The impact of COVID-19 on group tour operators and the implications for overtourism

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Chapter 7

The Impact of COVID-19 on Group Tour Operators and the Implications for Overtourism

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Abstract

This chapter sets out to analyze the impact of the Covid-19 virus on the holidays provided by UK group tour operators (GTOs) and the implications for overtourism. With tourism arrivals expected to fall by up to 30% in 2020 and a slow return to pre-Covid-19 levels for 2021 and beyond, the industry is possibly suffering the loss of up to 100 million travel-related jobs (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2020). GTOs will need to assess and possibly change the way they do business to initially survive and subsequently build up tourism numbers in the coming years.

This chapter identifies how GTOs could alter their holiday proposition to reassure travellers including the challenges of operating international tours when airlines have reduced capacity, the need to consider alternative age demographics who are more likely to travel and assessing existing itineraries to visit rural or small town locations rather than cities where numerous itineraries travel to now.

Finally, this chapter discusses and describes the significance of the findings with insights about possible opportunities based upon the approaches taken by various countries to target potential holidaymakers and the need to create a 'crisis management plan' for current and future countries. This may result in operational adjustments to meet these new requirements including the changing outlook of potential customers and the possibility of offering domestic tours to meet the current demand.

Keywords: Overtourism; Covid-19; group tour operators; tours; social distancing; coach tours

1. Introduction to the Impact of COVID-19 on the Tourism Industry

This chapter analyses the impact of Covid-19 on holidays provided by UK group tour operators (GTOs) as well as identifying how specific countries have managed the pandemic well and the lessons that can be learned from these strategies to manage future pandemics. This chapter then suggests how GTO could alter their holiday proposition to be able to reassure potential holidaymakers to travel and ensure they operate within government guidelines. These recommendations could result in operational and business approaches being adjusted to manage these challenges now and in the future. This chapter also discusses the environmental, cultural and economic impacts of tourism as part of a discussion regarding over-tourism issues as well as identifying a 'Capacity Management Model' for tourist boards and travel managers to manage these challenges.

It is important to define what a tour operator is before continuing with the recommendations. Tour operators arrange, assemble and operate tours on a set itinerary which usually incorporate; transportation, accommodation, food, tour guides and attractions for groups of between 4 and 50 people and can be inbound, based at the destination, or outbound, with operators offering itineraries to numerous countries (Tourism Notes, 2018).

The research involved undertaking secondary research during 2020 incorporating collecting, summarizing and analysing information including data and theories from textbooks, tourism organization's websites such as ABTA and IATA, travel and consumer media and published journal articles (Brunt, Horner, & Semley, 2017). Additional information was added to the chapters' content in April 2021 as the impacts of Covid-19 on tourism continued to evolve. As the consequences and impacts are being updated constantly, collecting secondary data is an ongoing process and further research would be necessary to update this chapter's future recommendations.

The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC, 2020) has estimated international tourism has fallen by 30% in 2020 due to Covid-19 with $450 billion in tourism receipts being lost, equivalent to seven years of growth. This compares to a 4% reduction in 2009 after the global recession and a 0.4% drop in 2003 after the SARS outbreak. The industry could lose 100 million travel-related jobs with Asia losing 63 million positions. The pandemic has cost the world economy USD 2.7 trillion of gross domestic product (GDP) as at the end of 2020 as tourists decide not to travel (WTTC, 2020), and as travel restrictions continue to be imposed, these initial figures are likely to rise (Fox, 2020).

2. How Countries Have Managed the Pandemic

This section assesses the study's findings and provides an analysis of solutions including how Chinese travel operators, who have been able to promote holidays since 2020 have approached these challenges. Consequently, GTO can learn from Chinese operators when making strategic decisions on future holiday offerings.

The impact of the pandemic can be compared to the SARS epidemic in Asia which reduced tourism arrivals by 12 million within the affected 23 countries and particularly in China, Hong Kong, Vietnam and Singapore. These countries learned from this experience and subsequently implemented a 'Disaster Management Plan' which resulted in collaboration between government departments, industry and the population from the beginning of the crisis (Yeh, 2020). It is estimated that in China's case, this quick and strict lockdown from the beginning of the pandemic, which included suspending public transport, health checkpoints, school closures, volume testing, contact tracing, mask wearing and Covid-19 hospitals, prevented 2 million infections and 56,000 deaths as well as minimizing its economic impact. In comparison, the UK allowed 150,000 people to attend Chel- AQ1 tenham Horseracing Festival in March 2020 and 460,000 Americans attended a motorcycle rally in August 2020 which were both held on dates that were close to the respective national lockdowns (Burki, 2020).

China's lockdown restrictions began to ease throughout 2020 with normal life returning to most areas. The result was a rise in consumer confidence and subsequently domestic tourism. The countries' hotel sector occupancy rates improved gradually throughout 2020 and 2021 with a reported 35% load factor in May 2020, compared to 80% in 2019. Economy hotels outperformed luxury accommodation which experienced a 15% occupancy during the same period due to these hotels having been additionally affected by reduced international business and conference visitors as these market segments tend to use premium hotels. Also, hotels have closed buffets, increased restaurant table distances, encouraged staff to wear masks and switched the hotels' air conditioning off. Also, tourist attractions have reduced capacity by up to 50% and use preregistration schemes to identify exposure to the virus (Enger, Saxon, Suo, & Yu, 2020).

Chinese tourists' travel buying behaviours have altered due to pandemic concerns. For example, this market historically travels on large group tours but are now more attracted to domestic package holidays with small groups of less than 10 people (31% of interviewees wanted this type of holiday compared to 11% who requested this in 2019). Also, train travel has become more popular compared to flying, especially when travelling to regional destinations. Furthermore, tourists' preference has been to avoid crowded areas and to choose to holiday in outdoor scenic expanses (Enger et al., 2020). Chinese travel companies are having to instigate marketing promotions during 2020 to stimulate demand including airline fares being 30% lower than in 2019. Furthermore, younger people are more inter- AQ2 ested in travelling than the over 50-year olds as they feel that they are less affected by the virus. This has resulted in an increase in the use of marketing channels such as TikTok as well as travel managers offering their services as 'advisors' via livestreaming platforms to target this demographic (Hsiao-I Chi-Chung, Wei-Chun, Lan-Fen, & Bing-Wen, 2006).

As travel restrictions are reduced within countries around the world, the demand for holidays, especially to nearby countries, and domestic travel, should initially return, with international travel, especially if involving flying, taking longer to recover (Mayling, 2021). Furthermore, the wider implications include international governments need to create plans for future challenges, acting

immediately with strict lockdowns and clear communication during future challenges. This approach is essential to manage future pandemics and allow the economy and tourism to recover quickly.

3. How GTOs Can Alter Their Holiday Proposition

This section of this chapter discusses the significance of these findings, suggests recommendations for travel companies to market themselves and identifies industry trends and its wider implications.

The market segment of baby boomers (56–75 years old people born between 1946 and 1964) is an important customer demographic for numerous GTOs, be it adventure companies such as Exodus and Headwater to culturally focussed operators such as Titan, Trafalgar and Travelsphere (Whitley, 2019). However, this demographic could be nervous to travel, compared to Generation Z (under 24 years old and born between 1997 and 2015) and millennials (25–40 years old and born between 1981 and 1996) who could be first to holiday again in volume. Research by Costin and Hassan (2020) identified baby boomers are least likely to travel to an urban area, with 32% stating 'nothing can make it more appealing', and this age group also wanted to avoid public transport and busy places (Hotel Solutions, 2020).

Further research by Sawday's identified self-catering holidays will be popular when travel restrictions are lifted as travellers want their own space, good hygiene standards and the ability to amend bookings (Hotel Solutions, 2020). Also, properties including villas and cottages that are in small towns and rural areas or hotels with private beaches will be popular. Hoteliers will need to consider beach plots and systems to accommodate social distancing such as erecting Perspex glass barriers, sun loungers being spaced out and time slots to use this facility. Spain has already employed wardens to police social distancing along with restrictions in the numbers allowed on beaches (Urwin & Clatworthy, 2020).

Transport carriers may insist that facemasks are worn by passengers while travelling with Tui and Eurostar already implementing this approach (Clatworthy, 2020). Emirates decided to leave the middle seat free to encourage social distancing which may result in increased fares with reduced capacity on flights. However, Ryanair's boss, Michael O'Leary, stated this is pointless as passengers pass each other in the isle (Arlidge, 2020).

Holidaymakers are more likely to scrutinize sanitation procedures and information including health situations of areas travelled too, travel insurance cover and social distancing practices on transport, restaurants and attractions (Costin & Hassan, 2020). Several tourist boards have published guidelines for hotels, and these protocols can be used to reassure travellers (Clatworthy, 2020). For example, Expedia have highlighted these practices on their website, and Marriott, Hilton and Accor have created standardized cleanliness and hygiene policies (Scott & Gratton, 2020).

The option to sell long-haul destinations that GTOs traditionally offer, such as South America and Africa, may need to be reassessed with more focus on European, American and Asian trips in the short term. With an 82% reduction

in flight demand in 2020 and lost revenues of £250 billion, airlines have decided to cut capacity and abandoned routes which provide added challenges for GTOs when offering worldwide destinations (IATA, 2020). However, GTOs could promote tours to countries which have managed the virus well, allow tourists to travel and have fewer general travel restrictions such as Oceania, Asia and the Caribbean (Fox, 2020).

GTOs usually contract various hotels including meals at the establishment. However, these stakeholders need to consider operational approaches including face masks worn in communal areas, replacing buffets with table service, creating designated 'bubble' areas and one-way systems of pathways, welcome kits of masks and sanitizers, apps for contactless check-in, temperature checks for staff and holidaymakers and a 24-hour period between stays allowing for deep cleaning (Hotel Solutions, 2020). This trend will no doubt continue, and consequently, the travel industry needs to reassure travellers that guidelines are adhered too. However, there are wider implications of these approaches including additional costs with increases in staff to manage the above systems and challenges to maintain profits and lower prices when making changes to the infrastructure. Furthermore, smaller hotels and self-catering units may need to be considered within the itinerary, which are not necessarily the traditional form of accommodation used on tours, and demand for such lodging may cause challenges with availability and increased prices.

Operators who traditionally promote larger group sizes of 30–50 holidaymakers, such as Trafalgar, Titan and Collette, may need to rethink their business model with tourists concerned about travelling in larger groups (Hotelmize, 2019). This industry trends could result in the demise of these types of holidays. Tour operators who do currently operate smaller group tours of 10–20 people, such as Back-Roads and Intrepid, have an opportunity to promote the concept of smaller 'bubbles' of tourists travelling which may be of interest to tourists. The wider implications of this approach could be more expensive tours as the fixed costs of a tour (coach transport and guides) being divided among fewer people and consequently higher costs per person.

The domestic holiday market could benefit from the pandemic with ABTA's 'Travel Trends Report' identifying 35 million overnight UK holidays were taken in 2019 and 56% of residents planning a UK break in 2020 and 2021 (ABTA, 2020). GTOs may not traditionally include the UK within their portfolio of destinations, but this industry trend offers an opportunity to promote potential popular new trips.

4. Is Overtourism Still Relevant Post the Pandemic?

Overtourism can be defined as 'The impact of tourism on a destination that influences perceived quality of life of citizens and/or quality of visitors experiences in a negative way' (UNWTO, 2019). With the decline of tourist numbers, as described above, there may be an argument to state that large crowds and the circumstances of overtourism could be a thing of the past. However, many countries have restricted travel abroad, which has funnelled volumes of tourists to a

smaller choice of locations, especially domestic holiday regions. With countries such as Spain, which attract 18 million British tourists annually, not being able to be offered widely as a choice of holiday location, holidaymakers have headed to UK beauty spots which has created traffic congestion, increased prices for accommodation and created overtourism. For example, Durdle Door beach in Dorset attracted 500,000 visitors over a weekend in the summer of 2020 resulting in the emergency services declaring the scene a major incident and tourists leaving 33 tonnes of waste within the area. The coastal resort of Brighton suffered a similar fate, and even though the local council warned UK residents not to travel to the city, trains from London were overcrowded with little social distancing, and crowd control measures were necessary at the train station (Minihane, 2020). Also, travel companies will need to consider social distancing and how to manage crowds better with tourists possibly happy to pay for experiences that consider
AQ3   these approaches (Rotondo, 2020).

However, the various lockdowns have allowed some governments to maintain infrastructure and nature to rehabilitate. For example, the Abbey Road crossing in London, made famous by the Beatles, has been repainted, dolphins have returned to Venice's canals and the coral reefs of Australia's Great Barrier Reef are recovering. As Koh (2020) identifies, historically, various city infrastructures have been under considerable strain as a consequence of large volumes of tourists, but the pandemic has allowed these areas to recover and locals to enjoy their place of residence again. Additionally, the air quality in major cities such as Bangkok, Paris and Barcelona have improved with, for example, reduced airline traffic. Furthermore, tourism facilities and infrastructure have been converted to be used for the local population during the pandemic. For example, the Singapore Convention Centre venue has been converted into a community care facility, and hotels in many countries are now being used for quarantine procedures which provide revenue opportunities when occupancy rates have been low during 2020 and 2021. Tourists should return in small numbers initially throughout the world which provides an opportunity for governments and authorities to incorporate smarter and more sustainable tourism strategies into future planning.

The drop-in visitor arrivals allow tourist boards and governments to reassess their approach to tourism and perhaps alter their approach to develop strategies to manage overtourism in future years (Koh, 2020). Government bodies and private enterprises can use this opportunity to reconsider if the growth of tourism within their area, region or country is desired and perhaps to reconsider the decision to target additional tourism growth. Relevant stakeholders can compare the economic benefits of tourism against the challenge of managing the impacts of tourism on the ecological systems, community well-being such as increased living costs, crime rates, traffic congestion and general pollution and the protection of cultural traditions (Higgens-Desbiolles, 2021).

5. The Impacts of Overtourism on a Host Destination

International tourism has grown from 200 million tourists in the 1960s to 1.4 billion in 2018 (UNWTO, 2019). As Sezgin and Yolal (2012) highlight, this

growth has been stimulated by package beach, cruise, ski and cultural tour holidays. Also, new source tourist markets, such as China, which accounted for 12% of tourist arrivals to Europe in 2019, has additionally driven this growth. This development can affect the host destination and its natural environment, culture and economy, subsequently influencing resident attitudes towards tourists. For example, the Thailand government stopped holidaymakers visiting the beach at Maya Bay, the location for the film 'The Beach', which attracted 2.5 million annual visitors due to the popularity of the film which affected its natural habitat (Associated Press, 2018). Infrastructures are also placed under strain resulting in locals being excluded from using facilities, as is the case in Mexico's Cancun resort where residents are prohibited from using the hotel beaches (Martínez, Nechar, & Gonzalez, 2013).

The WTTC and McKinsey & Company (2017) report identified five impacts of overtourism, which are discussed below:

First, residents can feel a sense of being alienated if their local community does not benefit from tourism or if they feel an imbalance between tourisms rewards and overtourism impacts. This can influence local's toleration of travellers with residents even protesting against tourism numbers in cities such as Venice, Dubrovnik and Barcelona (Gonzalez et al., 2018). Furthermore, research by Kuščer and Mihalic (2019) identified Ljubljana residents had negative feelings towards visitors due to pollution, overcrowding and traffic which resulted in residents wanting to leave Slovenia's capital city.

Coldwell (2018) identifies 'ice cream tourists', for example, which are day trippers or cruise passengers provide limited economic contribution but add towards increasing urban congestion. Also, some city centres have experienced a change in the retail landscape with businesses emerging to serve tourists, such as restaurants, souvenir shopping and boutique clothing stores, rather than for the needs of the local population (Koens, Postma, & Papp, 2018).

Second, overtourism can degrade the overall visitor experience as tourist volumes congregate in specific 'hot spot' areas. For example, the waiting times to climb the Eiffel Tower can be three hours, and many holidaymakers are crowded together to see famous sites such as the Louvre's Mona Lisa. Shelby and Haberleins' (1986, cited by Gonzalez, Coromina, & Gali, 2018) research identified that if 66% of tourists stated they felt they were in a crowded area; it is likely that the capacity has been exceeded. Furthermore, the increased desire to experience the 'authentic' daily life of locals, such as the 'Slumdog' tours of Mumbai's slums, results in tourists visiting historically non-touristic areas that are unused to dealing with tourism (Koens et al., 2018).

Third, the destinations' infrastructure can struggle to cope with overtourism as the 850,000 Amsterdam residents can testify with 20 million tourists annually descending upon the capital. The locals are tired of 'partying' visitors and subsequent strains on infrastructure which has resulted in authorities stopping the marketing of the city and the council not authorizing the construction of additional hotels (Fes, 2020). The Philippines has also experienced challenges with power failures, water shortages and overcrowded roads resulting in the government now limiting holidaymaker arrivals (WTTC & McKinsey & Company, 2017).

Fourth, overtourism can damage the natural environment, increase pollution and consume scarce resources such as water and food, especially when considering that 10% of destinations that attract holidaymakers account for 80% of total tourism arrivals. This strain and the fact that global tourism is responsible for 5% of all greenhouse gas emissions highlight the need to manage visitor impact. Few locations are immune, for example, 3,000 kg of rubbish has been collected from Mount Everest, and 80% of the Koh Khai islands coral reefs in Thailand are damaged because of overtourism (WTTC & McKinsey & Company, 2017).

Fifth, overtourism can bring threats to the local culture and heritage. For example, holidaymakers have vandalized sites such as China's Great Wall, and large volumes of visitors diminish the destination's spiritual integrity as is the case with Cambodia's Buddhist temple complex at Angkor Wat. Also, the heritage of a city can be affected, as is the case with the Boqueria food market in Barcelona, which for 180 years has been selling traditional Spanish food but has now banned tourist groups due to overcrowding.

6. Strategies to Combat Overtourism

Tourism organizations can work together to govern the economic, cultural and environmental impacts of overtourism as discussed below:

First, as Darrell Wade of Intrepid Travel highlights, travel companies and tourist boards can spread tourism incomes more evenly throughout the hosts economy with the marketing of a wider range of experiences and tourist attractions (Taylor, 2018). For example, dining in independent restaurants instead of chains and offering alternative attractions such as Iceland's Seljavallalaug hot spring rather than the Blue Lagoon can ease the strain on iconic visitor 'hotspots' plus provide opportunities to connect with a wider range of local people, their customs and cuisine.

Furthermore, governments such as in Bhutan and Botswana have chosen a low-impact and high-yield tourism policy through their pricing and quality holiday offering. Holidaymakers are still contributing to their economies, but with fewer travellers, there is less impact on the environment and culture. Also, tourists are willing to pay for higher value experiences, such as smaller groups paying $125 to watch the sunrise at Chichen Itza in Mexico compared to the 5,000 daily visitors who watch a similar scene at Angkor Wat in Cambodia for $37 (Lonely Planet, 2020).

Second, sociocultural impacts can be managed by incorporating local expertise into tourism plans, understanding cultural values and gaining residents cooperation and support. Gonzalez et al. (2018) identified citizens' willingness to accept further tourism development is influenced by how tourists currently impede residents' daily life, especially in shared spaces and how tourism impacts local prices. For example, the housing rents in Lisbon have increased as landlords prefer to advertise their properties to tourists through hosting sites such as Airbnb rather than offer them to locals which subsequently reduces the number of residents dwelling in the centre and impacts the city's social makeup and living standards. The outcome of this lack of consideration can result in negative publicity as was

the case with Cornwall's 'Wish you weren't here' media coverage which represented a manifestation of local's frustrations (O'Connor, 2002).

Third, appropriate strategies can reduce the impact on the environment by limiting permits or daily numbers of tourists at attractions. For example, since 2002, Inca Trail permits have been limited to 200 per day compared to 1,600 permits previously which resulted in excess rubbish, unauthorized camping areas, erosion and pollution (Coldwell, 2002). As Gonzalez et al. (2018) highlight, residents themselves can participate and influence how sustainable tourism can develop by acting as a cultural agent and social group. For example, Bermuda and Ibiza have applied a cap on the building of hotels, and the Galapagos Islands have limited cruise ship numbers to reduce pollution and impact on its natural environment with the blessing of locals.

Staggering tourism flows can assist in reducing environmental impacts. As Adam Goldstein of RCC highlights, cruise ships dock into Dubrovnik only in the morning and only on three days a week which causes pollution and overcrowding on these days. The ships could arrive throughout the week and in the afternoon, which would increase the destination ability to manage this volume without exacerbating environmental impacts (Taylor, 2018). Also, destinations such as Venice are now using technological solutions to manage tourism volumes such as installing turnstiles that restrict entry at specific times to reduce overcrowding, rubbish and erosion (Fes, 2020). AQ4

7. Metrics to Understand Potential Risks of Overtourism

As Salli Felton, the Chief Executive of the Travel Foundation, stated, 'we've created over-tourism together and the only way to solve it is together' (Taylor, 2018). It is therefore important to establish the varying aims of both government organizations, such as tourist boards, and privately owned travel companies, such as tour operators. This will establish if there are competing interests and identify a common framework to manage the governance of the environmental, cultural and economic impacts as well as create tourism growth.

There are several examples of localized strategies, such as the Gonzalez et al.'s (2018) work on heritage towns and Koens et al.'s (2018) overtourism research within cities which identifies how cities benefit economically from tourism and also how tourists may overwhelm this space based upon the population and size of the city.

However, the enclosed 'Capacity Management Model' (Fig. 1) is appropriate to a wider range of tourism circumstances including resorts, venues, regions, urban areas, natural attractions and historical sites. The model identifies the maximum tourism capacity that each can handle, still maintain enjoyable visitor experiences and reduce the environmental and cultural impact. The model uses the spider diagram approach to modelling with each aspect of overtourism being graded between 1 and 5 (5 being negative) and the cumulative score identifying the potential level and risk of overtourism.

The first aspect of the model identifies 'Planning capabilities of travel organisations and government bodies' as an important element of the overtourism
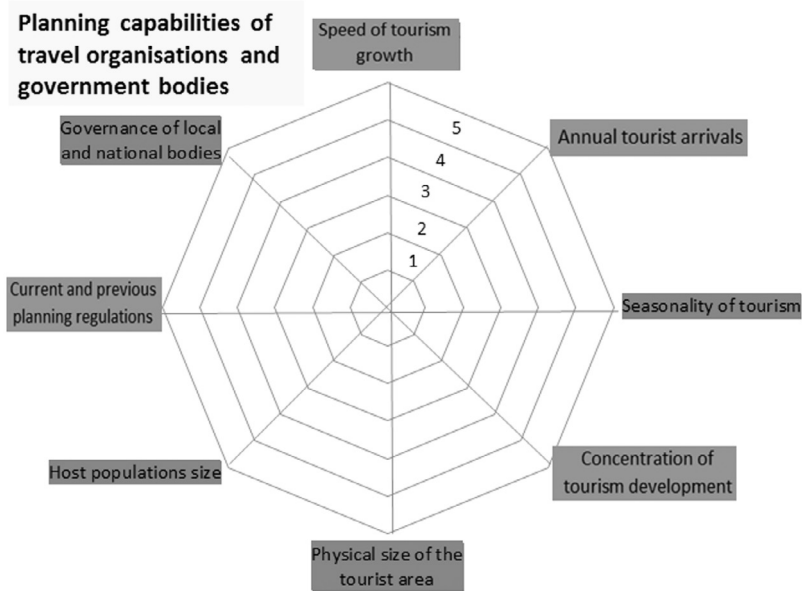
Fig. 1.   Planning Capabilities of Travel Organizations and Government Bodies.
Source: Author.
Note: Score of 5 being negative.

planning process. This considers how existing approaches to tourism develop-
ment in terms of planning regulations and general governance can assist in man-
aging tourism development. This is also combined with the speed and volume of
tourism development as well as the physical area that tourists are placed in within
the host destination in comparison to locals. For example, if tourism volume, as
is the case with Amsterdam as discussed above, is far higher than the host popula-
tion and the tourists are staying in central areas where locals live and work, this
may cause challenges with too many visitors. Additionally, if the growth is sudden
and/or constant, and the host planning has not considered the impact of tour-
ism, this growth is not managed well. In Amsterdam's case, it is only after large
numbers of tourists have visited the city that governments are now restricting
infrastructure development such as hotels.

The second aspect of the model includes including elements relating to the
'Level of impact on the host destination'. This involves assessing the impact of
the environment, culture and society and general living standards such as the
cost of living and housing. The economic aspects are divided into the three areas
to include the short-term impact, for example, employment, but then medium
term in terms of local business benefiting from trade and then the long term in
terms of career opportunities for individuals and the prospects for local busi-
nesses to offer their services to tourism development. Finally, it is important to
consider the 'Attitudes' of locals to tourists. As Gonzalez et al. (2018) identifies,
residents' goodwill is crucial to successful and sustainable tourism expansion, and
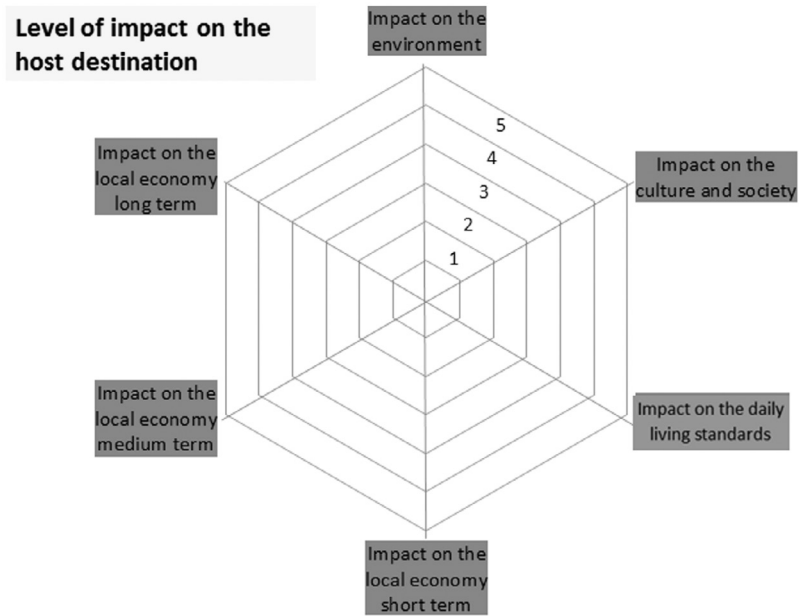
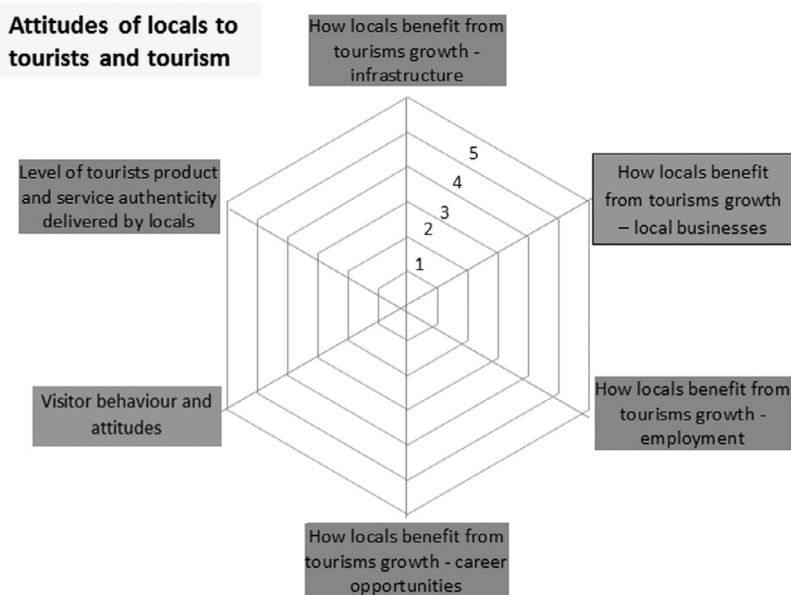Fig. 2.   Level of Impact on the Host Destination. *Source*: Author.   AQ5

Fig. 3.   Attitudes of Locals to Tourists and Tourism. *Source:* Author.

consequently, the model can guide tourism planners to manage future growth strategies for both developing and already developed tourism destinations. Areas to consider include how the local population benefit from tourism development in terms of the infrastructure that is built, local businesses and general employment and career opportunities as described above. This can influence how the locals perceive tourists and tourism and subsequently their behaviour towards visitors.

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, the travel industry is currently in testing times but if some GTOs consider changing the way they operate and their itineraries content and work with tourism authorities, opportunities to target holidaymakers may arise. Tourists' concern over safety could be directing holidaymakers to look for exclusive travel experiences within excursions and transportation or tours with small hotels and self-catering units.

The travel industry believes vaccine certificates are important to restore confidence with some companies, such as Qantas Airlines, introducing these measures even if governments do not (Lawson, 2021).

This study has identified several impacts on the tourism industry, specifically how each affected component has changed the creation and marketing of group tours, possibly forever. These suggestions and recommendations could assist future tourism decision-makers on how to strategize and plan for future pandemics and to view the industry, for example, considering accommodation, excursions and transport providers as well as how to plan for the impacts and management of overtourism. By considering these impacts and taking the local host population into account in tourism development, tourists and locals can live side by side in a positive and equal manner.

Further research is necessary to provide continuing guidance for GTO stakeholders and tourism-orientated companies as well as to test the 'Capacity Management Model' with numerous case study examples.

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AUTHOR QUERIES

AQ1: Please check whether the edited sentence 'It is estimated ...' conveys the intended meaning.
AQ2: Please check the sentence 'Chinese travel companies …' for clarity.
AQ3: Rotondo, 2020; Sezgin and Yolal (2012); Associated Press, 2018; Coldwell, 2002, are not listed in the reference list. Please provide details.
AQ4: Please provide expansion for RCC.
AQ5: Please provide citations for Figs. 2 and 3.