

CASE REPORT



Resident perceptions towards COVID-19 public policies for tourism reactivation: the case of Thailand

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify the key components of COVID-19 public policies for tourism reactivation in Thailand and evaluate their various influences on the local resident's satisfaction, fear of external threat and avoidance behaviour. It also investigates the moderating role of affiliation with the tourism industry. Through the lens of stimulus-organism-response (SOR) model, this study applies the structural equation modelling using consistent partial least squares. Findings reveal that the COVID-19 public policies are represented by a three-component structure: tourist, tourism company and destination. Results of this study enrich the understanding of tourism policy research, particularly from the view of policies for tourism reactivation, resulting from the COVID-19 crisis. It then presents the theoretical and practical implications from the perspective of SOR theory.

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Introduction

Since the emergence of COVID-19, the issues on how to deal with the impacts of the pandemic have received enormous attention from industry practitioners and scholars (Gudkov, 2021). Considering its easy transmission from one person to another, the COVID-19 disease has become an outbreak and quickly spread worldwide, thereby causing border closures, destination lockdowns, travel restrictions and tourists remaining at their homelands with unfavourable impacts on the tourism industry (Abadi et al., 2021; Gossling et al., 2020). Although travel limitations and suspension of international flights help prevent the transmission rate of a viral infection, these worldwide accepted measures contribute to a decline in international tourist arrivals and tourism revenues (Sanabria-Díaz et al., 2021). For example, in 2019, tourism contributed to around 18% of Thailand's GDP with more than 39 million visiting the country. However, with the travel restrictions applied, the number of international tourist arrivals to the kingdom has reduced to less than 300,000 in 2021, thus plunging the local economy into deep contraction (Bangkok Post, 2021).

As a result of COVID-19, an 'under-tourism' and even 'zero tourism' situation have occurred in several destinations, causing anxiety and discontent to people, particularly

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