

THE IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON TRAVEL BY BRAZILIAN TOURISTS: CONJUNCTURE AND PERSPECTIVES ON THE OUTBREAK AND EXPANSION OF THE PANDEMIC IN BRAZIL

OS IMPACTOS DA COVID-19 NAS VIAGENS DE TURISTAS BRASILEIROS: CONJUNTURA E PERSPECTIVAS NA ECLOSÃO E NA EXPANSÃO DA PANDEMIA NO BRASIL

LOS IMPACTOS DE COVID-19 EN LOS VIAJES DE LOS TURISTAS BRASILEÑOS: COYUNTURA Y PERSPECTIVAS EN EL BROTE Y EXPANSIÓN DE LA PANDEMIA EN BRAZIL

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ABSTRACT: In 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a state of pandemic due to COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease 2019). This study describes the characteristics of the epidemic and summarizes the forecasts of international organizations in relation to its impacts on the tourism and travel sector. This study aims to measure the impacts of the pandemic on travel and tourism from the perspective of Brazilian consumers who were either traveling, or were intending to travel at the time of the outbreak of the disease. Its specific objectives are: To identify the impacts on current or scheduled trips; to describe how Brazilian tourists evaluate public measures and policies to mitigate the impacts on tourism; and to identify the respondents' perspectives on tourism and travel in the period after the outbreak. The methodology used was exploratory research with a quantitative approach, through the application of a websurvey in April 2020. The results indicate that 69.51% of the respondents were directly impacted by the pandemic, with high levels of interference, resulting in the postponement of travel plans. The participants supported government social distancing measures, perceived impacts on tourism, and believed that it would only be safe to return to travel after six months. It is estimated that once the pandemic is over, tourism will contribute to socioeconomic recovery.

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KEYWORDS: COVID-19; Coronavirus; Tourism and pandemics; Tourism and epidemics.

RESUMO: A Organização Mundial da Saúde declarou em 2020 estado pandêmico relacionado à Covid-19 (sigla em inglês para Doença do Coronavírus 2019). O estudo descreve características da epidemia e sumariza projeções de organismos internacionais acerca de seus impactos sobre o setor de turismo e viagens. O objetivo consiste em mensurar impactos da pandemia sobre as viagens e o turismo na perspectiva dos consumidores brasileiros que estavam viajando ou pretendiam viajar à época da expansão da doença. São objetivos específicos: Identificar impactos sobre as viagens em curso ou programadas; Descrever como turistas brasileiros avaliam as medidas e as políticas públicas para mitigação dos impactos no turismo; Identificar a perspectiva dos respondentes em relação à prática do turismo e viagens no período posterior ao surto. A metodologia tem natureza de pesquisa exploratória e abordagem quantitativa, com delineamento de *websurvey* aplicado em abril/2020. Os resultados apontam que 69,51% dos respondentes foram diretamente impactados pela pandemia, com altos níveis de interferência, resultando no adiamento das viagens. Os participantes apoiam medidas de isolamento social, percebem impactos no turismo e avaliam que só será seguro voltar a viajar em período superior a seis meses. Estima-se que, com o término da pandemia, o turismo poderá contribuir com a recuperação socioeconômica.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Covid-19; Coronavírus; Turismo e pandemias; Turismo e epidemias.

RESUMEN: La Organización Mundial de la Salud (OMS) declaró en 2020 un estado pandémico relacionado con COVID-19 (acrónimo en inglés para Enfermedad del Coronavirus 2019). Este estudio describe las características de la epidemia y resume las proyecciones de las organizaciones internacionales sobre sus impactos en el sector del turismo y los viajes. El objetivo es medir los impactos de la pandemia en los viajes y el turismo, desde la perspectiva de los consumidores brasileños que viajaban, o con la intención de viajar en el momento de la propagación de la enfermedad. Los objetivos específicos son: Identificar los impactos en los viajes actuales o programados; Describir cómo los turistas brasileños evalúan las medidas y políticas públicas para mitigar los impactos en el turismo; Identificar la perspectiva de los encuestados en relación con la práctica del turismo y los viajes en el período posterior al brote. La metodología utilizada fue un enfoque de investigación exploratoria y cuantitativo, con un diseño de *websurvey* aplicado en abril/2020. Los resultados indican que el 69,51% de los encuestados se vieron directamente afectados por la pandemia, con altos niveles de interferencia, lo que dio lugar al aplazamiento de los viajes. Los participantes apoyaron las medidas de distanciamiento social y percibieron los impactos en el turismo y evaluaron que sólo será seguro volver a viajar después de más de seis meses. Se estima que con el fin de la pandemia, el turismo puede contribuir a la recuperación socioeconómica.

PALABRAS CLAVE: COVID-19; Coronavirus; Turismo y pandemias; Turismo y epidemias.

INTRODUCTION

For centuries, society has faced numerous environmental problems that have been beyond its control, including viral pandemics that have caused significant disorder in different dimensions of human life, impacting on the social, economic, and cultural spheres, among others (Saunders-Hastings & Krewski, 2016).

Nowadays, these natural disasters gradually erupt, directly affecting different spheres of activity, in different ways. Tourism, for example, is one of the most important economic and social activities in the contemporary world, as many countries use

travel and tourism as a priority tool for development (World Tourism Organization [UNWTO], 2010).

The outbreak of the disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which first emerged in the city of Wuhan in China, has spread worldwide and represents a major threat to global public health. Therefore, it is vital to discover how to prevent its spread (Ruan Wen, et al, 2020). The World Health Organization [WHO] adopted the acronym COVID-19, which is an abbreviation of “COrona Vlrus Disease (Coronavirus Disease), while the ‘19’ refers to the year 2019, when the first cases in Wuhan were publicly disclosed by the Chinese government” (Fundação Oswaldo Cruz [FIOCRUZ], 2020). On February 27, 2020, the WHO declared COVID-19 to be a public health emergency of international interest, a measure that substantially impacted on international traffic to various countries (World Health Organization [WHO], 2020a). Subsequently, on March 11, 2020, Tedros Adhanom, director-general of the WHO, declared it to be a worldwide pandemic, emphasizing that he had never witnessed an event of this magnitude due to a coronavirus (WHO, 2020c). In Brazil, restrictive measures were enacted on March 20, 2020, through Legislative Decree No. 6 (2020), placing the country in a state of public calamity.

Although the new coronavirus is (as of the time of this research) in its initial impact stage, entities such as the World Tourism Organization [WTO], World Health Organization [WHO], United Nations [UN], and the World Economic Forum have quickly prepared forecasts and studies aimed at measuring the potential economic damage to various countries, and not only those with more developed tourist industries.

This study gives a brief summary of publications by international organizations in various sectors, aimed at quantifying and recording the initial impacts of the coronavirus pandemic around the world. It is supported by academic literature on the relationship between travel and tourism and the occurrence of infectious diseases. In its empirical dimension, this work included a websurvey, which was applied in April 2020. This survey was disseminated via various social networks, in order to gather the perspectives of Brazilian tourists concerning the impacts of the spread of COVID-19 on their travel and tourism practices, contributing to scientific knowledge in the area. Viral outbreaks are cyclical environmental crises that occur from time to time, affecting the development of tourism to a greater or lesser extent, not only when the spread of the disease is in its more advanced stages, but because of the unpredictability it creates. Cases such as the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak highlight the vulnerability and volatility of the sector (Sausmarez, 2007).

For Saunders-Hastings and Krewski (2016), globalization has increased the potential harm caused by these factors that occur during a pandemic, due to the high flow of people moving around the world. Yet at the same time, it has enabled dialogue between nations, facilitating cooperation in health research and in the epidemiological surveillance response. Verdinelli (2002, p. 23) points out that “another growing concern in the area of health has been the expansion of the borders of disease vectors such as dengue and malaria”, and according to Bahl (2004), diseases of this nature can represent similar risks in the scope of tourism, as is effectively observed in the case of COVID-19.



Therefore, this phenomenon can occur again at any time, resulting in the appearance of more virulent waves of the current pandemic or new strains of influenza. Besides implementing changes in the volume of travel permitted, governments can also impose legal travel restrictions and screening requirements at entry and departure. (Eichner, et.al, 2009). The WHO recognizes that travel that significantly affects international traffic can only be justified at the beginning of an outbreak, as it can allow countries to buy time, even if only a few days, in order to quickly implement effective preparedness measures (WHO, 2020b).

Vareiro and Pinheiro (2017) consider that in general, such crises have a significant influence on travel industry. According to the authors, 57.2% of tourists change their tourism plans when faced with an economic crisis, and it is reasonable to accept that such behavior will also manifest during a public health crisis.

The academic literature reports studies on the interaction between crisis situations and the financial system, the economy, energy, environment, food, health, population and demography and water, and their interdependence. Similar studies are also found from the perspective of geopolitics. However, studies that contemplate the junction between crises and their consequences on tourism are generally scarce (Hall, 2010).

Faulkner (2001) mentions the shortage of tourism research relating to crisis or disaster phenomena, such as pandemics, whether focused on the impacts of such events on the different spheres of industry and specific organizations, or the responses of the tourism sector to these situations.

In view of the context described above, and with the aim of filling the gaps found in studies on pandemics, the overall aim of this study, which began in March 2020, is to describe the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the practice of tourism from the perspective of Brazilian tourists who were traveling or intended to travel in the period of the spread of the disease around the world.

Specifically, it seeks to (i) Identify the impacts of the pandemic on the trips underway or being planned; (ii) Describe how Brazilian tourists evaluate public measures and policies to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic in relation to tourism (or how these are characterized); and (iii) Identify the respondents' perspectives regarding the practice of tourism and travel in the period following the outbreak.

After an introductory note, this study discusses the impacts on the tourism sector, considering the tourists and the forecast consumption after the pandemic. This is followed by a presentation of the methodological strategies used, an explanation of the steps followed, and a presentation and analysis of the results. Finally, some considerations are given, assessing whether the objectives were achieved, outlining some limitations of this research and showing how these conclusions can contribute to academic research in the area.

IMPACTS ON THE TOURISM SECTOR: POST-PANDEMIC TOURISM FORECASTS

In 2019, the tourism sector was marked by uncertainties over Brexit and the bankruptcy of the Thomas Cook Group. Even before this scenario, initial data from the WTO showed growth of 4% in the first half of 2019 compared with the same period of 2018 (UNWTO, 2019), leading the WTO to forecast growth of 3% to 4% in the annual balance sheet (UNWTO, 2020b), following the 5% growth rate in the number of international tourists (United Nations [UN], 2020).

COVID-19, which was not foreseen in any of the forecasts, caused the tourism sector to change direction. The pandemic was initially projected to cost the global economy \$2 trillion (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development [UNCTAD], 2020a). Airlines are expected to announce losses of 42%, while the losses for hotel chains, restaurants and leisure facilities will be 21% (UNCTAD, 2020b), resulting in lost jobs and income of US \$3.4 trillion in 2020; and all this does not take into account future implications of the virus (International Labor Organization [ILO], 2020).

The impact of COVID-19 on global tourism has been overwhelming and immediate (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2020b). The World Economic Forum [WEF] forecasts that after the end of the pandemic period, the tourism sector will take more than 300 days to recover (WEF, 2020). This forecast is endorsed by the OECD, as tourist flows remained restricted as of June 2020 (OECD, 2020b), and may be extended for longer in some countries.

Initially, the World Travel & Tourism Council [WTTC], which represents the private travel and tourism sector, predicted that fifty million jobs in the sector would be placed at risk due to the pandemic, with job losses of 12% to 14% and economic losses of 25%, representing a global risk for the sector (WTTC, 2020; OECD, 2020b).

The OECD predictions were based on the uncertainty over the duration and magnitude of COVID-19 in the global economy. The OECD places tourism to a risk group that may see a decline of 50% to 100% of its activities, because "many countries where tourism is relatively important can be affected more severely by stoppages and limitations in travel" (OECD, 2020c, p. 3).

Besides affecting public health, Everingham and Chassagne (2020) state that the pandemic has a high impact factor on the global economy, with tourism being one of the sectors most strongly impacted (UNWTO, 2020a, OECD, 2020b). The sector already suffered at the beginning of the millennium due to the impacts of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, and it also suffered from the economic crisis of 2008 (Stankov, Filimonau & Vujičić, 2020; Brouder, 2020).

Also in this millennium, tourism has been impacted, albeit to a lesser extent, by outbreaks of other viruses, such as SARS-CoV in 2002, H1N1 in 2009, MERS-CoV in 2012, Ebola in 2014 and the Zika virus in 2015, which, according to Zenker and Kock (2020), reveals standards of comparison with the COVID-19 pandemic.



Hajibaba, Gretzel, Leisch and Dolnicar (2015) state that tourists are resistant when it comes to changing their consumption behaviors, preferring to continue traveling even in times of crisis. The crisis caused by COVID-19 is, according to Higgins-Desbiolles (2020), a new opportunity to shape desirable behaviors among tourists, since the tourism sector has long sought to instill a new consumer profile (Brouder, 2020).

Part of this change is due to the barriers imposed. Thus, mass tourism will not expand significantly. The “hope” of a new post-COVID-19 tourist unites Mostafanezhad (2020) and Everingham and Chassagne (2020), Pernecky (2020) and Crossley (2020). For Brouder et al (2020) this new tourist may express more solidarity, greater awareness of sustainability, and a greater concern for local development.

For Mostafanezhad (2020), there is an urgent need to change tourist behavior and alter the “new normal”, as this will help restructure society and the tourism sector. Stankov, et al. (2020) state that, ironically, the COVID-19 pandemic provides space and time (literally) for tourists to reflect on self-isolation about their past tourist practices and behaviors. For Everingham and Chassagne (2020), this period will lead to a rethinking of tourism, moving away from the current model of hyper-consumption.

Zenker and Kock (2020) believe that as a result of such reflections, there will be less international travel and greater flow to destinations closer to home. This will help prevent destinations from becoming overcrowded, providing an alternative to mass tourism (Camargo, 2019).

Instilling a more conscious consumer behavior would benefit the post-pandemic tourism industry (Stankov et al., 2020), which is vital for the sector's economic recovery (Everingham & Chassagne, 2020). Brouder (2020) points out that for this to occur, institutional innovations are needed in relation to the tourism offer and demand.

In light of the context described in this work, which addresses the projected scenarios outlined by different international organizations and contributions from tourism theorists and researchers, it was proposed that a websurvey be carried out, as presented below, in order to analyze the situation as experienced by Brazilian tourists, focusing on the initial period of the pandemic and its influence on the respondents' current and future travel plans.

METHODOLOGY

Due to the social distancing measures recommended by the WHO during the period of this research (March to May 2020), remote mechanisms were adopted in this study and there was no face-to-face contact between researchers, or between the researchers and research subjects. This meant only sources available online, or in the researchers' personal collections, could be used. The distancing restrictions also meant that the survey could only be applied electronically, without any face-to-face contact.

Thus, to achieve the research results, some methodological procedures were necessary based on the above-mentioned objectives. The study consists of exploratory research, with a quantitative approach and a websurvey directed at Brazilian tourists impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The research also gathered news and reports issued by official bodies, and was anchored by the technical-scientific literature on the following topics: COVID-19; Tourism and the tourist profile in the face of the pandemic; and Tourist consumer behavior. Few studies were found that correlate these themes, revealing a gap and a research opportunity in the area, with a view to providing new contributions to the interpretation and academic treatment of this research object in the field of tourism.

This study focuses on the interpretation of the results provided by the websurvey. This interpretation was carried out using exploratory-descriptive research which, according to Veal (2011, p. 29), "seeks to discover, describe or map behavior standards in areas or activities that have not been previously studied" and tools provided by Descriptive Statistics, which aim to "synthesize a series of values of the same nature, thus allowing a global vision of the variation of these values, organizes and describes the data in three ways: through in tables, graphs and descriptive measures" (Guedes, Martins, Acorsi & Janeiro, 2019, p. 01). Considering the specificities and limitations imposed by the health crisis, and the need to gather information about the recent situation (or even the momentary scenario), we opted to use Internet pages and digital platforms, as these are considered natural sources of information which, because they originate in a given economic and social context, portray and provide data about that same context (Godoy, 1995).

For the calculation of sample size for this study, a population of 104.4 million tourists was adopted, which is the total number of paying passengers transported by Brazilian airlines on domestic or international flights in 2019 (National Civil Aviation Agency [ANAC], 2020). Although it is presumed that this figure will include multiple trips by the same passenger, there is no way of specifying the actual number of individuals who travelled, hence it was decided to use the total number of trips. This procedure helps establish the degree of reliability and guarantee the permitted margin of error. Veal (2011) confirms that the concept of reliability is related to how the results of this study would be repeated if an identical study were applied, with another sample and at another time. According to the calculations of the specialized research company Solvis (2020), the number of responses that would be needed for the research to obtain 95% reliability and a margin of error of 3% was 1070. However, the websurvey exceeded this number, as 1125 valid responses were obtained from Brazilian tourists.

Given that the diverse impacts of COVID-19 on Brazilian tourist travel, a websurvey was adopted for this study, which according to Medaglia and Silveira (2010, p. 128) consists of a "survey made available via the Internet that allows that respondents fill in the data by directly accessing the form and sending it to the researcher, so that it can be easily tabulated". According to Joncew, Cendon and Ameno (2014, p. 194) in websurveys, "the interviewees respond to the investigation in different ways, places, and times, using different software and hardware that can significantly alter the original layout of the questionnaire". The research conducted for this study was aimed at tourists traveling during the period of the pandemic, or who had planned some tourist activity for 2020. The central focus of the study was tourists whose plans had been changed or canceled due to the corona virus pandemic.



The data collection instrument contained 26 questions, distributed in six sections (see Table 1), in order to better organize the collected data. The survey was created using the Google Forms platform, and went live from April 1 to 14, 2020.

Table 1: Division of the data collection instrument by sections and objectives

Section	Title	Objective
1	Presentation and consent	To describe the research and provide the consent form
2	Respondents' profile	To collect tourist information in order to establish a demographic profile
3	Respondents not impacted: reasons and circumstances	To identify the impacts of the pandemic on trips that were being made or scheduled
4	Impacts of COVID-19 on travel	
5	Impacts of COVID-19 on tourism	To describe how Brazilian tourists evaluate public measures and policies to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic in relation to tourism (or how these measures are characterized)
6	The future of post-pandemic tourism	To identify the respondents' perspective regarding the practice of tourism and travel in the period after the outbreak

Source: The authors (2020).

Sections 3 and 4 directly addressed issues related to the first objective of the research. Section 5 gathered data related to the second objective of the study, while the sixth section considered the respondents' perspectives in terms of the future of travel and tourism after the pandemic, providing data that meets third and final objective.

Considering the research dissemination strategies, it is emphasized that this choice carries the possibility of bias, since younger people are more likely to participate in virtual environments than older people (Faleiros, K  ppler, Pontes, Silva, Goes & Cucick, 2010). Also, it means that the respondents may have some behavioral alignment associated with certain groups of social network users. For Kozinets (2014), all the respondents form a solid network capable of providing data for this research, as they are connected to everything in common, in this case, travel and tourism.

RESULTS

The first section describes the study objectives and the participants, and the obtaining of their consent for the use of the data provided solely for academic purposes. The data collection took place after obtaining the formal consent of the respondents (through opt-in). They were then directed to the second section, which gathered information on the respondent's profile.

Initially, the respondent's age group was determined. It was identified that the majority of the respondents were aged under forty (69.78%, n=785), which may be related

to the data collection strategy; 26.93% (n=303) were aged between 40 and 59 years old; and 3.29% (n=37) were over 60 years old, i.e., in the higher risk group for COVID-19, as established by the WHO.

The percentage of women who participated in the research was 69.51% (n=782); while men represented 30.22% (n=340) of the respondents; also in relation to sex, 0.18% (n=2) of the participants indicated the option “other” and 0.09% (n=1) preferred not to answer. The higher participation of women in this study is notable, although the percentage of females in the national population is slightly higher than the percentage of men, 51.1% vs. 48.9% (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics [IBGE], 2020); on the other hand, this statistic may reflect the fact, as recorded by Social Research Institute Ipsos, that women are the main decision-makers (83%) when it comes to travel (Accor, 2018).

In relation to the respondents' level of education, it was found (See Table 1) that: 5.16% (n=58) had not entered higher education; 52.00% (n=585) were taking, or had obtained a degree; and a significant portion of the participants, 42.84% (n=482), claimed to have some relationship with the *stricto sensu* graduate program.

Table 1: Level of Education of the websurvey respondents

Education	(n)	(%)	Education	(n)	(%)
Incomplete Elementary Education /Student	02	0.18%	Graduate	376	33.42%
Complete Elementary Education	1	0.09%	Incomplete Postgraduate / Student	09	9.69%
Incomplete High School/Student	9	0.80%	Completed Postgraduate	137	12.18%
High School Education	66	4.09%	Incomplete Doctorate/ Student	90	8.00%
Incomplete Higher Education/ Student	29	18.58%	Full Doctorate	146	12.98%

Source: The authors (2020).

The high educational level of the respondents observed may be related to the fact that the dissemination of the data collection instrument was disseminated among social network groups consisting of undergraduate and graduate students and researchers.

The websurvey asked the respondents about their occupations. As shown in Table 2, only 0.80% (n=9) of the respondents did not specify any occupation, so the low selection of the option “other” is residual, showing wide-ranging responses in this category, despite the fact that several activities are covered by the categories “private company employee” and “liberal professional”, which can include a wide range of non-specific occupations.

**Table 2** Occupation of websurvey respondents

Occupation	(n)	(%)	Occupation	(n)	(%)
Civil servant	35	27.11%	Unemployed	79	7.02%
Private company employee	249	22.13%	Business person	61	5.42%
Student	244	21.69%	Liberal Professional	58	5.16%
Self-employed	94	8.36%	Retired	26	2.31%

Source: The authors (2020).

A recent research organized by Soares, Gabriel and Romo (2020a), called "*Impacto del Covid-19 en el Comportamiento del Turista Español*" showed results similar to those described here, in terms of the respondents' profile.

Regarding the respondents' place of residence, questionnaires were returned from twenty-five of the twenty-seven Brazilian states, demonstrating wide dissemination of the data collection. However, it is observed that the number of responses was not proportional to the total resident population in each state. Residents in the northern region accounted for 3.64% (n=41); residents of the central-west region accounted for 6.22% (n=70); those living in the northeast region represented 13.96% (n=157); and the highest percentages were those living in the south and southeast regions, with 37.60% (n=423) and 38.58% (n=434), respectively.

According to the WHO, the elderly and those with pre-existing disease are among the most vulnerable and susceptible groups (WHO, 2020a). The research participants were asked if they had been diagnosed with any chronic illness, such as AIDS, cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular or respiratory disease, hypertension, among others. 17.60% (n=198) responded in the affirmative; 79.47% (n=894) in the negative, and 2.93% (n=33) said they did not know.

We also sought to identify whether the respondents lived with other people over the age of 60 years, where applicable. 37.33% (n=420) indicated living or cohabiting with a person in this age category, while the remaining 62.67% (n=705) did not respond in the affirmative. The respondents who confirmed a diagnosis of chronic disease and/or cohabiting with a person aged over 60 totaled 7.82% (n=88), i.e., those with a higher risk for COVID-19, according to the WHO. The low percentage of respondents with some risk factor meant that it was not possible to accurately measure whether this aspect had any impact on the intention to travel.

To complete the questions in this section, the respondents were asked whether they had suffered impacts from COVID-19 during their travels. It was noted that 14.67% (n=165) said there had been no impacts, 15.82% (n=178) said they had not changed their travel plans as at the time of the research, but that they might have to in the near future; this was noted as "not yet" in the websurvey; a significant majority, 69.51% (n=782), said they had suffered some travel restriction due to COVID-19.

Depending on the response given to the above question, the respondents were then referred to different sections of the websurvey. Those who indicated that they had not yet, or definitely not had their travel plans changed were referred to a third section, while those who had been affected by the pandemic were referred to a fourth section.

The third section comprised 30.49% (n=343) of the participants, a layer composed of respondents whose travel had not been impacted, as shown in Table 3. Of this group, 68.51% (n=235), stated that they did not have any trip scheduled; another 29.45% (n=101) wanted to wait for new information to see whether their travel plans would change, perhaps because the expected date of travel was still far of, but with the possibility of being impacted; and 2.04% (n=7) said they had traveled despite the pandemic.

Table 3: Reason for non-impact of COVID-19 on travel

In relation to the trip (s), you:	(n)	(%)
No trip planned	235	68.51%
Traveled despite the pandemic	7	2.04%
Not yet impacted	101	29.45%

Source: The authors (2020).

The fourth section presents the responses of 69.51% (n=782) of the participants who claimed to have suffered some impact on their travel due to COVID-19. This section contained ten questions focusing exclusively on factors related to travel and tourism. As in the previous section, the percentage considered complete (100%) was obtained through the number of respondents in each section.

The participants were asked to rate the level of impact of the coronavirus on their travel. 0.26% (n=2) of respondents said there had been no impact; 3.45% (n=27) defined it as low; 10.61% (n=83) defined the impact as intermediate; 23.15% (n=181) indicated that it was high and 62.53% (n=489) rated it as very high. It is seen that the sum of the categories "high" and "very high" was over 85%.

In order to identify the nature of the interference, the respondents were asked whether a trip had been canceled; 33.50% (n=262) of the respondents said no, 39.90% (n=312) said they had anticipated the impacts of the pandemic and requested a cancellation, and the remaining 26.60% (n=208) said had been told by their tour operator or holiday company that their trip had been cancelled. The sum total of cancellations was 66.50% (n=520).

As shown the websurvey, two thirds of the trips were canceled. The majority were canceled at the tourists' own initiative, suggesting that the tour operators only began to adopt active practices after the pandemic situation had become consolidated.

In a similar movement, as a strategy to minimize the impacts of this unprecedented period, the Ministry of Tourism launched the campaign "Don't cancel, reschedule" (*Não cancele, remarque!*) (Brazil, 2020), and sector organizations, the Brazilian Association of Travel Agents [ABAV] and the Brazilian Tour Operators [BRAZTOA] endorsed the campaign under the motto "Don't cancel, postpone" (*Não cancele, adie*) (Nedelciu, 2020).



In response to the question: "Because of the pandemic, did you postpone your trip?": 45.40% (n=355) of the participants said yes, they had done so at their own initiative; 22.51% (n=176) had done so at the holiday company's request; and 33.50% (n=262) had not postponed their trip.

The responses to this question suggest that the campaign to encourage people to postpone, rather than cancel trips, was effective as a strategy to mitigate the huge losses suffered by the sector, and to help tourism recover in the medium or long term, as people start traveling again.

The respondents who said they had suffered the impacts caused by the pandemic, but who had not purchased a holiday or signed a travel contract, and whose travel was canceled, totaled 36.06% (n=282), which meant they had not suffered any financial losses. This group includes those who had planned car trips, to stay at second homes or visit friends and family, and those who had not yet signed travel contracts or purchased holidays.

There are clauses in the Consumer Protection Code, Law n. 8.078 (1990) regarding Contractual Protection, including monetary refunds. Table 4 shows the participant's responses when questioned about the alternatives adopted by airlines, hotel chains, service providers, event organizers and other sectors. 38.62% (n=302) of the impacted respondents said they had received a voucher that could be used within a stipulated period; for 17.01% (n=133), a partial or full refund was the best alternative; the category "other" totaled 8.31% (n=65).

Table 4: Compensatory measures adopted by companies to compensate tourists for losses

Measure adopted by companies	(n)	(%)	Measure adopted by companies	(n)	(%)
Planning a trip but had not completed a purchase	282	36.06%	Voucher for the same value or higher, valid for more than 6 months	216	27.62%
Full refund of the amount paid, or more	88	11.25%	Voucher for same value, valid for up to 6 months	86	11.00%
Partial refund of the amount paid	45	5.75%	No agreement reached between the parties	13	1.66%
Customer canceled the trip	12	1.53%	Various refunds or rebooking options offered	8	1.02%
Travel plans not yet changed	6	0.77%	Other	26	3.32%

Source: The authors (2020).

Table 4 shows the market's concern to promote the recovery of the sector, through the campaign mentioned above. The publication of Provisional Measure no. 925 (2020), which "provides for emergency measures for Brazilian civil aviation due to the COVID-19 pandemic", reads: "Art. 3. The deadline for refund of the value related to the purchase of airline tickets will be twelve months, observing the rules of the contracted service". The document, with legal force, seeks to avoid a financial collapse on the part of the airlines, which, *a posteriori*, could potentially cause further harm for the consumer.

Having a travel insurance policy can safeguard tourists against unforeseen events. Given the uncertainties in this period, an insurance policy can mitigate losses and inconvenience. The respondents were asked if they had taken out insurance, and whether they had filed claims for compensation based on those policies. Initially, it was found that 62.79% (n=491) had not taken out travel insurance; 33.12% (n=259) stated that they had made claims on their policy – possibly due to the information given above, on refunding or rescheduling was offered; and 4.09% (n=32) said they had made claims under their policy. From this information, it can be inferred that taking out travel insurance is not common practice among Brazilian tourists, but this may change as a result of the pandemic. Another aspect highlighted is the low level of claims, even among those who took out insurance. This trend is corroborated Soares,

Gabriel and Romo (2020b) in a post-pandemic future, reporting that 77% of participants in a survey, which also included Brazilian tourists, said they intended to take out travel insurance, although this did not necessarily mean that they would file claims should the need arise. When asked about possible financial losses, 30.95% (n=242) of the respondents said they had suffered financial losses, while 41.43% (n=324) had not, and 27.62% (n=216) did not know exactly, or would only know in the future.

Next, the participants were asked which activities or sectors they thought would be impacted by the postponement or cancellation of the trip. To this question, more than one response was permitted. 30.56% (n=239) of the respondents indicated that business travel would be affected; 38.62% (n=302) highlighted the entertainment sector; 40.92% (n=320) pointed out impacts on the events sector; 64.45% (n=504) highlighted hospitality; and 62.79% (n=512) of the respondents indicated impacts on transport. Although postponements or cancellations would, according to the respondents, cause greater impacts on transport and hotels, the percentages of such actions are very significant for all the sectors and activities listed.

Concerning the intended travel destination, 62.53% (n=489) of the respondents were traveling to a destination within Brazil and 29.67% (n=232) were traveling abroad; 7.80% (n=61) of the respondents said they had plans to travel to both national and international destinations. In addition, 81.20% (n=635) reported confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the potential destinations, 5.75% (n=45) reported no cases, while 13.04% (n=102) said they did not know. It is important to note that despite the fact that the WHO has already declared a pandemic at the time of the survey, many tourist cities have not yet recorded any cases. Therefore, in terms of national tourism at least, the percentage of tourists who traveled to places where there had been recorded cases of the disease could be considered high.

Another relevant fact is that around 13% of the respondents said they did not know whether there had been any cases of the disease at their planned destinations, which suggests that the dissemination would be rapid, as it was found that just a few days afterwards, it is unlikely that anyone would not receive this type of information when arriving



at any airport, train station, bus station, or even when traveling on highways. Soares et al., (2020b) addressed the increase of certain concerns among Brazilian tourists regarding the chosen destination. Such concerns include the security policies adopted, measures related to disease control and obviously, increased interest in gaining information about the health system of the destination.

The fifth section of the websurvey focused on the impacts of the disease on tourism. To the question "Did the pandemic caused by the new coronavirus change your future travel plans?", 14.84% (n=167) of the participants responded negatively; and 85.16% (n=820) answered yes, for a period of 6 months to a year, which suggests that the impacts have yet to be felt over a significant time period.

To estimate how long it will be before tourists' regain confidence in returning to travel, the participants were asked about two separate time scenarios – April to August 2020, and September to December 2020, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Travel intention for the year 2020

	April to August 2020	September to December 2020
Would not travel anywhere	81.42%	38.22%
Would travel to a destination with few confirmed cases of COVID-19	12.44%	43.56%
Would travel to any destination, with or without COVID-19 deaths	6.13%	18.22%
Total	100%	100%

Source: The authors (2020).

Given the recommendations for social isolation and the uncertainty over how long the pandemic will last, 81.42% (n=916) of the respondents stated that they would not travel anywhere until August 2020, with the percentage dropping considerably after this period. The period with the highest indicated intention to travel was the second one - September to December 2020. It can be said that the impact of the pandemic on intention to travel in the short term has been overwhelming, and even in the medium term it is quite significant.

The WHO, the media, medical specialists and other authorities vehemently requested that the population adhere to the social isolation guidelines, in order to prevent the circulation of the virus. 12.62% (n=142) of the websurvey participants reported having traveled to self-isolate in a place other than their usual place of residence; 83.38% (n=938) said they had stuck to the social isolation guidelines by staying at home, and 4.00% (n=45) said they had not self-isolated.

Despite the apparently low percentage of people who isolated somewhere other than their own homes, this percentage was higher in tourist regions where there are a lot of second homes. This explains the assertive actions taken by coastal municipalities, especially in the states of São Paulo and Paraná, to reduce the entry of non-residents during the pandemic.

For example, Decree 64,881 (2020) was issued by the Government of the State of São Paulo to support strategic blockages at the access routes to the coastal region; Decree 4,310 (2020), issued by the Government of the State of Paraná, was very emphatic in suspending visits, departures and arrivals in Ilha do Mel, one of the most visited destinations in the state, even decreeing the “return of tourists and others visitors from Ilha do Mel to their respective places of origin”.

Following the economic forecasts, in which a recession is a foregone conclusion, 29.96% (n=337) of the participants confirmed that they would reduce or cancel their travel; 44.53% (n=501) said they would only travel where extremely necessary; 19.38% (n=218) said their travel practices would remain unchanged; and 6.13% (n=69) reported that they had not planned to travel during the post-pandemic period, even before this timeframe.

This result reveals these people are not afraid of contracting the virus, which affects their decision to travel, but also the fact that the respondents will probably have a reduced income, and therefore, a lack of available finances for tourism, which could be seen as an unnecessary luxury in the current global scenario.

To identify how Brazilian tourists evaluate the public policies and public measures adopted by different governments to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic in relation to tourism (or how these measures are characterized), and to analyze the tourists' perceptions of its impacts on this sector, We elaborated Tables 6 and 7, which attribute an average score for each of the categorical statements proposed in the websurvey.

This strategy, which is based on the theory of Norman (2010), aimed to provide a summary evaluation of the participants' perceptions, and give a clear snapshot of their behavior in relation to each of the survey questions.

The following procedure was adopted: the responses were scored on a scale of 1 to 5 points, with 1 = totally disagree/none; 2 = strongly disagree/low; 3 = indifferent/intermediate; 4 = strongly agree/high and 5 = totally agree/very high. This procedure has the effect of condensing a large volume of information, and synthesizing it to make the results clearer.

The scores were obtained by multiplying the absolute value assigned to each point on the scale by the number of respondents in the question item. The values of each point on the scale were then added, divided by the total number of participants, resulting in the final score. The options with higher scores denoted greater significance in the aspect to which they referred.

Tables 6 and 7 show the percentage of respondents for each point on the scale, and the respective final scores. For example, in Table 6, 84.9% (n=955) of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement “Events where there are crowds should be canceled”. Thus, the average score for that question is 4.72, which lies between Agree (score 4) and Strongly agree (score 5).

**Table 6:** Perception of government measures related to COVID-19 and tourism

	Strongly disagree (x1)	Mostly disagree (x2)	Indifferent (x3)	Agree (x4)	Strongly agree (x5)	Score
Events where there are crowds should be canceled.	1.9%	2.5%	2.3%	8.4%	84.9%	4.72
In the case of this pandemic, it is recommended to avoid visiting countries with a high number of cases	3.6%	2.4%	2.0%	8.8%	83.2%	4.66
People who have visited places where there are cases of COVID-19 should be required to self-isolate.	1.9%	2.3%	2.8%	16.8%	76.3%	4.63
The government should close the borders to prevent tourists from entering the country.	4.9%	7.9%	6.8%	24.3%	56.2%	4.19
The government should restrict people's travel (the right to come and go)	4.9%	10.3%	7.5%	27.4%	50.0%	4.10
Bars, cafés and restaurants should not be allowed to open during the pandemic.	5.9%	6.8%	5.4%	35.0%	46.8%	4.07
Airlines should suspend flights to some destinations.	6.1%	9.8%	9.8%	28.9%	45.4%	3.98
Bus companies should reduce the number of buses.	7.8%	8.9%	9.9%	32.4%	41.0%	3.90
Hotels and guesthouses should not be allowed to open.	6.6%	11.9%	13.9%	33.0%	34.7%	3.77

Source: The authors (2020).

It can be seen in Table 6, through the scores assigned, that the respondents tended to Agree or Strongly agree with the measures adopted by some governments and presented in the websurvey; two thirds of the government measures scored over 4.00, indicating high agreement. Table 8 presents, from the highest score down, the tourism sectors that would be most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, in the respondents' perceptions. The option to add the item "others" at the end of the table, which scored 4.05, was based on the broad generalization of what this category represents.

Table 7: Perception of impacts of COVID-19 on tourist sectors and activities

	None (x1)		Low (x2)	Medium (x3)	High (x4)	Very H High (x5)	Score
Tour guides	0.4%	0.9%	3.0%	23.5%	72.2%	4.66	
Cruises	0.4%	1.2%	6.8%	21.5%	70.1%	4.60	
Hospitality (inns, hostels, resorts)	0.4%	0.9%	4.5%	30.1%	64.1%	4.57	
Events (sporting, cultural, business, etc.)	0.4%	1.6%	8.0%	28.4%	61.6%	4.49	
Trade fairs and markets of tourist interest	0.4%	1.2%	9.2%	30.1%	59.1%	4.46	
Air Transport	0.6%	1.6%	9.4%	32.7%	55.6%	4.41	
Museums and houses of culture	0.5%	2.6%	9.3%	31.0%	56.5%	4.40	
Bars and restaurants	0.3%	1.2%	10.4%	34.4%	53.8%	4.40	
Other tourist attractions	0.6%	1.9%	9.3%	33.1%	55.1%	4.40	
Rental of real estate in tourist areas	0.4%	1.4%	9.4%	35.5%	53.2%	4.40	
Market of typical or regional products	0.4%	1.4%	9.6%	36.2%	52.4%	4.39	
Handicraft producers	0.8%	3.9%	13.2%	31.2%	50.9%	4.28	
Road transport	0.7%	2.0%	14.4%	37.1%	45.9%	4.25	
Natural Parks	2.5%	4.8%	19.6%	35.1%	38.0%	4.01	
Maintenance services in second homes	2.0%	9.4%	30.2%	33.4%	24.9%	3.70	
Others	3.6%	3.8%	19.1%	31.3%	42.2%	4.05	

Source: The authors (2020).

Table 7 shows that from the respondents' perspective, tour guides are the professionals who will suffer most from the pandemic, due to the lack of tourists at the attractions; next in line were cruise companies, which it was believed will absorb greater negative impacts than hotel chains – no doubt due to the widespread media reports of COVID-19 outbreaks on cruise liners, which were then refused entry to ports. The respondents perceive that maintenance services in second homes will be comparatively less affected than the other sectors, since these properties also require attention during a non-pandemic period, with only their use or rental to third parties being affected.

It is important to note that all the sectors listed obtained significantly high scores, showing that predicted impact of the pandemic is high and will affect various different areas of activity. By listing the sectors in descending order by score, we were able to capture the nuances of intensity of impacts, in the respondents' perceptions.

The final section of the data collection instrument was intended to identify the respondents' perceptions of a post-pandemic future, and their perspectives on travel. Considering the synthetic nature of this text, we chose to cover these aspects in future



new communications to the scientific community, which will enable us to determine whether the impacts predicted in this survey actually occur in practice, given that the tourism industry has good capacity to adapt to social trends and economic influences, hence the need for "constant transformations and readaptations of business models and organizational management events" (Vareiro & Pinheiro, 2017, p. 237).

CONSIDERATIONS

Studies on to the social, economic and public health impacts of pandemics are relatively abundant. But when it comes to tourism, such studies are either still in progress, or were conducted immediately after a pandemic. Although viral outbreaks are seasonal and almost always come without prior notice as to dimension, on a local or global scale, public and private agents in the sector should have contingency plans to mitigate the damages caused by such events.

There is a high degree of uncertainty among the scientific community as to when or where a new viral strain will appear, how it will spread, and how it will impact on different sectors and dimensions of human life. Tourism is one of these sectors. As stated by Bahl (2004, p. 19-20) "tourism can act as a disseminating agent of diseases and illnesses, through travel and national and international flows".

However, the pandemics of the past, and now this new one, can provide resources for structuring impact mitigation measures, with a view to guiding public or private policies and initiatives to support affected communities, companies and individuals in the tourism sector, as the consequences can be catastrophic and decisive for a service or even an entire destination.

In a preliminary examination of the situation, it is noticed that each tourist service reacts differently when faced with the crisis. This is partly due to a lack of contingency plans for such situations, but also to the unique nature of these services. Tourism has always been a great vector for the spread of a virus, which is why it is imperative not only to think about what can happen and what palliative actions to take, but also, and especially, to establish actions to prevent this from occurring.

The proposal to identify the impacts of the pandemic on the trips that were in the planning stage, the first objective of this study, was achieved, demonstrating significant changes in the development, schedule or planning of the respondents' travel and tourism activities, through alternatives such as returning home early, seeking a refund, or postponing the trip.

In the second objective, to identify how Brazilian tourists evaluate public measures and policies to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic in relation to tourism (or how these measures are characterized), we listed the mitigation measures adopted by different governmental and supra-governmental bodies, and measured the interviewees' perspectives on the scope and effectiveness of these actions.

In the third objective, to identify the respondents' perspectives on the practice of tourism and travel in the period after the outbreak, the results were limited to a reflection on the valuation of the plans and expectations of the research subjects, which revealed that although the immediate impact on the plans is overwhelming, there is also a trend (perhaps still within the scope of subjective idealization) to return to previous practices in the long turn - which can mean approximately one year - when the respondents considered it would be safe to travel again, although at the time of this study, there has been no news of a vaccine or effective treatment for the new Coronavirus disease.

This unusual conditions in which this work was carried out brought additional challenges to the research routines and, consequently, some limitations on the results. For example, the researchers only had access to literature in their own collections, or works that could be accessed through electronic means, such as remote digital services.

It is noted that our intention was not to exercise futurology, but rather, to investigate the respondents' perspectives as a way of crystallizing the immediate impacts on their relationship with travel and tourism. We affirm, however, that this relationship is naturally dynamic, and the assessment can be compromised by the emotional burden and by information overload, although the pandemic has dominated the media and social networks at the time the survey was conducted.

In short, it is understood that the proposed objectives were achieved, and that gaining an insight into the situation at its peak provides important insights for the scientific community. It also demonstrates the need for new studies, to evaluate whether the forecast future impacts have come to bear, and to establish possible comparisons between what is affirmed during the course of experience, and what actually occurred *a posteriori*.

Although the records are sometimes cloudy in the periods following major epidemics, the experience of facing a global event of this nature, paradoxically though it may seem, appears to instill in people the prospect of a more harmonious future, with solidarity among people. Thus, it is hoped that History will not repeat itself, as a self-fulfilling prophecy, and that tourism will soon go back to becoming a vector for development and for building relationships between people and cultures.



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