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Re-thinking Governance in Tourism: Harnessing Tourism's post-COVID-19 Economic Potential

John Paolo R Rivera , Eylla Laire M Gutierrez , and Fernando Martin Y Roxas 

Asian Institute of Management, Dr. Andrew L. Tan Center for Tourism, Makati City, Philippines

ABSTRACT

Prior to the coronavirus pandemic, tourism stakeholders were actively addressing sustainability, environmental conservation, and local community involvement challenges. Learning from the pandemic, tourism planning and development anchored not only on sustainability but also on safety, resilience, and risk reduction considerations. While success in developing sustainable destinations is an outcome of efficient and effective governance, tourism governance requires cooperation and interaction among its value-chain members through engagement strategies. Using the principles of sustainability, stakeholder participation, and safe travels, we redesigned existing frameworks to explain how tourism stakeholders can enhance destination governance by repositioning governance from the destination to the value chain. We propose a synchronized value chain arising from stakeholder collaboration to reinforce visitor's confidence toward travel thereby creating a sustainable, safe, and resilient post-pandemic tourism industry.

KEYWORDS

Governance; tourism; pandemic; product; sustainability

Introduction

Prior to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the global travel and tourism industry (i.e., including its direct, indirect, and induced impacts) has been posting rapid growth (Perrottet & Benli, 2016). This has been driven by rising income (Chou, 2013), declining cost of travel (Hoeller & Roach, 2015), liberalization of travel-related markets (Fu & Oum, 2014), and continuing development of technology (Vidal, 2019). These factors revolutionized travel by making it autonomous, faster, safer, convenient, and cheaper (Hagemann, 2016). In fact, according to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO; 2020), approximately 1.5 billion international tourist arrivals were recorded globally in 2019. This is a 4% increase from 2018 suggesting the key position of tourism as a resilient industry in economies across the globe. Meanwhile, the World Travel & Tourism Council (n.d.) reported that in 2019, travel and tourism accounted for 10.4% of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (USD 9.2 trillion), 10.6% of all jobs (334 million), and 25% of all new jobs created across the world. In addition,

CONTACT John Paolo R Rivera  jrivera@aim.edu  Asian Institute of Management, Dr. Andrew L. Tan Center for Tourism, Makati City, Philippines

international visitor spending amounted to USD 1.7 trillion (6.8% of total exports or 27.4% of global services exports). As such, it continuously accelerated investments in physical and digital infrastructures, strengthened human linkages, promoted entrepreneurship, generated employment, and contributed to poverty alleviation (Asian Development Bank (ADB), 2012; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2018). Ultimately, the travel and tourism industry has become a pillar of economic growth and development, particularly for developing economies that integrated it as one of their strategic sectors (Khan et al., 2020; Ndivo & Okech, 2020; Okruhanska, 2017).

Unfortunately, the unprecedented growth of the travel and tourism industry led to the proliferation of mass tourism. This has threatened the sustainability of many nature-based tourism destinations (Regan & Olarn, 2020). To mitigate the ill-effects of tourism, sustainable tourism emerged as the strategic direction for tourism operations, management, and development (Agyeiwaah et al., 2017; Mai & Smith, 2015; Roxas et al., 2020a; Timur & Getz, 2009).

The trajectory of the travel and tourism industry was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic given the stringent measures taken to contain its spread (e.g., stay-at-home policies, social distancing protocols, temporary shutdown of airlines), thereby constraining the movement of people. These measures hit the core of tourism – high-touch, interactive, mobile (Gutierrez et al., 2020). Consequently, tourism flows, revenues, and employment were instantaneously and severely affected.

As reported by World Travel and Tourism Council [WTTC] (n.d.), in 2020, the travel and tourism industry posted a loss of around USD 4.5 trillion, with its contribution to GDP dropping by a staggering 49.1% compared to 2019. Its contribution to global GDP declined from 10.4% in 2019 to only 5.5% in 2020. This translates to a 45% and 69.4% decline in domestic visitor spending and international visitor spending, respectively. Compared to the 334 million individuals employed in the industry in 2019, the pandemic resulted to 62 million lost jobs (tantamount to a drop of 18.5%), with only 272 million individuals remained to be employed across the sector globally. The threat of job losses persisted despite government support. Amidst such challenges, the pandemic was perceived as a transition event (Hall et al., 2020) or a transformative opportunity (Mair, 2020) to facilitate structural and systemic modifications on the tourism industry. Arguably, the pandemic offered a chance to redeem the industry from the defective system to which it operates in (Ioannides & Gyimóthy, 2020). This paradigm inspired us to further explore the prospects of sustainability in the context of a post-pandemic tourism industry

Given such backdrop, we pose this research question: *How can tourism industries adapt to the emerging needs of the post-pandemic scenario?*

The value of addressing our research question stems from the need of the travel and tourism industry to recover from the pandemic while incorporating better practices and governance structures that renders a more proactive, responsive, and resilient industry moving forward. By governance, we mean the “process involving coordination, collaboration and the cooperation of stakeholders, in order to ensure the multiplier effects from the social and environmental development of tourism in the local economy” (Dos Anjos & Kennell, 2019, p. 1). As the industry moves toward a post-pandemic scenario, old business and governance models and practices rendered obsolete by the pandemic should be left behind. While travel and tourism is expected to reach pre-pandemic levels sooner or later (Ochave, 2022; United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), 2022), we assert the need to facilitate increased interaction and cooperation among tourism stakeholders in managing destinations to seamlessly implement sustainable tourism initiatives. Governance has emerged as a convenient conceptual term to characterize contemporary patterns of collective decision-making (Panyik, 2014).

Hence, in addressing our research question, we set the following objectives:

- (1) To investigate how the COVID-19 affected and modified the existing structures and systems of tourism industries, with the goal of identifying both the facilitating and inhibiting factors to sustainable tourism development.
- (2) To propose a framework illustrating how tourism can be managed and developed in the context of the pandemic.
- (3) To provide policy options that support the recovery and sustainable development of tourism in societies.

Our study offers recalibrated perspectives and alternative strategies in managing tourism growth which is critical for policymakers and tourism stakeholders in the industry. We contribute to literature and policy by providing viable strategies that addresses existing health and security issues, at the same time, re-introducing a more sustainable form of tourism development in the post-pandemic. By emphasizing on the strategy to reposition governance from the usual tourism destination-level to the collaborative value-chain approach, we distinguish our approach from other studies that investigates the tactical and operational approaches to revitalize the travel and tourism industry in the post-pandemic scenario. At the core of our strategic approach is the importance of stakeholder collaboration and cooperation in rebooting and transforming the industry to become safer and resilient, following the recommendations of Roxas et al. (2022). As argued by Sigala (2020), the reevaluation of existing tourism assumptions and models is critical given the pandemic’s impact on the economic, socio-political, and environmental aspects of society. Likewise, following Siakwah et al. (2019), it is also essential

to underscore improvements in tourism governance to reinforce the equitable distribution of tourism benefits to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs, <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>) that indirectly positioned tourism at the forefront of development.

Literature review

In addressing our first research objective of identifying the manner to which the pandemic has changed the industry, we examine several existing studies that enumerated both facilitating and inhibiting factors affecting tourism development. We also emphasized how recent studies view the evolving landscape of the tourism industry against the backdrop of the pandemic.

The changing landscape of tourism

Known as a complex and inter-related network of economic system (Luthe & Wyss, 2016), tourism is expected to be easily disturbed by numerous factors that challenged the balance of tourism destinations. The pre-pandemic tourism paradigm focused on addressing issues of over-tourism and maintaining the sustainability of destinations (Dodds & Butler, 2019), while gradually incorporating concepts of crisis management (Aliperti & Cruz, 2019; Ritchie & Jiang, 2019; B. W. Ritchie, 2009). However, the unprecedented implications of the pandemic required both researchers and practitioners to reexamine the way the industry operates (Roxas et al., 2022). As Abbas et al. (2021) cited, this pandemic has provided the industry an “abundant new framework” (p. 8) where further research can be conducted. Similarly, Zeng et al. (2020) suggested that the crises such as the recent COVID-19 outbreak often results to shifts in the use of new technologies which is a critical part of industry development.

Characterized by the post-pandemic scenario, several studies have also argued that this crisis offers an opportunity to re-orient tourism activities to a more responsible and sustainable version (Cheer, 2020; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020; Jiang & Wen, 2020). For one, technology and medical sectors have played an important role in facilitating tourism recovery. As many reports have shown, technology utilization has increased over the period of the pandemic as shown by the enhanced trust, willingness, and readiness of users to employ technology (Stankov et al., 2020). For example, during the pandemic, people used social media platforms more often to obtain online sources of information and to communicate with their family members and loved ones (Zhong et al., 2021). Paving the way for seamless movement of people, digital contact tracing schemes and vaccination certificates have also increased technology adoption (Mbunge et al., 2021).

As suggested by Sigala (2020), the pandemic did not only drastically change the way tourism is conducted in many destinations, but also exposed the structural weaknesses of the industry given the uncertain and complex environment rendered by COVID-19. With this, there is a growing trend of aligning tourism activities to a more nature-based and sustainable form (Rivera et al., 2021). The shifting attitude, behavior, perspectives of tourism demand and supply may serve as a bigger push to develop more sustainable tourism products and services. Arguably, the post-pandemic tourism is predicted to focus on the provision of personalized, comfortable, and affordable tourism activities, thereby veering away from usual mass tourism (Abbas et al., 2021).

For tourism enterprises, tourism experts suggest that while some may be able to survive by maintaining their business models, around one-third of existing enterprises may not be able to survive, while some enterprises may even emerge stronger with renewed business models to accommodate the modifications brought about by the pandemic (Traskevich & Fontanari, 2021). For instance, the pandemic has arguably forced several enterprises to invest in technological innovation. Heritage and cultural attractions, for example, while hesitant at first, decided to adopt virtual tours to survive. This includes establishments such as the *Eiffel Tower*, *Vatican Museums*, Singapore's "Experience Singapore now. Visit later" initiative, among others (El-Said & Aziz, 2022). Enterprises also needed to account for changing tourist demands and tourism employment landscape (Yin & Ni, 2021). At an individual level, tourists, owners, and employees alike suffered from mental health deterioration (Buckley & Westaway, 2020). While taking a toll on employment, tourism education is expected to experience increased pressure in coping with decreased job creation opportunities in the industry (Abbas et al., 2021). Due to the health stigma posed by the pandemic, tourism is expected to implement high-quality health and sanitation measures. At the core of this changing landscape, as suggested by Kuščer et al. (2021), is the importance of greater product differentiation.

As earlier emphasized by Brouder (2020), the transformation of the industry is hinged on a few things such as institutional will preparedness (e.g., presence of policies to enable innovation and transformation), willingness of enterprises to transform, and a "collective tourist behavior" (p. 488). Therefore, a reset in tourism and hospitality requires an adjustment and meeting of minds between demand and supply stakeholders. As shown in the case of Wellness Tourism in Salou, Spain, the incorporation of sustainable tourism strategies by its Tourist Board has become a necessity in the post-pandemic (Andreu et al., 2021). Similarly, as noted by Corbisiero and Monaco (2021), pathways to innovation in tourism has already form part of Italy's 2017–2022 tourism strategic plan. For one, the government intends to take carrying capacity measures seriously as shown by the introduction of ticketing

and entry fees in tourism destinations such as Venice starting January 2023 (Hughes, 2022). The same approach is aimed to be implemented in Philippines' Baguio city through a *congestion fee* for tourists visiting destinations (Dumlao, 2022).

In the immediate post-pandemic scenario, studies have shown that businesses have also modified their processes. For example, several businesses now use digital modes of communication to relate to their audience (Giones et al., 2020). Similarly, sanitation and hygiene protocols have been mainstreamed across tourism enterprises (Robina-Ramírez et al., 2021). For others, the pandemic gave enterprises an opportunity to rethink their business models and plans. Kaushal and Srivastava (2021) highlighted the efforts of enterprises to develop a *multiskilled workforce* – employees engaging in several job roles in tourism and hospitality. Arguably, this ensures employee retainment even during crises or in normal lean or off seasons (Kyriakidou & Maroudas, 2010). In acknowledging that the crisis may reoccur, businesses and governments have also realized the value of effective crisis management plans to the industry's operations (Jamal & Budke, 2020). Common to all approaches mentioned is a realization that physical interactions have an impact on public health and safety (Kaushal & Srivastava, 2021) – which is important to the travel and tourism industry.

Re-designing national and regional linkages in tourism in the new normal

A “globally intertwined crisis” (Kuščer et al., 2021, p. 10) such as the COVID-19 pandemic requires an inter-governmental and international response from governments, destination management organizations (DMOs), and other tourism stakeholders. Thus, planning for post-pandemic requires collaboration that goes beyond national borders with a focus on regional discussions among travel organizations, companies, and governments (Abbas et al., 2021). A regional approach to value-chain creation may be useful where local resources are accounted for at the regional level. The post-pandemic scenario therefore suggests a paradigm shift where stakeholders realize that sudden and rapid disturbances both local and international will heavily impact the value chain of tourism industries within a destination (Traskevich & Fontanari, 2021).

For example, governments play a crucial role in the governance of tourism recovery specifically in keeping an open communication among its diverse local governments and affected tourism businesses (Yeh, 2021). Similarly, DMOs are also expected to work closely with tourism stakeholders such as businesses in reconstructing the industry. Part of DMOs' role is to harmonize all the required certifications and quality seals (e.g., sustainable, hygienic, and safety standards) to promote tourist confidence. Critical to this role is the DMOs' ability to identify diversified customer groups especially new target

groups given the changing behavior of consumers (Charm et al., 2020). Equally important in restarting tourism is local community participation (Gutierrez, 2021). Similarly, the role of expanded digitalization is identified as a key component in strengthening the industry's recovery along with improving the quality of offerings available. E-tourism is assumed to transform the future of tourism by implementing technological advancements and innovation (Abbas et al., 2021; Ma et al., 2021).

As evidenced by the work of Romao (2020), it is possible to integrate both regional and local resources in tourism where local residents are able to participate in the creation of a regional model for promoting tourism. Thus, this suggests an elevated form of governance where destinations are no longer just managed locally, instead at a regional level – thus suggesting a unique value-chain for tourism. In this sense, tourism development is used as a tool to promote regional development (Traskevich & Fontanari, 2021).

In acknowledging the diverse responses and levels of readiness among destinations, travel bubbles have been implemented between countries deemed as safe travel zones. For one, New Zealand, Australia, and other Pacific islands formed their own travel corridor, Singapore and Japan also set up a “residence track” catering to cross-border travel of professionals, a planned travel bubble within Southeast Asia, as proposed by Vietnam, among others (Fusté-Forné & Michael, 2021). However, despite the presence of such agreements, many of these travel corridors were suspended given the varied restrictions imposed over the course of the pandemic (Setboonsarng, 2020). Despite efforts to revive such initiatives, its sustainability has been put to question given the unpredictable and fluid mobility policies that negatively affects tourists' experience (H. Ritchie, 2021). In acknowledging this, several other initiatives including Phuket, Thailand's “Sandbox” which is a program that allowed foreign visitors to enter the Phuket without undergoing quarantine procedure, were implemented (Tan, 2022). Under this program, foreign visitors can enter other destinations in Thailand after spending seven nights in Phuket (entry point). The same initiative was then eyed to be implemented in Phu Quoc, Vietnam (Hoang, 2021). In initiatives such as abovementioned, Cheer et al. (2020) emphasized that the use of vaccination in the promotion and maintenance of travel bubbles and networks in the post-pandemic is crucial.

Improving tourism governance has also been underscored in various countries, both developed and developing, toward the goal of achieving SDGs in Africa (Siakwah et al., 2019), influence decision-making processes in integrated rural tourism in Hungary (Panyik, 2014), examining efficacy of tourism administration in Kenya (Ndivo & Okech, 2020), conservation of marine-protected areas in Indonesia (Yunitawati & Clifton, 2021), understand rural tourism governance and power relationship in tourism planning in China (Wang & Wing Yan Man, 2019), promoting small-town decision-makers'

awareness of policy coordination as a central issue in either implementing collaborative governance and designing tourism development policies in Italy (Vignieri, 2018), among others. In this sense, governance also means that governments are expected to recuperate by reopening tourism activities in various destinations (Helble & Fink, 2020). The income received from the resumption of tourism activities may also be funneled to support sustainability initiatives (Shenai, 2022) as seen in the cases of several destinations such as in Kerala, India (Markose et al., 2022) and Aloguinsan, Cebu, Philippines (Gutierrez, 2019).

Research gap

For future academic research, Traskevich and Fontanari (2021) emphasized the importance of identifying archetypes of resilient destinations. Likewise, Harilal et al. (2019) also argued that to capitalize on the benefits of the growing tourism industry, there is an urgent need for national tourism policies to be reinforced by more intensive research geared toward planning and development policies that will outline the critical issues, challenges, and constraints in the national tourism governance and policy landscape. Hence, the development of a renewed model is essential in establishing the correlation between the requirements of resilient destinations and the unique capacities of tourism industries across countries and regions. A crisis management approach needs to be mainstreamed in tourism industry where critical stakeholders, such as government leaders and tourism organizations, are expected to create a sector-wide plan that includes an industry-wide outbreak response, regeneration, and restart phases in case of another pandemic outbreak (Abbas et al., 2021).

In coping with the growing challenges of the post-pandemic, it is important to identify a framework that highlights the importance of shifting the governance from the destination-level to regional level to ensure the resilient and sustainable development of the industry. Armed with the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, this is one of the first, if not the first, study to highlight governance along the lines of a crisis that unprecedentedly disrupted tourism while incorporating disaster risk reduction in a governance framework.

Baseline framework

In addressing our second research objective of designing a framework explicating the ways to which tourism can be better managed and developed, we appeal to existing frameworks developed geared toward tourism recovery. Following the gradual easing of mobility restrictions across the globe conditioned on declining infection rates, studies have introduced several models

that depict ways on how the industry could recover in the post-pandemic. We identify the following models, which will serve as our baseline:

Resiliency models

Resiliency is arguably a necessary condition for sustainability where it is perceived as a buffer for enabling sustainability (Espiner et al., 2017). By incorporating the experiences gained from the pandemic, this period is expected to provide an opportunity to build tourism's resiliency (Kuščer et al., 2021). Resilience, also understood as the ability to bounce back and to absorb shock, as suggested by McCartney et al. (2021), also entails government's capacity to provide cash assistance and incentives, job opportunities, support for businesses, among others. As shown in the experience of Macao in assisting the recovery of its city tourism, McCartney et al. (2021) emphasized the importance of fiscal reserves to support resiliency among other elements such as travel corridors, recognition of the societal impacts of COVID-19, among others. This is underpinned by their proposed conceptual model on recovery where financial incentives proved beneficial to resiliency. On the other hand, others suggested the value of mental well-being and personal resilience in the over-all resilience of the industry (Traskevich & Fontanari, 2021). Filimonau and De Coteau (2020), on the other hand, proposed an action framework in building tourism resilience as applied in the case of Grenada. Emphasis is given on the value of organizational resilience where business continuity plans and active collaboration among stakeholders are at the forefront. Resiliency thus requires a participatory process that includes a wide range of actors in the industry and at the destination level (Tosun, 2006). Through an examination on the case of Indonesia, King et al. (2021), emphasized the value of an agency-based livelihood approach to understand the agency, socio-environmental capital, and social structures in destinations. From this perspective, it was suggested that communities, even without tourism income, were able to build their skills while maintaining local ownership in their own resources. Arguably, such characteristics allow them to become resilient in the face of crises.

Justice framework for recovery

With the exposure of deep-seated social and economic inequalities due to the pandemic, tourism-dependent economies have become communities in crisis (Behsudi, 2020). Rastegar et al. (2021) argued that the need to reassess a just recovery that accounts for those who were heavily affected by the pandemic, thus proposing a justice framework to tourism recovery. The proposed framework emphasizes the need to examine the relationship between tourism recovery strategies and justice principles of recognition, procedural,

distributive, and restorative. The concept of just recovery is further elaborated by Sheller (2021) in discussing the value of mobility justice (Sheller, 2018) in rethinking the workings of the tourism industry along the lines of capitalism and vulnerability of select destinations such as the Caribbean countries. Through these concepts, the value of inclusivity, especially of those in the marginalized groups must be accounted for in pursuing any forms of tourism recovery strategies.

Equity

In relation to pursuing resilient and just recovery, the value of equity must be incorporated as well. This entails making specific changes at multiple levels while ensuring that ethical frameworks are in place. Part of this process is transforming the capitalistic and consumerism lens perspectives to a more sustainable and equitable growth that slows down the consumption process in tourism while transforming existing experiences in the industry (Benjamin et al., 2020).

Proactive recovery model

As opposed to reactive responses (i.e., a type of response triggered by a specific event) to pandemic-related issues in the industry (Yeh, 2021), Raki et al. (2021) argued the need for a proactive strategy to address issues in tourism recovery. A proactive recovery strategy (i.e., a type of response that acts in anticipation of future problems, needs, or changes) is focused on consumer-wellbeing encompassing aspects of financial, emotional, and physical state of an individual (Anderson & Ostrom, 2015). In this approach, tourists' and employees' wellbeing are linked suggesting the interconnectedness of customer experience and organizational-related outcomes.

An examination of the existing models depicting the prospects of tourism recovery suggests that these efforts ultimately lead to the achievement of sustainability – a concept that has evolved from the traditional triple bottom line approach (i.e., people, planet, profit; Roxas et al., 2020a) and target segmentation (Kuščer et al., 2021), to include the elements of justice, resiliency, equity, and proactive strategies as shown in Figure 1. That is, “sustainable tourism is expected to play a more critical role in the face of the new normal” (Gutierrez, 2021, p. 1).

Augmented framework

While the frameworks identified as baseline can stand alone, an integrated approach can also be developed. By unifying the frameworks and by introducing other necessary and sufficient components, we can augment the baseline

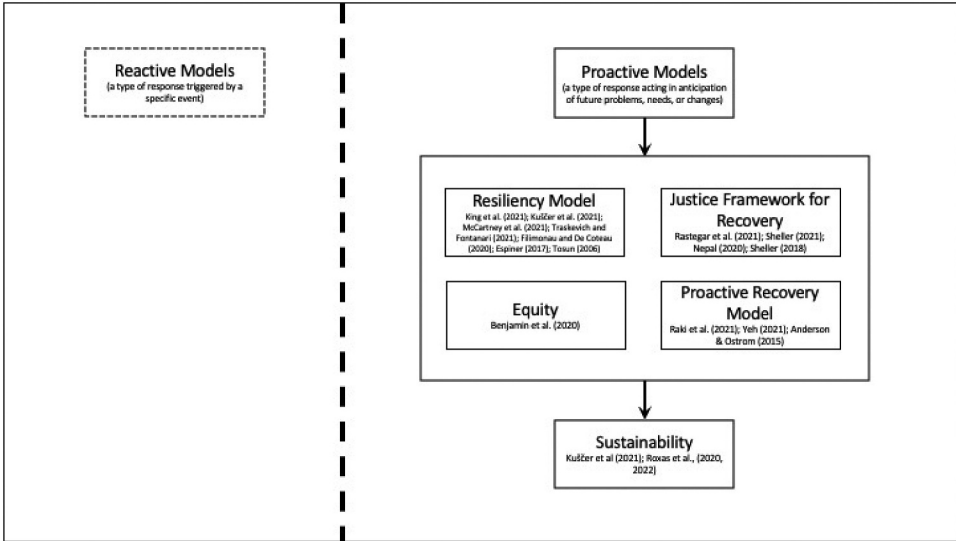


Figure 1. Baseline framework.
Source: Constructed by the authors.

by simultaneously underscoring a value chain approach to tourism development (Rivera & Gutierrez, 2019), highlighting the role of tourism stakeholders (Björk, 2000), mapping their respective governance roles (Gutierrez, 2021; Roxas et al., 2020a, 2020b), and identifying threats to the tourism value chain (Traskevich & Fontanari, 2021). All of which are geared toward identifying modes of resilience that will facilitate disaster risk reduction and resilience in the tourism value chain. To augment our baseline framework, we illustrated this unified framework in Figure 2.

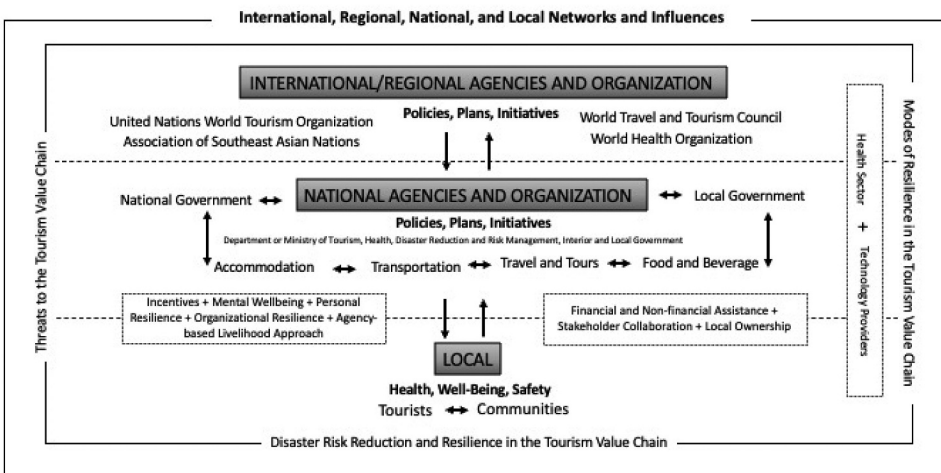


Figure 2. Augmented framework.
Source: Constructed by the authors.

Taking off from our discussion of the proactive recovery model, we have seen that there is concurrence among scholarly studies that the concept of sustainability has changed as the tourism industry moves toward the post-pandemic situation. [Figure 2](#) reflect this evolution of sustainability from the triple bottom line approach to a multi-stakeholder activity that requires coordinated efforts among different actors and stakeholders. We espouse that the discourse of sustainability is now also about disaster risk reduction and resilience and the enhancement of health and well-being of the stakeholders. Since every society, industry, or enterprise faces the risk of the unexpected (i.e., harmful events that can cost resources, employment, lives), there is a need to inculcate risk management to allow for attempts to prepare for the unexpected by mitigating risks and extra costs even before they occur. Hence, given lessons from the pandemic, we include disaster risk reduction and resilience in our framework.

Key players in tourism

In constructing our augmented framework, we begin by recognizing that industry players can be categorized into three levels of governance – the local, national, and international spheres following the study of Gutierrez (2021). To categorize the players, we identify each level as follows: the first level emphasizes the influence of **local** institutions and domestic politics in the pursuit of sustainability. As emphasized by the resiliency and proactive recovery models, individual well-being and health needs to be accounted for in the prospects of tourism reopening (Kuščer et al., 2021; Raki et al., 2021). This includes the well-being of tourists and employees alike. As Abbas et al. (2021) pointed, local people including communities play a critical role in transforming the future of tourism post-pandemic since tourist confidence may directly be influenced by the health and well-being of local communities in destinations.

The second level highlights the role of **domestic institutions and organizations** (i.e., government remains to play a significant role in managing and/or directing tourism-related initiatives). Influencing the pursuit of sustainability, recovery, and resilience warrants understanding of the dynamics among national government and domestic political institutions (Gutierrez, 2021). In the case of tourism, national governments designate a department or ministry of tourism mandated to plan, program, coordinate, implement, and regulate the development and promotion of the tourism industry. Governments are therefore expected to maximize the established multi-sectoral structures that connect public and private spheres across multiple levels. In this case, DMOs assist in bridging both national and international level policies and initiatives for tourism recovery (Rivera et al., 2021). Hence, in using a value-chain approach, governments need to coordinate to stakeholder groups including

accommodation, food and beverage, transportation, travel and tours, and healthcare providers (Karadayi-Usta & SerdarAsan, 2020). Due to the pandemic, health and tourism has become intertwined. As a result, healthcare providers and medical institutions have played increasingly important roles in restoring tourism confidence as shown in the case of the growing forms of vaccine tourism (Mariano, 2021). More than ever, the collaboration between the medical sector and tourism stakeholders was evident throughout the pandemic where medical experts became instrumental, to an extent co-decision-makers, in determining the mobility of individuals (Lavazza & Farina, 2020). In transitioning to tourism reopening, McCartney et al. (2022) also emphasized the importance of continued collaboration between medical experts and tourism stakeholders to ensure safe and sustainable tourism recovery.

Finally, the third level emphasizes the impact of the **international environment and international institutions** (i.e., country-specific pursuits of sustainable tourism are readily affected by the international system). According to Garay and Cánoves (2011), various international organizations such as the UNWTO, the WTTC, the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment), among others, sustainability, recovery, and resilience has comprised most of their policy statements and pronouncements. Moreover, with impacts of the pandemic, the World Health Organization as well as regional blocks like the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) have also touched on sustainability, recovery, and resilience in transitioning toward post-pandemic situations. As such, Hall (2011) emphasized that their presence has shaped how tourism industries across the world have developed.

Elevated governance in Post-COVID-19 tourism

In facilitating the post-pandemic tourism recovery, these stakeholder groups from various levels of governance need to cooperate (Björk, 2000; Gutierrez, 2021; Roxas et al., 2020b, 2022). As noted by Yan et al. (2021), the role of stakeholders in tourism recovery and in the post-pandemic adjustments were constantly changing – involving a process of learning, un-learning, and adapting to changes. A common strategy involves long-term collaboration between and among stakeholders. Participation and cooperation in government initiatives using both “bottom-up” and “top-down” approaches are needed to facilitate the safe reopening of tourism (Koščak et al., 2017; Torres-Delgado & Palomeque, 2012).

McCartney et al. (2021) and Wan et al. (2022) emphasized that governance in the midst of crisis entails the ability to facilitate stakeholder collaboration and engagement. As literature suggested, governments play a crucial role in crisis recovery and resiliency – fostering public–private partnerships (Lim & To, 2022), providing fiscal incentives (McCartney et al., 2021), creating

avenues for synergies (Wan et al., 2022), among others. At the core of governance is achieving stakeholder collaboration (Hystad & Keller, 2008; Jiang & Ritchie, 2017). Likewise, responsive governments are those that can facilitate stakeholder engagement and collaboration in times of crisis (McCartney et al., 2021; SharSharma et al., 2021; Wan et al., 2022). However, this does not mean that leadership, decision-making, and financing roles are solely owned by governments. Instead, participation of stakeholders (i.e., from tourism to medical actors) are essential in the management of efforts promoting tourism recovery and resiliency (Robina-Ramírez et al., 2021).

As shown in the models of tourism recovery underpinned by justice, equity, and resilience (Benjamin et al., 2020; Kuščer et al., 2021; Rastegar et al., 2021; Traskevich & Fontanari, 2021) bottom-up approaches remain useful in the prospects of an inclusive tourism recovery. In the same manner, as emphasized by Romao (2020), given the grave impacts of the pandemic to tourism globally, international, regional, and local tourism initiatives may also be integrated in reopening local tourism activities. By incorporating the varied governance approaches, an *elevated form of governance* is proposed. In this study, we define *elevated governance* as a type of governance where tourism activities are managed at the value chain level (Traskevich & Fontanari, 2021). As a result, an increased collaboration among value-chain members is expected.

Accounting for disaster risk reduction and resilience in tourism

As shown in Figure 2, the left-hand side of our augmented framework suggests that disaster risk reduction and resilience approach is driven by threats to the tourism industry. By presenting a crisis determined by population density, mobility, and time pressure to make decisions (Bryce et al., 2020), Sigala (2020) argued that the COVID-19 pandemic revealed the structural weaknesses of the tourism industry to perform effectively in a volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous, and disruptive (VUCAD) world (Rafael et al., 2020). Hence, following Traskevich and Fontanari (2021), we identified the conditions and imperatives created by the pandemic that will compel the tourism industry to prioritize disaster risk reduction and resilience. These threats to the tourism value chain are: “globalization, ecological problems, political unrest and terrorism, natural cataclysms, interdependence in socioeconomic systems, degradation of national and regional cultures, and commodification of culture” (Traskevich & Fontanari, 2021, p. 12). The pandemic is encompassed in these threats.

The role of health and technology sectors in tourism governance

As show in [Figure 2](#), the left-hand side of the framework acknowledged the impact of physical interaction in the spread of the COVID-19 virus. As observed, technological innovation has been widely implemented to ensure the promotion of health and safety across destinations (Gretzel et al., 2020).

Arguably, technology has helped many destinations in ensuring safety and building resilience. Hasan et al. (2020) noted the value of using blockchain-based solutions in the provision of digital health passports and immunity certificates that are reliable and tamper-proof. Several studies have also noted the rise of cashless transactions in various destinations including Indonesia, Portugal, the Philippines, among others (Andulana et al., 2021; Firdaus & Aziz, 2021; Marques et al., 2022). In China, online payment applications are also used to generate health codes that monitor an individual's health status and exposure to COVID (Liang, 2020). Other destinations utilize other innovative technologies to ensure safety in tourism. In Hong Kong, for example, tracking bracelets are provided for arriving travelers which work alongside a smartphone application that monitors the health condition of an individual (Baker, 2022). Other destinations such as Kyoto, Japan utilizes mobile application to monitor the movement of people alongside the spread of COVID-19 infections (Yamamoto, 2021). The wide use of COVID vaccine certificates (i.e., yellow card, vaccine passports) also enabled data sharing between and among destinations (Sun et al., 2021).

Alongside such innovations, medical experts have been sought after to guide procedures for tourism recovery. The case of tourism reopening in Macao also exemplified the role of community pharmacists and medical professionals in the active surveillance of individuals entering and leaving the destination. Part and parcel of this responsibility is the provision of public information about health and safety (McCartney et al., 2022). Beyond efforts of ensuring that individuals are vaccinated, health infrastructures and capacities are deemed critical in ensuring the sustained recovery of tourism industries. That is, destinations are expected to have strengthened health infrastructure to ensure the safety of its residents as well as visitors (Orîndaru et al., 2021).

Resilience approaches in the tourism value chain

On the right-hand side of our augmented framework in [Figure 2](#), we espouse that to pursue disaster risk reduction and resilience in the tourism industry, actors and stakeholders need to collaboratively develop and adhere to agreed modes of resilience. Consistent with Traskevich and Fontanari (2021), this is aimed toward creating a resilience-oriented market characterized by improved, effective, and aligned strategic positioning and product policy of destinations.

Hence, to provide specific approaches or modes that stakeholders can employ to create a resilience-oriented tourism industry, we adapt the key implications suggested by Department of Tourism, AIM-Dr. Andrew L. Tan Center for Tourism & Guide to the Philippines (DOT, ALTCFT, GTTP; 2020, 2021) derived from a nationwide survey that probed traveler's sentiments, insights, behavior, and preferences on future travel post-pandemic. In order to restore confidence in tourism, DOT et al. (2020) suggested elevated safety (i.e., design new customer experiences around safety and look beyond own touch-points by alleviating inconveniences brought about by additional health and safety protocols); agile innovation (i.e., review and recalibrate value propositions based on changes in preferences of target segments by focusing on personalized, engaging, story-rich, and technology-driven products and services for added value); digital transformation (i.e., maximize the use of available online marketplaces to expand digital reach), and collaborative governance (i.e., seek convergence points by initiating personal interactions and joint assessments with other stakeholders in the value chain). In order to ensure safe travels, Department of Tourism, AIM-Dr. Andrew L. Tan Center for Tourism & Guide to the Philippines (DOT, ALTCFT, GTTP; 2021) recommended communication (i.e., effective communication strategies with and among tourism stakeholders is necessary in crafting strategies for industry recovery); diversification (i.e., shift from traditional mass-based product and services offerings to curated and niche tourism offerings for new travel segments); customization (i.e., mainstreaming of bespoke travel); and simplification (i.e., standardized and well-communicated travel and health protocols) as critical aspects of tourism recovery. Innovative tourism products and services may include but is not limited to virtual tours and customized tour packages for solo travelers, friends, families, elderlies, immunocompromised, among others.

Conclusions and recommendations

Directions from scholarly literature

In reviewing existing literature and frameworks of tourism development, recovery, and resilience, the discourse of sustainable tourism in a post-pandemic scenario has expanded further. That is, sustainability is not anymore just the consideration to fuel tourism development and pandemic recovery, but it should also consider safety and resilience (e.g., Aliperti & Cruz, 2019; Dodds & Butler, 2019; Ritchie & Jiang, 2019; B. W. Ritchie, 2009). The pandemic, as an unprecedented event, impacted numerous value chains across industries. It rendered many business models and practices outdated. It also challenged traditional models of governance. Consequently, it opened opportunities for stakeholders (e.g., government, enterprises, and individuals) to

collaboratively examine and rediscover tourism's value beyond recreational and leisure purposes (e.g., Abbas et al., 2021; Cheer, 2020; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020; Jiang & Wen, 2020; Zeng et al., 2020).

In a post-pandemic scenario, the literature has pointed out that the travel and tourism industry must also factor in perspectives of resilience, sustainability, and safety in its operations and strategy (e.g., Brouder, 2020; Traskevich & Fontanari, 2021). Hence, we formulated a unified framework on developing newer and better sustainable tourism products and services that are aligned with the post-pandemic scenario by repositioning governance models from the traditional destination level-perspective, to one that accounts for the existing value chain. Our findings are critical inputs for policymakers as they craft schemes to address emerging health security challenges and redirect the impaired tourism industry toward prosperity in the foreseeable future.

Key implication: elevating tourism governance

In promoting elevated governance for tourism recovery (e.g., Helble & Fink, 2020; Roxas et al., 2022), international and regional organizations play an increasingly significant role in influencing the types of recovery and rehabilitation responses promoted by countries across the world. ASEAN-level recovery plans (e.g., sustainable tourism, safe passage, uniform protocols), for example, continue to influence government policies, so do the initiatives promoted by tourism organizations such as WTTC's *Safe Travels Stamp* and UNWTO's *Global Guidelines to Restart Tourism*. Similarly, national governments remain to be the primary source of policy to support tourism recovery in local destinations. Governments continue to provide health and safety protocols, development plans, financial assistance, and recovery programs that influence tourism development. At the local level, communities continue to prioritize their health and well-being to facilitate the full and safe reopening of tourism destinations.

Key implication: multi-stakeholder approach to tourism recovery

In unifying the existing frameworks toward disaster risk reduction and resilience in the travel and tourism industry, we highlighted each stakeholder has a critical role to play in supporting the industry, ideally through a bottom-up approach. By adhering to a multi-stakeholder approach to tourism recovery would prove beneficial. For example, airlines think they belong to the airline industry and with this narrow mind-set, they tend to fix passenger problems and fears. Hotels, restaurants, and transportation companies may have the same approach in coping with this industry-wide crisis. Because travelers make travel decisions based on safety in the entire end-to-end experience, all members of the tourism value chain must work on enabling the different

modes of resilience we have enumerated in ensuring safe yet convenient travels. Saving one segment without helping the others will not save anyone. Hence, we continue to emphasize the importance of coordination and collaboration among stakeholders of the industry's value chain.

Policy recommendations and economic implications

To apply elevated governance and multi-stakeholder approaches, we recommend three approaches. First, international organizations, national tourism organizations, and local tourism administrators must encourage stakeholders to work on a unified value proposition – provide an enriching and safe travel experience. With this goal, jobs for local communities can be ensued but it will require the participation of all value-chain members. This is necessary to regain travel confidence of tourists.

Second, we continue to echo the proposition of Gutierrez et al. (2020) and Roxas et al. (2022) to encourage optimizing smaller networks (i.e., *thinking small*). This will allow more micro, small, and medium enterprises to participate in the market and sustain livelihoods of their workforce. With smaller networks, travel vendors can redesign their menu into customizable products and services that can attract specific target market (i.e., low volume, high spenders). Instead of the usual larger parties, tourists can be split so that more guides can be employed to take them around in a more leisurely pace at a premium price. Thus, consistent with sustainable tourism, this will allow for more efficient capacity management that can lessen community and environmental disturbances.

Third, for the first and second to materialize, stakeholders must have a transformed perspective on how tourism demand is viewed. Given the lessons from the pandemic, the travel and tourism industry must see the value of promoting quality over quantity of visitors. That is, focusing mainly on large markets is not anymore consistent with a post-pandemic scenario. Recalibrating business models to target smaller segments that spend more and frequently may be more aligned given tourists' renewed taste and preference for travel. Satisfying these tourists may prove to be more valuable, sustainable, resilient, and much safer than mass-based travel. Hence, instead of price cuts to attract greater quantity of tourists, increasing the value of tourism products and services will be more effective in stimulating profitability.

The outcomes of these recommendations will have spillover effects on the aggregate economy. It will eventually increase employment opportunities for many tourism destinations resulting to greater productivity levels for local economies. Its multiplier effects will manifest in better employment figures, lower poverty incidence, faster growth trajectories for the economy, and better quality of life for the citizenry.

Recommendations for future studies

As the pandemic situation continues to evolve, infections rise and fall, vaccination supply becomes steady allowing for the eventual end to the pandemic, other factors, new information, and innovative strategies emerge. Future studies can continue to augment the existing models by subjecting them to country-specific travel and tourism industry experiences. Unique geographic, demographic, social, cultural, economic, political factors, pandemic situation, among others may pose idiosyncrasies that will allow for differentiation in framework application. Likewise, frameworks also require participation and continuous validation from stakeholders from the grassroots to policymakers so that it is more attuned to the realities of the tourism industry.

This can be done through a multi-tier research design. An approach to do this is to solicit perceptions of tourism stakeholders through a descriptive methodology (e.g., focused group discussion, participatory research) followed by the conduct of key informant interviews and validation. Through this proposed methodology, results are validated, verified, and supported by those who are immersed in the frontlines of travel and tourism. Likewise, through this approach, a stakeholder-driven framework of sustainability, safety, and resilience can be developed that is anchored on the voice of those who are directly affected by the activities of travel and tourism.

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Declaration of Ownership

This report is our original work.

Disclosure statement

We declare that we have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

ORCID

John Paolo R Rivera  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-9585-4863>

Eylla Laire M Gutierrez  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-8947-4338>

Fernando Martin Y Roxas  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-5271-2857>

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