

HOW DOES GOVERNMENT POLICY SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN DEALING WITH COVID-19 PANDEMIC?

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Abstract: This paper discusses the crisis of Indonesia's tourism industry, which is a leading sector of national economic growth that has been badly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. An analysis of the government's strategic policies is carried out and discussed. The analysis was performed using the Nvivo12 Plus software to acquire maximum results. The research results are as follows: first, the impact of COVID-19 on the tourism sector is so significant that the crisis has substantially impacted not only the said sector, but its derivative businesses as well (0.662-0.862). Second, the economic contraction is quite significant, namely a decline of -10.37%, and this is exacerbated by the uncertainty of when the outbreak will end. If the tourism industry is to be reopened, every activity must comply with applicable health protocols. Third, current policies are focusing on managing the spread of COVID-19 by limiting human mobility and tourism activities, wherein consequently, a strategic step to safeguard the sector in this difficult situation is to implement health protocols in every activity.

Keywords: Tourism, COVID-19, Indonesia, sustainability, government policy.

Introduction

The aim of the research is to analyse the Indonesian government's policy in sustaining tourism in the aftermath of the Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. This research is carried out because COVID-19 has had a major impact on the entire national economy, and most notably affected is tourism, which is among the main generators of revenue. The COVID-19 pandemic has also affected other sectors such as the government, which is facing uncertainty in terms of state health policies (Teter, 2020). Although the World Health Organization (WHO) has urged governments to act fast, the slow pace of measures taken to address the pandemic is, among others, due to lack of funds, conflicting interests, high turnover of health workers, and the fact that some areas are confronted with differing levels of the problem (Iqbal, 2020). Before the advent of COVID-19, governments were more likely to respond and concentrate on political matters, but as the pandemic intensified, it seems as if

everything is unprepared to keep conditions under control (Wang & Qian, 2020).

The emergence of COVID-19 has caused immeasurable harm to human life (Cheer, 2020). It has not only led to a health crisis with high rate of mortality, but also plunged the global economy into recession. The current pandemic raises many critical research topics in health economics, public economics and finance, institutional economics, international trade, environmental economics, development economics, behavioural economics, and many others to serve as references for decision-makers (Hastuti & Assriyani, 2021). The tourism sector is one of the most crucial sectors in Indonesia that has been significantly impacted by the pandemic (Sugihamretha, 2020). The industry and its derivatives have been facing immense pressure for nearly two years, such as a decrease in the arrival of domestic and foreign tourists, leading to a reduction in business (Chen *et al.*, 2020). Worldwide, the pandemic has resulted

in the termination of employment contracts, business closures and reduction of demand for manpower (Bhaskara *et al.*, 2020; Curley *et al.*, 2020).

The tourism players are working closely with the government since the industry is facing a considerable decline due to various restrictions imposed to curb the spread of the disease (Moscardo, 2020). There is a global disruption in supply chain and demand, and the pressure on sustaining the tourism industry is evident with the significant decrease in tourist arrivals (UNWTO, 2020). Real-sector activities, particularly the service, tourism and aviation sectors, are expected to experience zero-growth in the next few years. Therefore, studying the tourism crisis caused by the pandemic and understanding the concept of sustainable tourism have become a vital concern. In the case of Indonesian tourism, a substantial drop in tourist arrivals is evident before and after the pandemic struck. In 2019, tourism has contributed significantly to the country's economic growth at around 5.5% and succeeded in boosting foreign exchange earnings — reaching US\$20 billion in a year — besides creating approximately 13 million jobs (Ministry of Tourism, 2020).

Ultimately, this study explains how tourism in Indonesia is sustained during the pandemic by examining the impacts, analysing government policies, and predicting the sector's future direction. Additionally, this study may provide knowledge to help accelerate the industry's recovery and build resilience against future crises.

Literature Review

Sustainability of Tourism

In 2020, the United Nations' World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) described tourism crisis as an unforeseen event that may have an impact on visitors' confidence in their destinations, consequently hindering the continuous operational capability of related businesses. Since tourism is known to be extremely exposed to many risks (Chen *et al.*, 2020), any crisis can

turn into a disaster. In particular, epidemics such as SARS, H1N1 and the hand, foot and mouth disease can negatively affect tourist perception on the safety of a destination country (Ritchie & Jiang, 2019). COVID-19 has caused global travel restrictions and lockdowns that have not been seen since World War 2. UNWTO has projected that international arrivals in 2020 may decline by 20% to 30% compared with 2019 (Yeh, 2020; Purnomo *et al.*, 2021).

Tourism is especially susceptible to pandemics because mobility restrictions and physical distancing will interrupt its activities (Gössling *et al.*, 2020). The plight of tourism stakeholders has been prominently featured in the news, in which they hope that the government will help them for the sake of their survival. Nine key themes have been identified, namely the pandemic's impact, people's sentiment, control of tourism activities and cultural venues, role of the hospitality industry, national leadership and local response, tourism disputes and solutions, corporate self-improvement strategies, government assistance, and post-crisis products (Chen *et al.*, 2020; Agustiyara *et al.*, 2021).

The pandemic has devastated travel and tourism, as well as the closely associated hospitality, arts and events industry (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020). It has been estimated that there would be up to 80% decline in international tourism in 2020; a possible loss of US\$1.2 trillion in tourism export revenues; and, up to 120 million jobs affected (UNWTO, 2020). Many businesses have sunk and the technological revolution that used to bring people closer by making travelling simple and affordable — fuelling billions of trips a year — is helpless in stopping the decline brought on by the pandemic (Becker, 2020; Moscardo, 2020).

The discussion of sustainable world tourism is related to environmental values and cultural preservation (Yuwono *et al.*, 2021). The purpose of cultural and ecological conservation is to minimize damage to the environment during tourism activities, namely the increase in waste, pollution, sanitation and tourists ethics-aesthetics (Suntikul *et al.*,

2016). It is better for countries to carry out sustainable tourism development which cares for the natural, socio-cultural environment and prioritizes the welfare of the local community (Hall, 2019). Furthermore, according to UNWTO (2017), three basic principles must be fulfilled in developing tourism: ecological, socio-cultural and economic sustainability. Sustainable development will ensure the future of the industry because it preserves natural resources, human capital and cultural practices, which are important components of its activities (Aimagambetov *et al.*, 2017).

Currently, the tourism sector in Indonesia is not protected from major disruptions like COVID-19, but there is ample evidence that recovery will be easier in the near future (Kanakaraju *et al.*, 2021; Dewi *et al.*, 2020). This article explores the key to sustainable tourism under the New Normal in Indonesia. Furthermore, it presents the government's response to mitigate the risks, which is timely considering that the country relies on tourism as a leading sector of economic growth. Accordingly, the advent of COVID-19 provides valuable lessons concerning the challenges faced by the industry, and has led to the creation of a new platform to achieve sustainable tourism.

The Concept of Sustainability in Tourism Policy

Sustainability has become an important policy for the tourism industry, which has spurred debates and criticism (Stankov *et al.*, 2020; Purnomo, Agustiyara, *et al.*, 2021). People gradually need to understand the nature of growth threshold — a comprehensive study on the relationship between sustainable tourism that explores how weaknesses may be addressed and quantified in a localized context (Renn, 2015). The definition of tourism sustainability has been described as having three distinct traditions of resources, activities and communities, reflecting various aspects and elements of the philosophy (Saarinen, 2006). In time, the growth of tourist attractions is supposed to bring major spillovers, but current marketing tools are unable to address

the ensuing deterioration in local ecosystems (Suryahadi *et al.*, 2020). Sustainable tourism policies must therefore take into account not only the balance and cooperation between industries, but also the potential effect of various development strategies that are indirectly linked.

There is an increasing imbalance in the success of sustainable tourism policies and planning, where conventional tourism models and problem-solving approaches are unable to address prevalent issues (Guo *et al.*, 2019). Tourism development and systems theory are closely connected and the structure will affect the development of sustainable tourism — rapid growth can have catastrophic consequences, which will then lead to its demise (Weed, 2020). The aim of sustainable tourism policies must therefore evolve from economic growth to sustainability without further expansion of potentials (Mai & Smith, 2015). Sustainable tourism may be a paradox. On one hand, the idea is understood and widely disseminated by businesses, governments, academics and policymakers (Paraskevas *et al.*, 2013; Satispi *et al.*, 2021), which shows that it is a success. On the other hand, the new growth of tourism has an objectively mounting effect on climate, suggesting that sustainable tourism is a failure. A possible explanation is that policymakers are unable to accept the weaknesses of sustainable tourism policies.

While evaluating the process of developing sustainable tourism philosophy, it is not difficult to see that it can theoretically represent the idea of sustainable development, yet there are major gaps between the two principles (Lapointe, 2020). The theory of sustainable development is inapplicable to the tourism sector as a particular economic and social activity. That is not to suggest that many of the ideals of sustainable tourism are unsuccessful (Sharpley, 2000). On the contrary, these sustainable tourism policies enable people to pay attention to the ethics of tourism and the environment, while concurrently improving tourism and promoting the development of environmental friendly modes that better suit the destination's

social and economic development objectives (Mai & Smith, 2015; Suryawan *et al.*, 2021). Sustainable tourism is the future of growth, and it has increasingly gained a lot of interest. This does not, however, guarantee that its objectives will be achieved.

Incorporating sustainable tourism into public policy is a problem for most countries, as those policies are far from integrated, and convergence entails the horizontal integration of national policies, the bottom-up integration of structural changes, public engagement, and the successful use of urban planning structures (Brendehaug *et al.*, 2017; Purnomo *et al.*, 2020). The globally agreed guidelines for developing sustainable tourism do not generally apply to all countries, and may lack the required coordination when implemented in certain countries. Tourism stakeholders have overwhelmingly embraced steps to strengthen collaboration, but there are disagreements on how to execute them (Dinica, 2009).

Moreover, labour and job issues correlate with tourism’s capacity to provide quality service, wherein a approach that takes sustainability into consideration will encourage the growth of a beneficial industry (Dinica, 2009).

This research will focus on the framework in Figure 1, which describes how existing government policies promote sustainable tourism post COVID-19. In other words, the

focal point is taken by combining the concepts of sustainable tourism and policy, thus giving rise to the main argument of how tourism will be able to continue when the pandemic ends.

Research Methods

The spread of COVID-19 continues to raise concern about the next wave of outbreak (Dewi *et al.*, 2020). However, the emphasis on meeting primary and secondary needs has resulted in the need to create policies for suppressing the spread of COVID-19 to maintain human mobility with great caution (Bonaccorsi *et al.*, 2020). Nonetheless, there are several limitations of this research: (1) the pandemic continues to develop and the situation is largely unknown, so this study is inductive in nature. The main focus is to find effective policy measures with long-term value to combat pandemics like COVID-19 in the Indonesian tourism sector. (2) The scope of the research may be limited to a specific area within a specific time frame, but it may provide direction for future studies.

The present article is the result of an explanatory qualitative research using secondary data (Purnomo *et al.*, 2018). Secondary data were collected from the Indonesian Tourism Ministry, tourism associations and other official institutions before and during the pandemic. The data were in the form of files, documents and reports, which were corroborated by online

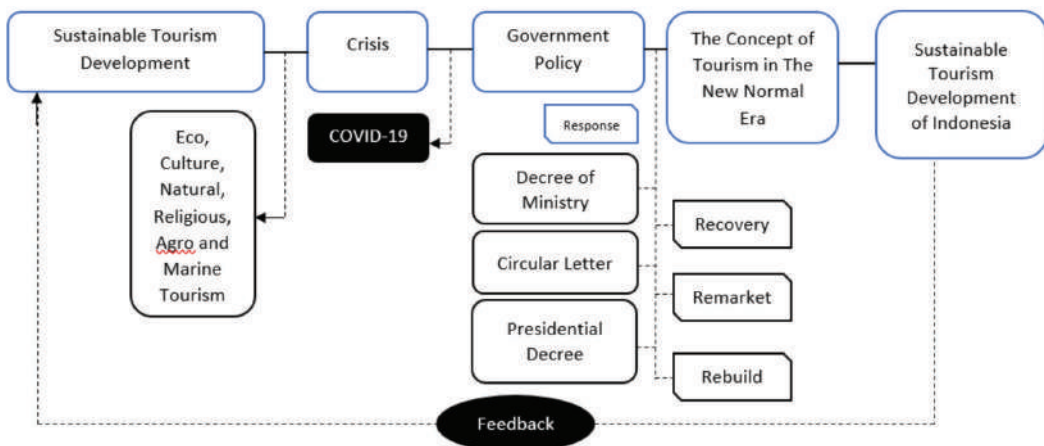


Figure 1: Theoretical framework on how government policies promote sustainable tourism post-COVID-19

media and social media data, journal articles and books (Moscardo, 2020).

Subsequently, the data were analysed using the Nvivo12 Plus software and grouped into three topics, namely analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on the Indonesian tourism sector; analysis of government policies; and, studying and analysing the sustainability of Indonesian tourism after the pandemic. This research is combined and interconnected with climatological, socio-cultural and economic data as the parameter of sustainable development (Jamal & Budke, 2020).

Results and Discussion

The Impact of COVID-19 on Indonesian Tourism

Before the pandemic, Indonesia’s tourism had been growing in the last five years (2015-2019), which was rather apparent from the number of foreign tourist visits, with an increase of between 5% and 20% each year (Ministry of Tourism, 2020).

Figure 2 shows an annual increase in tourist visits to Indonesia, which obviously had a positive impact on the country. According to Wishnutama (2020), the growth and development of Indonesian tourism from 2015 to 2019 was exponential.

Given the continuous economic growth, the country’s foreign reserves were consequently reinforced, thereby strengthening the rupiah exchange rate against other currencies, especially the US dollar (Nasution et al., 2020). Data from Statistics Indonesia (2020) also showed a consistent increase in tourist arrivals, which brought in huge profits for the national economy and job benefits for the people (Table 1).

Table 1 provides an indication on the success and quality of tourism in Indonesia. As the leading sector that helped propel the country’s growth, tourism also required the support of line agencies and institutions to continue to expand and outperform other Asean countries, such as Thailand and Singapore (Becker, 2020; Olivia et al., 2020).

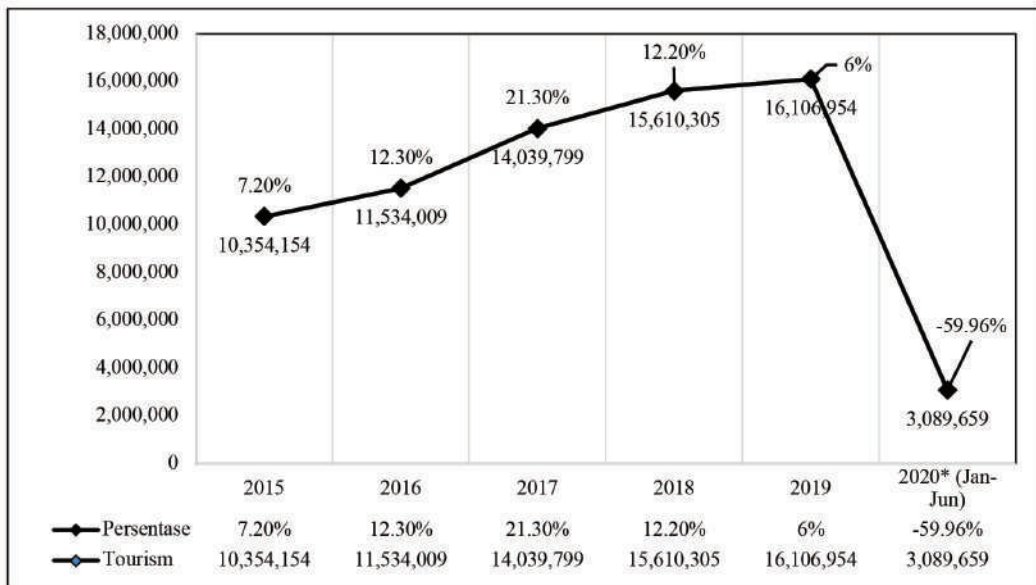


Figure 2: Statistical data on tourist arrivals
Source: (Ministry of Tourism, 2020)

Table 1: Contribution of tourism to Indonesia's economy (2015-2019)

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Contribution to GDP (%)	4.3	4.2	4.11	4.5	5.5
Foreign Exchange (USD)	12.2 billion	13.6 billion	15.24 billion	19.8 billion	20 billion
Employment (million)	11.4	11.8	12.4	12.7	13

Source: (Ministry of Tourism, 2020)

Indonesia's economic growth in 2021 was targeted at 5.3% to 5.7% (Wishnutama, 2020). Due to global challenges, achieving targets of economic growth had waned on account of critical elements driving the economy, namely investments, exports, the manufacturing industry and the number of foreign tourist arrivals, which had all experienced slowdown and stoppage due to the pandemic (Ozili & Arun, 2020; Purnomo *et al.*, 2021). Until the fourth quarter of 2020, the Indonesian economy was experiencing a setback compared to the same period in 2019. Furthermore, the decline of the tourism sector had reduced the state's revenue, which consequently fell into recession (Table 2).

The decline in tourism activities had significantly affected the national economy. Overall, the economic contraction had reached -10,37%, which was the worst performance since 1999. The increase in annual visits by foreign tourists had a major impact on the country's foreign exchange earnings (Sugihamretha, 2020). Furthermore, the industry had encouraged further economic growth, namely in increasing infrastructure development, encouraging the development of other sectors through direct, indirect and induced effects, increasing

employment opportunities, and providing an overall positive scale (Lieberman, 2011).

Before the pandemic, scholars had warned of a significant threat to the country's tourism industry, namely disease outbreaks in the community (Bloom & Cadarette, 2019). This statement seemed to have been fulfilled by the current pandemic, which caused a drastic decrease in the number of foreign tourists visiting Indonesia. Data from Statistics Indonesia (BPS-2020) showed that the number of foreign tourists arrivals had drastically declined in the first five months of 2020. The industry suffered a severe blow, which was subsequently exasperated by cessation of travel activities, hospitality services and finally, termination of employees and business closures. Although tourism is a profitable industry, it is also currently one of the main agents of spreading COVID-19 (Benjamin *et al.*, 2020; Jamal & Budke, 2020). Therefore, the first step to break the chain of transmission is to completely stop all tourism activities. The decision to stop Indonesian tourism activities was indeed the most difficult to implement as the earnings of many large (foreign exchange) and small-scale (local economy) businesses were dependent on tourism. Next, a deeper analysis

Table 2: Comparison of Indonesia's economic growth

Period	2019	2020	Change
Q1	5.07 %	2.97 %	-2.1 %
Q2	5.05 %	-5.32%	-10,37%
Q3	5.02%	-3,49%	-8,51%
Q4	4,96%	-2,19%	-7,15%

Source: (Economics, 2020; Rosana, 2021)

of the impact of the pandemic was carried out. The results are summarised in Figure 3.

Figure 3 states the damage to various economic sectors caused by COVID-19, which was calculated using the NVivo 12 Plus software. It could be seen that the number of COVID-19 against the tourism sector was 0.86, and Tourism-Places to Stay was 0.75, Tourism-Tourist was 0.85, Tourism-Travel Agent was 0.74, Tourism-Transportation was 0.80 and Tourism-Labour was 0.78. These figures showed that COVID-19 had forced the tourism sector into a crisis phase, with broad impact on its derivative sectors. The significant impact that occurred was a misstep, partly due to the government’s failure in controlling the pandemic in the early stages when it hit the country, besides weak supervision, abnormal policies and the lack of public support or trust.

In addition, the tourism industry’s waning multiplier effect had resulted in a decline in business as a whole. The most influential impact was the closure of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). Furthermore,

unemployment began to rise and it should be noted that before the pandemic, the tourism industry was able to support more than 13 million workers nationwide (Sugihamretha, 2020). An in-depth analysis of the tourism sector was also conducted, and the results are shown in Figure 4.

As presented in Figure 4, the economic impact on Indonesian tourism was estimated to have dropped drastically since the pandemic began, and it was estimated that the country’s foreign exchange earnings had decreased by US\$1.3 billion (from Chinese tourists). Overall, the potential loss of foreign exchange had reached US\$4 billion (Wishnutama, 2020). The foreign exchange earnings from the tourism sector in 2022 was estimated at US\$2.8 billion to US\$4 billion only. The tremendous impact had compelled the government and related stakeholders to come up with strategic policies for maintaining the industry. In line with the concept presented by (Gössling *et al.*, 2020), COVID-19 had provided valuable lessons for all industries. The future challenge would be rebuilding the industry by introducing new

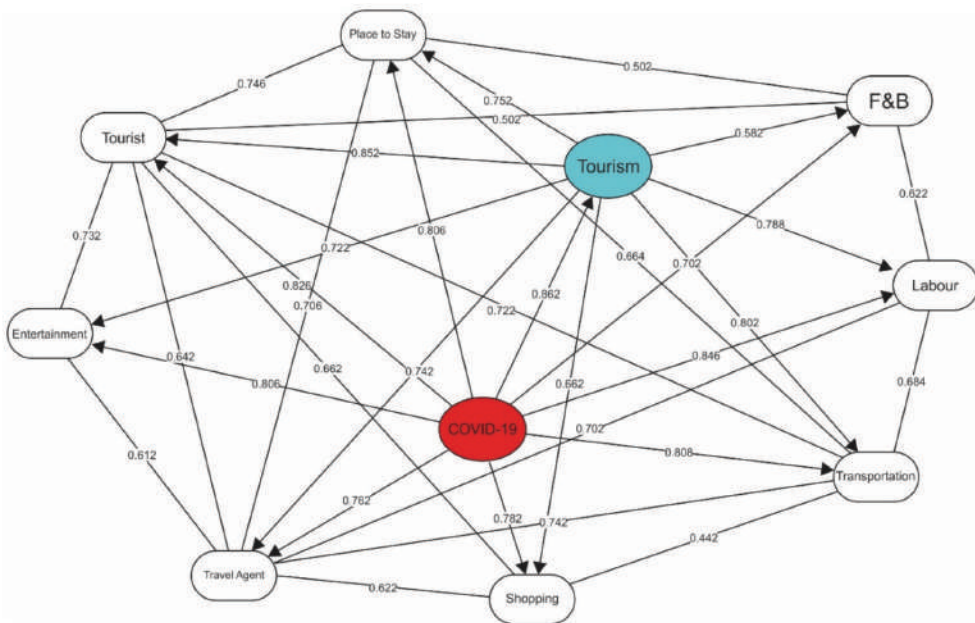


Figure 3: Analysis of damage caused by COVID-19 to Indonesia’s tourism industry and its derivative businesses

Source: Authors’ Analysis 2021

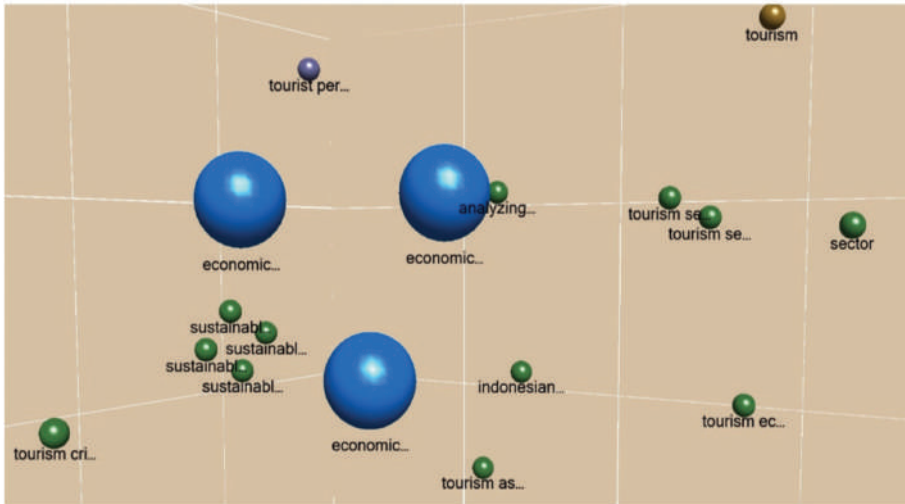


Figure 4: Clustering data on tourism impacted by the pandemic in Indonesia
 Source: Authors' analysis (2021)

changes so that the sector could withstand internal and external disruptions and achieve sustainability.

Indonesia's Government Policy on Tourism During the Pandemic

COVID-19 cases throughout Indonesia from March 3rd to August 6th, 2020, had progressively increased and reached 118,753 (COVID-19 Task

Force, 2020). There was a need to implement serious measures, such as central policies to reduce transmission. The government's policy to restrict people's movement and social activities was considered the most crucial measure before vaccines were available (Jamal & Budke, 2020).

The trends identified in surveys were in line with expectations because they followed the notion of a problem-concern cycle across

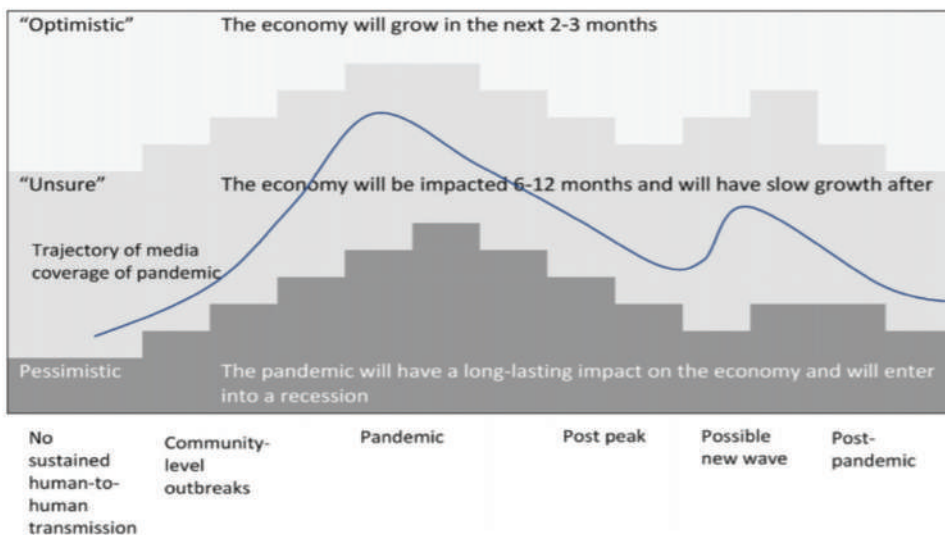


Figure 5: The economic impact at various stages of a pandemic
 Source: Gossling *et al.* (2020)

different stages of a problem or risk perception (Jamal & Budke, 2020). Figure 5 illustrates the pandemic cycle, indicating the growth of cases, and then a decline before the rise of a second wave, which was followed by the next wave. This depiction had accurately occurred to date, giving rise to the notion that policymakers needed to be more serious in controlling the current wave.

The WHO had advised people to practise physical distancing to avoid being infected by COVID-19, which could spread

via liquid droplets from an infected person (Purnomo, Fathani, *et al.*, 2021). Based on this recommendation, the government had appealed to the public to avoid crowded areas and to self-quarantine if they showed symptoms of the disease.

Table 3 presents national policies issued by the government to prevent the spread of COVID-19. These policies were formulated based on the considerations and directions of the World Health Organization (WHO). These policies also applied to the tourism sector

Table 3: Indonesian government policies to curb spread of COVID-19

No.	Date Issued	Regulation
1	January 28 2020	Decree by the Head of the National Disaster Management Agency Number 9A of 2020 concerning Determination of Status of the Certain Disaster Emergency Conditions due to the Coronavirus Pandemic in Indonesia
2	February 29 2020	Decree by the Head of the National Disaster Management Agency Number 13 A of 2020 concerning the Extension of Status of the Certain Disaster Emergency Conditions due to the Coronavirus Pandemic in Indonesia
3	March 12 2020	Circular Letter of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia Number Hk.02.01/Menkes/199/2020 the Year 2020 on Communications in the Handling of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)
4	March 17 2020	Circular Letter of the Minister of Manpower of the Republic of Indonesia Number M / 3 / Hk.04 / Iii / 2020 The Year 2020 Concerning the Protection Of Workers / Workers and Business Continuity in the Framework of COVID-19 Prevention and Control
5	March 18 2020	Circular Letter of the Minister of Tourism and Creative Economics / Head of the Creative Tourism and Economic Agency of the Republic of Indonesia Number 1 of 2020 Concerning Administrative Action to Prevent the Spread of Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)
6	March 31 2020	Presidential Decree No. 11 Year 2020 on the Determination of Public Health Emergency COVID-19. (1) Stay at Home, (2) Social Distancing, (3) Physical Distancing, (4) Required Mask Use, (5) Required Hand Washing, (6) Suspending All Activities
7	March 31 2020	Government Regulation in Lieu of Law (PERPPU) Number 1 Year 2020 on State Financial Policy and Financial System Stability for Handling the Corona Pandemic
8	March 31 2020	Government Policy (PP) Number 21 Year 2020 on Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) in the Context of Accelerating the Handling of Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). PSBB I, PSBB II, PSBB III, PSBB Transition
9	April 2 2020	Regulation of the Minister of Law and Human Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia Number 11 Year 2020 concerning the Temporary Prohibition of Foreigners from Entering the Territory of the Republic of Indonesia
10	April 13 2020	Presidential Decree (KEPPRES) Number 12 Year 2020 on the Determination of Non-Natural Disasters of the Spread of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) as a National Disaster

Source: Ministry of State Secretary Indonesia, 2020

as it was identified as one of the factors that aggravated the spread of COVID-19 (Mei, 2020).

The government had activated the Tourism Crisis Management (MKK) policy (mitigation, emergency response, recovery and normalization) and the handling of the tourism crisis was regulated under the Minister of Tourism Regulation Number 10 Year 2009 concerning the Management of the Tourism Crisis. The tourism minister had issued policies through Circular Letter No. 2 Year 2020 concerning the Follow-Up to the Appeal in the Prevention of the Spread of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), which applied to the entire sector and the creative economy, and must report developments in the implementation of these measures to anticipate and address the impact of COVID-19. Furthermore, the circular also called for the temporary closure of all tourist destinations. The policies issued by the government are the first steps to reduce the spread of COVID-19. With the closure of Indonesia's borders, large-scale social restrictions (PSBB), physical distancing, and other relevant measures, the number of COVID-19 cases could be controlled.

Problems arose when people began disregarding the policies due to the urgency of primary and secondary needs, including human mobility. According to the description provided in Figure 4 (Gössling *et al.*, 2020), new waves of infection were expected periodically due to pressures of having to fulfill life necessities. Policies that were not strictly implemented and followed had resulted in a surge of infections in Indonesia. First, the relationship between government policies in the tourism sector and the prevention and handling of COVID-19 is as follows: Mitigation is a phase when the performance of the tourism ecosystem was running normally, or in a pre-crisis stage (Jamal & Budke, 2020). In this phase, several efforts were made in the form of preparedness and mitigation measures to reduce the potential impacts that might arise as a result of a crisis. The pre-crisis phase in Indonesia indicated the government's weakness in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic, and one of the causes

of the rapid spread of COVID-19 was human movement. It appeared that the Indonesian government initially did not take the emergence of COVID-19 in Wuhan, China, seriously when most countries had started to anticipate, track and shut down all transportation. Due to the slow response of the government and the absence of strict policies to prevent transmission of COVID-19, the tourism industry had been severely affected. There was not much concern about the pandemic as it swept the world, and activities continued to take place until tourism clusters began to appear nationwide. There was also no tightening of health procedures at that time, which subsequently led to the current chaos, and all sectors had since experienced economic damage and contracted by -5.32 %.

Second, an emergency response requires immediate action. In determining the government's response, the Tourism Crisis Center (TCC) might take follow-up measures in line with established policies. In the case of COVID-19, the emergency response was considered sluggish as the relevant government policy was issued only on March 31st, 2020, three months after the disease was first reported, and 20 days after it was declared a pandemic by WHO on March 11. It was the Circular Letter of the Minister of Tourism no. 2 Year 2020 on follow-up measures for preventing the spread of COVID-19 that implemented a total halt of tourist activities to prevent the spread of the virus. It is assumed that if tourist destinations were not closed, it would be very easy for the outbreak to spread (Benjamin *et al.*, 2020). The government policies were considered a slow response because they were issued only when the pandemic had entered Indonesia and devastated all sectors. Currently, as vaccinations had been carried out, the country's tourism is beginning to reopen on a local scale. However, access restrictions still applied and visitors had to comply with health protocols.

Third, the recovery or post-crisis phase will take place after an emergency response situation has been decided. In the case of the COVID-19 pandemic, the government did not establish a safe situation for people to co-exist with

the novel coronavirus and continue their daily activities (Bhaskara *et al.*, 2020). Furthermore, to support the economy, the government had been looking for strategic ways for MSMEs to continue running even in a disaster emergency. In an official statement, the Tourism and Creative Economy Minister had emphasized that MSME businesses must continue to run properly by utilizing assistance from local authorities so that the wheels of the economy might continue to turn.

Fourth, normalization is the phase where efforts are made to return life to normal and adapt the concept of mitigating a predetermined crisis event. In the case of the pandemic, it was unclear when the outbreak would end, considering that positive cases continued to grow every day (Becker, 2020). However, to maintain the economy, the government through the Minister of Tourism, particularly by implementing Circular Letter no. 2 of 2020 on follow-up measures for preventing the spread of COVID-19, continued to urge for more creative business activities, as well as allowing government-sanctioned tourism activities to continue. Nonetheless, designated tourist destinations remained officially closed until an undetermined time. If destinations were opened for a short period, every activity must comply with health protocols established by the central government so that the safety and security of tourists might be guaranteed. In terms of tourism operations post COVID-19, sustainable policies must be linked and matched with principles of sustainability (Figure 1).

Tourism post-COVID-19 would require resilience in dealing with events after the pandemic so that the activities could continue, and such sustainability might be achieved through policy regulations, good decision-making, stakeholders and cross-sector collaboration, and support of local communities and tourists. Therefore, first, development of the tourism sector could be initiated by encouraging local tourism with values that promote the local economy, even though it was a small-scale effort. Second, the economy needed to run on human mobility. Allowing small-scale economic

movements might provide an opportunity for local communities to survive. Third, after the pandemic, tourism activities should be more concerned with the environment. This reason was considered to maintain the concept of tourism with an external nuance and prioritizing health protocols.

The pandemic had provided hard lessons for policymakers (Gössling *et al.*, 2020; Benjamin *et al.*, 2020; Brouder *et al.*, 2020) and it was not easy for them to resolve such unprecedented situations. All parties seemed helpless because all aspects of human life in the social, economic, environmental, and health spheres had been affected (Jamal & Budke, 2020). At present, policymakers or the Indonesian government could apply only large-scale mass social restrictions to break the chain of infection. Furthermore, one of the lessons was that policymakers had become more aware of opening new paths towards sustainable tourism and prioritizing the safety and health of tourists and citizens. This rapid assessment offered a summary of the current crisis and presented a contrasts with previous crises. Given the severity of the pandemic, there was an immediate need to refrain from returning to “business as usual” when the crisis is over. Rather, it should be an opportunity to study the transformation of the global tourism environment that was more consistent with the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The pandemic, in particular, had raised concern about vulnerability and offered valuable lessons on the impact of global change. The goal now was to learn together from this catastrophe to promote the development of sustainable tourism.

The Concept of Indonesian Tourism Post-COVID-19

Even in a pandemic, issues in sustainable tourism must continue to be addressed to preserve the economic, social, environmental and cultural sustainability of the tourism industry (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020). The commitment to sustainable tourism involved making substantive improvements to policies

These were new topics released by the government based on the outcome of meetings with stakeholders to revitalize the tourism industry. Until now, few locations only in Indonesia had adopted the CHSE programme, such as Bali, Lombok, Yogyakarta, Bandung, Medan, Surabaya, Manado, Banten, Semarang and Batam. The concepts developed by the Tourism Ministry and the government could provide hope for the future of Indonesian tourism because they implemented values of sustainable tourism. First, the social value of sustainable tourism, especially in the domestic area, needed to be realized to maintain local economic stability (Brouder *et al.*, 2020). Maintaining the regional economy would be very important for the continuity of tourism. Even though the national economy was experiencing a decline, local tourism mobility must be introduced in line with proven health protocols. Second, strengthening the local economy would bring a major impact on the sustainability of tourism. All areas of concern must encourage the strengthening of the local economy and MSMEs by encouraging everyone to shop locally. That was why the government and other stakeholders were trying to reintroduce local mobility on a low scale. Third, the implementation of sustainable tourism during this pandemic must prioritize natural tourism because it could encourage tourists to appreciate nature and their health.

Conclusion

Indonesia had lost one of its main sources of income with a multiplier effect. Before the pandemic, tourism had contributed to an economic growth of 5% per annum, and foreign exchange earnings could reach US\$20 billion besides creating 13 million job opportunities. However, in the current situation, government policies advocated lockdowns, halting mass transportation, and closing tourism destinations to curb the spread of COVID-19. As a result, the tourism industry had taken a large blow in the first half of 2020, incurring huge losses for businesses.

Several phases of recovery had been carried out by the Indonesian government. The Mitigation Phase that should have been carried out while the tourism ecosystem was running normally in pre-crisis stage. However, the industry had been slow in anticipating the seriousness of the pandemic, which had led to the disease spreading nationwide with serious consequences. Currently, there is still no official statement regarding the reopening of tourist destinations. The Recovery Phase should be carried out after an emergency response situation had been decided. All activities from henceforth have to comply with COVID-19 health protocols. The last is the Normalization Phase, which was where efforts should be made to live with the disease and daily activities start returning to normal.

In conclusion, this paper provided input on issues and phases to overcome the Indonesian tourism crisis brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, namely by prioritizing healthcare and establishing tourism sustainability. These policies had to be established when tourism destinations are reopened, utilizing technology and limiting the number of tourists. Health facilities should also be provided in all tourist destinations, besides strengthening regulations, safeguards and sanctions, so that the activities might operate safely.

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