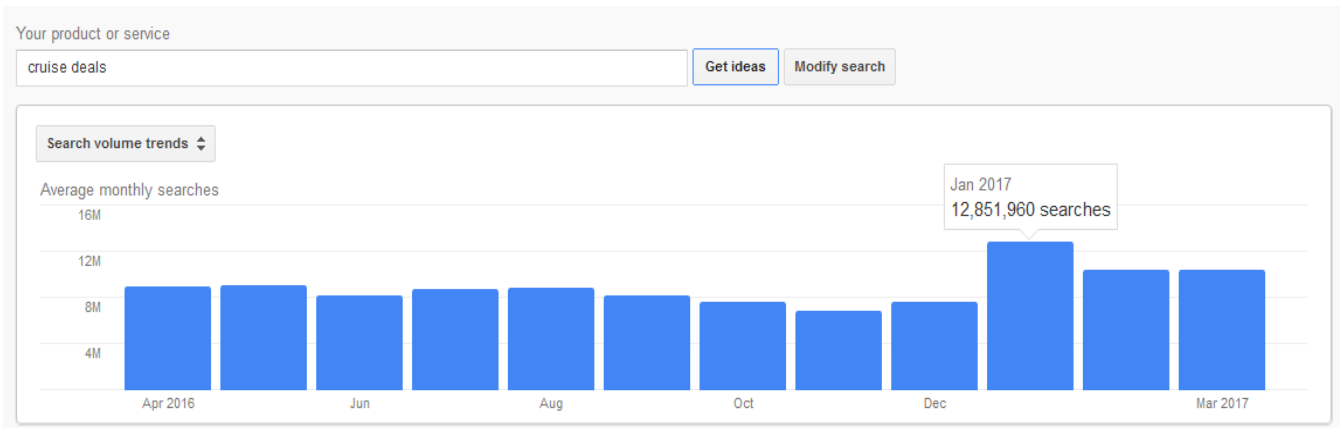


After shopping on a smartphone:

Nearly **2 in 3** double-check flight prices on a computer.
1 in 2 double-check hotel prices on a computer.

7. Reach travelers at the right time and at the right place:

Now is the best time to start winning the hearts, minds, and wallets of consumers. Specifically: spring time. Search volume for [vacation ideas] peaks in April, according to Bing's travel research. But search demand varies depending on where people want to head for their travel. Make sure you have a strategy that keeps you visible during your most valuable season. If consumers don't know you or can't easily find you, they can't buy from you.



8. Embrace Facebook Ads:

For harvesting existing demand search ads are great options available. But you can however also create new demand using Facebook Ads. It's wiser to Use Facebook ads now to drive interest and generate the brand affinity you'll need later to drive more searches, more clicks, and higher conversion rates.



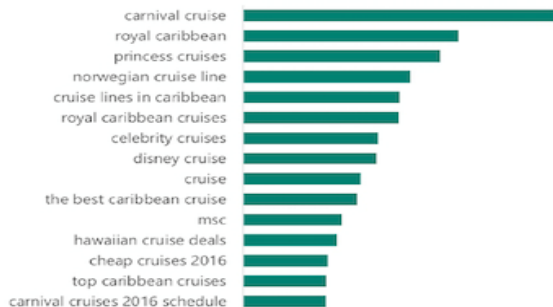
9. Bid on your brand terms:

Bidding on your brand terms means more clicks for you and fewer clicks on your competitors. Even if you have great organic search visibility, there's a chance that people could click on and buy from your competitor if you aren't running PPC ads. You can see up to a 44% lift in incremental paid and organic clicks when you bid on your own brand terms. Bing Ads goes into this in detail in its Brand Term Bidding study. Brand terms are incredibly important for theme parks and cruise lines, as the Bing travel study pointed out.

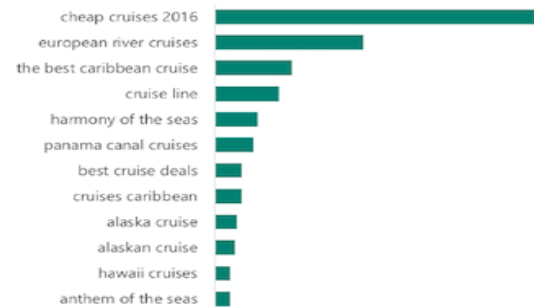
Travelers search by cruise line and destination

There's growing interest in affordable, European and Caribbean cruises.

Cruises & Cruise Services: Top searched terms



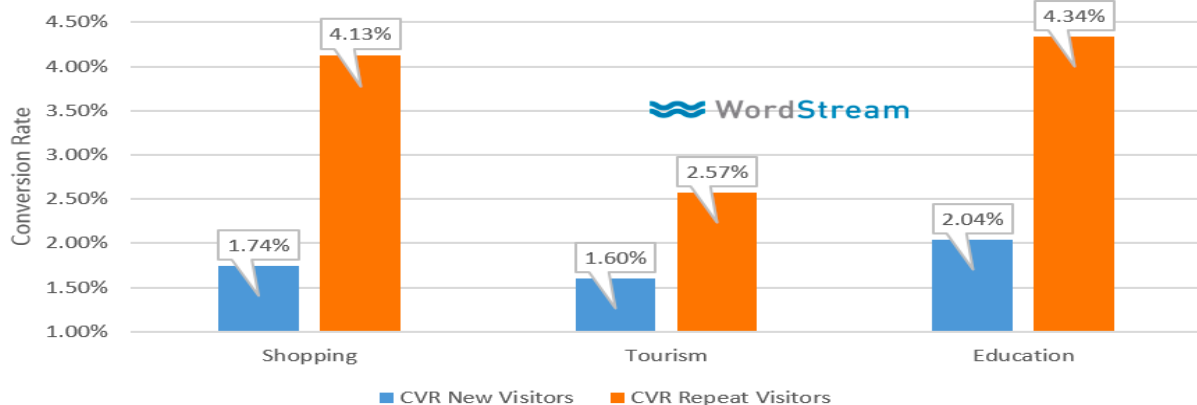
Cruises & Cruise Services: Top growth terms



10. Close the loop with Re-marketing:

If we know a customer's journey can include dozens of searches and visits to hundreds of web pages, then remarketing can be your most valuable weapon. Remarketing ensures that one interaction someone has with your brand isn't the only interaction. People who know and like your brand will be more receptive to your future messaging, and they're also more likely to convert. Conversion rates are 2x-3x higher for repeat visitors than first-time visitors: The travel purchase cycle can be a long and winding road. Use remarketing to make sure consumers can always find their way back to you.

Conversion Rates of New vs. Repeat Visitors for Various Types of Customers



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 travelers' 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. 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 chat box 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 sanitizer equipment, applications identifying and managing people's health identity and profiles.

CONCLUSION

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 (Hall, 2011). 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. The travel restrictions both domestic and international have impacted on travel and tourism industry as this industry is suffering with huge loss due to no tourism at present. Even the restrictions being removed in future there always remain a question on when the company will financially be normal as people are afraid on travelling due to exposure of being with the crowded again. There will be definite decrease in travel for certain period of time until the pandemic calms down resulting in not so good growth for travels as well as tourism spots in and all the travel and tourism industry. The Covid19 Outbreak will lose tourist traffic from other countries to India and this study gives the impact of Covid-19 on Indian tourism and delivers helpful information on Covid-19 and prevention Measures. The mission for effective communication will be to develop and establish integrated marketing platforms (promotion and communication) around narrative world (unique story) of their products, destinations and culture, created to achieve better positioning and awareness of destinations and products, increase influence among audiences and improve traffic and audiences and improve traffic and audience in communication and promote and increase ROI and ROR of brands and institutions which cater to travel and tourism industry. 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.

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