

## Advancing Tourism and Hospitality Research Following the COVID-19 Pandemic: Appropriateness of Theories of Practice for Tourism Research

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The COVID-19 outbreak was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on March 12, 2020 (Kele, Chan, Lily, & Idris, 2020). The pandemic has significantly impacted global economic, political and socio-cultural systems (Chan and King, 2020, Idris, Lily, Kele & Chan, 2020, Kele, Chan, Lily, & Idris, 2020) and placed them in a state of emergency, resulting in new phenomena. The health and safety measures such as social distancing, travel and mobility bans, community lockdowns, mandatory or self-quarantine have halted global travel, tourism, and leisure (Zenker & Kock, 2020, Loo and Woon, 2021). The pandemic has caused profound and long-term structural and transformational changes to tourism as socio-economic activity and industry.

Hence, in this editorial note, I would like to share some thoughts and relevant insights on the way forward in advancing tourism and hospitality research post-pandemic. This is relevant to JSSH and may serve as the new direction of JSSH.

### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this note is to explore ways to move forward with tourism and hospitality research after COVID-19. It emphasizes in particular the necessary changes, the importance of the multidisciplinary and trans-disciplinary approach and the relevance of theories of practice in new phenomena.

Tourism stakeholders' behavioral changes and experiences in demand, supply, destination management, and future travel represent significant research areas to rebuild and reset the tourism industry. It is essential to draw from different perspectives to this new phenomenon. Conceptually, tourism is considered a process, activities and outcomes that can fall within the framework of social practices (Shove and Pantzar, 2005). A literature review shows that extensive research work narrowly focuses on the assessment and impacts of COVID-19 (Shah, Safri, Thevadas, Noordin, Rahman, Sekwai, Ideris and sultan, 2020, Gössling, Scott & Hall, 2021) and types of impacts (Yeh, 2020). Researchers' approach to tourism studies is generally based on the specific limitations of the main discipline in which they were trained. Tourism is a complex phenomenon that crosses many disciplines. Accordingly, interdisciplinary research is more relevant to gain meaningful understanding of the impact of pandemic (Wen, Wang, Kozak, Liu and Hou, 2020).

Post-pandemic, the research scope should be broadened beyond the assessment and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Potential research areas include examining driving forces that set the tourism industry back, bringing and retaining customers to the tourism destination, adopting different theoretical lenses for advancing and resetting industry practices and research, and providing practical and theoretical implications on how to better seek, understand, manage and leverage the tourism impacts of COVID-19.

Tourism products are typically made up of extensive bundles of various social practices. As Lamers, Vab der Dium and Spaargaren, (2017, p.1) pointed out that "Practice theories offer a new perspective on tourism, by not focussing on individual agents or social structures, but on social practices as the starting point for theorising and conducting Research." This implies that the understanding of tourism behaviors in the new era can be deepened by studying them in terms of social practices. Applications of practice theories in tourism studies are relatively rare and recent. They are particularly relevant when understanding tourism practices that represent societal innovations (i.e., 'best-practices'). Practice theories can be deployed to analyze change and innovation in tourism and identify ways in which more sustainable tourism practices can be realized. In this context, practice-based tourism research in the new landscape is recommended. Thus, JSSH could have strong publications for theorizing and conducting empirical research using practice theories.

Looking ahead, tourism and hospitality research may cover reviewing the current context, issues, challenges, and changes faced by tourism sectors and stakeholders directly and indirectly. A multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary approach that broadens the research scope is essential. New research requires different theoretical perspectives for advancement to revitalize the tourism industry and enterprises. Researchers should aim to provide practical and academic implications on how to better research, understand, manage and value the impacts of tourism post-COVID-19. Journal review committees must review their standards and parameters to motivate and assess tourism research and publication's purpose, role, and impact.

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