



The Importance of Risk and Crisis Management in International Tourism Destinations

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Abstract

Risk and crisis management has a significant role to play in international tourism with the aim of providing safety for tourists and the sustainability of the tourism system. There are many areas in which tourism risks are addressed, including crime, terrorism, natural hazards, pandemics, political and economic instability, and food and infrastructure security. If not properly managed, a crisis may arise, which will affect tourism, economic revenues, and the image of a particular country. Crisis management is carried out at macro, meso and micro levels: at the macro level, national and regional policies and strategies are formulated, at the meso level, specific tourism zones and sectors are adapted, and at the micro level, local businesses and workers are supported with recovery measures. Modern approaches combine proactive and reactive strategies, location-based management, and systematic risk analysis. Digital technologies, GIS-based models, big data analytics, and the concept of smart spaces increase the agility of the tourism sector. Post-crisis recovery strategies include digital adaptation, green policies, brand rebranding and community-based models. Place-based, systemic and innovative approaches ensure the transition of tourism to a sustainable management model, ensuring the sector is flexible and resilient to future crises. These approaches strengthen economic, social and environmental sustainability and ensure the long-term development of tourism.

Keywords: Tourism risks, Crisis management, Security, Place-based management, Sustainable tourism

1. Introduction

Today, “safety” is perhaps the most sought-after factor in the tourism sector, right after price and quality. In other words, “safety is a prerequisite for tourists’ peaceful recreation” (George, 2003, p. 576). Safety has always been a priority for travel and tourism (Kovari & Zimanyi, 2011). Therefore, “tourism security has become an increasingly important area for gaining competitive advantage in tourism. In fact, security is one of the most critical factors determining a country's competitiveness in the travel and tourism industry.” (Payam & Selçuk, 2017, p. 886). In this context, the success or failure of any destination depends on providing a safe environment for tourists. However, tourism is a sector that is very sensitive to security and risk perception. Lack of confidence in tourism threatens the tourism sector. It is also a fact that safety, safety management and safety perceptions deeply affect destinations. (Aksu, 2013). Therefore, tourists have recently paid more attention to travel safety and tourism risks. Since risk and tourism are inherently related, more and more studies have focused on travel risks (Yang et al., 2016). Especially after the September 11 attacks, research on risk in tourism has become increasingly relevant.

2. Main Part

To prevent potential security risks in tourism from turning into crises and to effectively manage risk and security in tourism, every stakeholder in the tourism sector must consider security risks and security management. In other words, since “tourists’ perceptions of insecurity and high risk are directly related to their level of anxiety about the destination” (Reisinger & Mavondo, 2005), potential tourist risks surrounding tourism areas should be identified. Yang (2004) states that unexpected crises in the tourism

sector highlight the need to reconsider existing risk assessments in the tourism literature. “Risk perception is a powerful factor in tourist decisions and potentially distorts routine decision-making.” (Sönmez & Graefe, 1998b, p. 120). It is therefore necessary to identify the potential security risks that the tourism sector and tourists may face. This is because “both tourists and tourism destinations are deeply affected by negative security perceptions and failures in risk management.” (Hall et al., 2003, p. 2).

Risk and tourism are interrelated because the decision to travel involves risk and uncertainty as it involves traveling to unfamiliar places (Chang, 2009). Furthermore, risks for tourists are considered an integral part of tourism (Kekovic & Markovic, 2009; Kovari & Zimanyi, 2011). Tourism risk refers to the potential negative consequences that tourists are likely to experience from their travel experiences. In the context of tourism security, hazards are potential threats in the environments in which tourism activities are carried out. Risk can be defined as the probability that a tourist will suffer harm as a result of these threats (Kekovic & Markovic, 2009). In the tourism sector, uncertainties or threats constitute hazards, hazards constitute risks, and risks constitute crises. In short, risks, when poorly managed, can turn into tourism crises. Following these explanations, risk in the context of tourism can be defined as any event or situation that may prevent the tourism sector from achieving its strategic objectives, providing safe tourism services to tourists, or causing unexpected harm.

Crime, terrorism, food safety, health problems and natural disasters are seen as major areas of concern as major risk factors in tourism (Breda & Costa, 2006). In summary, Yang et al. (2016) grouped research on different types of risks in the tourism literature as follows:

Health risks (safe sex, excessive alcohol consumption, substance use, HIV risk, food risk, disease, sun exposure, injury, suicide), physical risks (personal safety, violence, sexual harassment and assault), financial risks (purchase risk, theft risk), functional/equipment, satisfaction, transportation, weather), social risks, psychological risks, political/terror risks, cultural risks, natural disaster risks (avalanches, volcanic eruptions, floods, hurricanes), adventure risk taking, temporal risks, privacy and data security risks, and legal risks (Yang et al, 2016, p. 291).

In recent years, people have paid more and more attention to travel safety and travel risks. Tourism risk perception is a quantitative assessment of tourism safety. Tourists' perception of destination risks directly affects their purchase intention. The asymmetry between the availability of objective information on tourist safety and tourists' subjective perceptions makes tourists extremely sensitive to travel risks. The inevitability of tourism risks requires tourists to have a certain level of knowledge about the destination environment.

3.Crisis and security management in tourism

A crisis is an unexpected situation that negatively affects tourism activity, causing the suspension or sharp reduction of planned activities. Tourism crises are classified according to internal and external factors. The internal crises include management problems, service quality decline, and financial problems. The external crises include natural disasters, political problems, epidemics/pandemics, terrorism, economic sanctions, etc. These crises can cause significant disruption in tourism flows, tour operations, and the sustainability of the hospitality industry.

Security management in tourism is a set of systematic activities aimed at ensuring the physical and information security of tourists, workers and tourism infrastructure (Paraskevas & Arendell, 2007). The main goals are to reduce risks, respond quickly in crisis situations, establish reliable communication channels and maintain tourist trust. For tourism organizations, security means not only physical protection, but also psychological safety (tourists' sense of comfort) and social security, an environment of public trust.

Modern tourism management systems employ proactive (preventive) and reactive (responsive) strategies for crisis management (Ritchie, 2004). Proactive management involves the prior analysis of potential risks, the establishment of insurance systems, the preparation of personnel for emergencies, and the development of communication plans. A reactive strategy focuses on damage reduction and post-crisis



recovery plans after a crisis occurs. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, many countries adapted the tourism sector by implementing health protocols, remote service forms, and digital management systems. (UNWTO, 2021).

Risk management is one of the main stages of crisis management. During the analysis of risks, the sources of danger, the level of damage and the degree of probability are determined (Glaesser, 2006). Among the most serious risks for tourism enterprises are security incidents, financial losses, loss of customer confidence and disruption of operational stability. Insurance mechanisms, information security systems and recovery plans should be developed against these risks.

In the 21st century, digital technologies have become the main guarantor of tourism security. Smart monitoring systems, GPS tracking technologies, electronic ticketing and access management systems help reduce risks in the tourism sector (Sigala, 2018). At the same time, crisis communication platforms, social media analytics, and digital alert systems enable operational decision-making during a crisis (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2022).

The main goal after the crisis is to restore the tourism market, reshape the brand image, and restore customer trust (Avraham, 2016). Coordination between government agencies, the private sector, and international organizations plays an important role in this phase. Corporate social responsibility programs, safe tourism certifications, and sustainable tourism strategies are considered tools to accelerate the recovery process (UNWTO, 2021).

Crisis and security management in tourism is not just a response to emergencies, but also a philosophy of sustainable management. This approach determines the flexibility, resilience and competitiveness of the tourism sector. Global experience shows that tourism systems that are prepared for crises recover faster and gain long-term credibility. Therefore, the introduction of risk analysis, a safety culture and innovative management methods in tourism policy is the main guarantee of future development.

There is a significant link between tourism security and tourism crises. A review of tourism crises in recent years shows that many tourism crises are a direct result of gaps and deficiencies in security and safety.

Terrorism is a global phenomenon that involves multiple targets. Between 2015 and 2017, terrorist attacks targeting tourists and tourism infrastructure occurred in countries as diverse as Tunisia, Belgium, Burkina Faso, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, the United States, Spain, the Philippines, Egypt, Thailand, and Turkey. Some of these attacks directly targeted tourists.

Terrorism remains a serious security concern for tourism. However, even direct targeting of tourists by terrorists or criminals is not a prerequisite for negative perceptions of tourist safety. Tourism safety can also be threatened by factors such as natural disasters, pandemics, political instability, forest fires, high crime rates, or poor management of buildings, food, water, transportation systems, and other infrastructure.

For example, in January 2016, an attack on a group of tourists in Istanbul killed 11 German tourists. Another example was the suicide attack at Ataturk International Airport in June of that year. Following these events, the number of international tourists visiting Turkey dropped sharply.

The link between security and crisis is particularly evident in the case of Turkey. Between 2000 and 2014, the number of international tourists visiting Turkey increased from 8 million to 41.26 million, placing Turkey among the top ten in terms of tourism revenue and visitor numbers worldwide. However, since 2015, this growth has been interrupted by security crises.

Tourism crises are important events that affect the development of tourism destinations. However, the scientific community's knowledge of the classification features, spatial (geographic) distribution, and impact structure of tourism crises from the accumulated literature is still insufficient.

This study analyzed 302 scientific articles selected from the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) database between 1991 and 2020. The study conducted bibliometric and content analysis to identify the event types, regional distribution, impact structure, and synergistic (interacting) factors of tourism crises.

The results show that existing research on tourism crises is largely event-oriented. The types of crises are multifaceted and divided into several subcategories. Tourism crises studied in the scientific literature mainly cover events affecting Asia, Europe, and North America — which is consistent with their geographical distribution in reality.

The impact of tourism crises on places has been identified at three levels:

1. Macro level (impacts at the scale of an entire country or region),
2. Meso level (impacts at the scale of a sector or region),
3. Micro level (impacts at the level of local enterprises and individuals).

Tourism activity acts as one of the main directions of economic, social and cultural integration on a global scale. However, this dynamic sector is highly vulnerable to crises. Natural disasters, pandemics, political instability, economic crises and security problems affect all structural elements of the tourism system (Ritchie, 2004). The impact of tourism crises is not only felt at the individual enterprise level, but also at the national and regional scale. For this reason, the scientific literature usually analyses the impact of crises on places at three levels: macro, meso and micro (Faulkner, 2001; Pforr, 2009).

The macro level encompasses the consequences of tourism crises on a country or regional scale. At this level, crises are observed in the form of declining economic indicators, loss of government revenues, weakening of the tourism brand, and loss of international image (Avraham, 2016).

For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism revenues in many countries fell by up to 70%, and employment levels fell significantly (UNWTO, 2021). Crises directly affect the reshaping of public policies at the macro level, the development of sustainable tourism strategies, and national security concepts.

Macro-level crisis management typically requires coordination between government agencies, international organizations, and regional tourism alliances. Recovery programs, tourism diplomacy, and economic stimulus are important measures in this stage (Glaesser, 2006).

Meso level: This level concerns the effects of crises on particular industries or particular tourism regions. At this level, crises are noticed in the closure of resort areas, in the restriction of the activities of air carriers, and in the change in the route of tourist flows (Pforr, 2009).

For example, political tensions in the Mediterranean region have led to a shift in tourist flows to alternative destinations such as Spain and Greece. This has meant increased demand for some countries, while reduced tourism revenues for others (Hall, 2010).

At the meso level, regional tourism management, local recovery plans and public-private partnerships play an important role in crisis management (Ritchie, 2004). Also at this level, innovative product diversification and digital marketing approaches increase the adaptive capacity of tourism (Sigala, 2018).

The micro level encompasses the impact of crises on local tourism businesses, employees, and individual entrepreneurs. This impact typically manifests itself in the form of financial difficulties, staff layoffs, customer disruptions, and psychological stress (Paraskevas & Arendell, 2007). Hotels, restaurants, and tour operators operating at the micro level face liquidity problems during a crisis and often need government subsidies or local community support. During the COVID-19 era, many small tourism businesses were able to partially resume their activities through digitalization, online reservation systems, and domestic market-focused services (WTTC, 2022).



At this level, protecting human capital, improving personnel's crisis skills, and forming a culture of individual risk management are of particular importance (Faulkner, 2001).

The impact of tourism crises on places is multidimensional and gradual. The main points of impact of this process are the national economy and international image at the macro level, sectors and regions at the meso level, and enterprises and individuals at the micro level. Global experience shows that an integrated crisis management model can only be effective if these three levels are interconnected (Ritchie, 2004; Glaesser, 2006). Therefore, place-based crisis management, systematic risk analysis, and the implementation of innovative recovery strategies should be one of the main directions in tourism policy.

Impact of Tourism Crises by Levels			
Level	Impact Areas	Examples	Management Methods
Macro	National economy, international image, government revenues	70% decrease in tourism revenues due to the COVID-19 pandemic	Government policies, national recovery plans, international cooperation
Mezo	Sectors, regions, resorts	Changes in tourist flows due to political tensions in the Mediterranean region	Regional tourism governance, public-private partnership, digital marketing
Mikro	Local enterprises, small businesses, individual entrepreneurs	Restaurants and cafes during the COVID-19 period	Liquidity support, staff training, online reservation

The concept of place-based crisis management involves measuring the impact of a crisis not only in terms of economic indicators, but also in terms of geographical, social and structural factors. This ensures the transition of the tourism system to a more flexible and sustainable management model (Glaesser, 2006).

Spatially-oriented crisis management considers tourism destinations as functional, geographical, and institutional units, creating a management model based on the specific risk profile of each region (Beirman, 2018). This approach integrates techniques like spatial analysis, hazard mapping, and resource localization.

For instance, in tourist destinations like the Mediterranean and the Caucasus, natural hazards like earthquakes and forest fires, political instabilities, and infrastructure vulnerabilities demand different approaches to management at different levels.

The model of place-based management is also founded on the principle of participation by the local communities. This helps in enhancing the application of local knowledge in decision-making processes during crises, resource mobilization by the communities, and social sustainability of the tourism system (Hall, 2010).

One of the significant steps in the effective management of tourism crises is the application of systematic risk analysis. In this approach, risks are not viewed as random events. Rather, they are seen as the combination of dynamically interacting social, economic, and environmental factors (Glaesser, 2006).

1. Systematic risk analysis can include the following stages:
2. Identification of risks;
3. Assessment of probability and impact;

4. Prioritization of risks;
5. Mapping of the most sensitive areas.

This approach results in more real-time decision support, particularly in the form of GIS risk models and big data analysis (UNWTO, 2021). Thus, for instance, in the course of the pandemic, some states had a plan for a staged revival of the industry using approaches such as geographic simulation of tourism movement and mapping of infection risk areas.

In the post-crisis period, innovative recovery approaches are critical to the change in the tourism system. These approaches are aimed not only at restoring losses but also at restructuring the industry for sustainable development (Avraham, 2016).

The most widely adopted innovative recovery approaches are:

- Digital adaptation - The migration of the tourism industry to online platforms and AI-driven booking systems;
- Green and environmentally friendly approaches - The promotion of ecotourism and energy efficiency (Daly & Farley, 2011);
- Tourism diplomacy and rebranding - Communication approaches that help rebuild the image of the destination (Avraham, 2016);
- Community-based recovery models - Active engagement of local communities in economic and social processes.

Moreover, innovative approaches, together with the idea of smart destinations, help improve the resistance of the tourism industry to crises and optimize resource use efficiency (Sigala, 2018).

Spatially oriented crisis management, risk analysis, and the application of innovative recovery strategies are key concepts that can facilitate the transition of the tourism sector to sustainable management. The application of this concept requires an understanding of the crisis not only in economic terms but also in terms of changes in spatial and structural dynamics.

Future research in this area could be placed in the following areas: place-based risk models, digital recovery tools, and mechanisms for participation in the community. The success of crisis management in the tourism sector is not only dependent on international strategies but also on the ability to cope with the uniqueness of each place in the community (Ritchie, 2004; Pforr, 2009).

The study found that there is an opportunity for deeper research in the area of tourism crises in the future. The study provides a scientific direction for future research in this area.

4. Conclusion

The management of crisis situations and security issues in tourism should be considered a philosophy of sustainable management and not just crisis management. The tourism sector, although one of the most dynamic sectors of the global economy, is subject to a wide range of factors such as natural disasters, pandemics, political instability, economic crisis, terrorism, and technological risk. It is not enough to evaluate the effects of tourism risk only in relation to a business or tourism organization; its effects are also felt on a national and regional scale. Therefore, it is essential that the effects of tourism crisis situations are considered on three different levels: macro, meso, and micro levels. The effects of tourism crisis situations are felt on a macro level throughout a country or region, and this is expressed in a decrease in economic indicators, a decrease in government revenues, a weakening of the tourism brand, a decrease in employment levels, and a negative effect on international images. At this level, crises also result in the restructuring of national tourism strategies, public policies, and the elaboration of concepts related to sustainable development in the field of tourism. This demonstrates that tourism is a field of activity that is both economic and strategic.

At the meso level, the effects of a crisis can be noted in the following areas related to the tourism sector: the closure of resort areas, the restriction of the activity of air carriers, the evolution of tourism



flows, the suspension of activities, and the uneven distribution of resources in the sector. It is worth noting that regional tourism governance plays a significant role in the management of a crisis at this level. Strategies implemented at the regional level also provide key opportunities for the creation of alternative tourism opportunities and the efficient channeling of tourism flows.

At the micro level, the impacts are felt by tourism businesses, small and medium-sized businesses, employees and individual entrepreneurs. These impacts manifest themselves in the form of financial difficulties, staff reductions, customer flow disruptions, operational disruptions and psychological stress. Hotels, restaurants, tour operators and other tourism businesses operating at the micro level face liquidity problems during the crisis and often seek to recover through government support, local community support or innovative solutions. At this level, protecting human capital, improving personnel's crisis skills, and forming a culture of individual risk management are of particular importance for the sustainability of the tourism system.

A place-based approach plays a key role in tourism crisis management. Place-based crisis management assesses tourism destinations not only in terms of economic indicators, but also in terms of geographical, social and structural factors. This approach increases the flexibility and adaptability of the tourism system. Each tourism destination has its own specific risk profile and management strategies should be developed accordingly. In this approach, tourist destinations are evaluated as functional, geographical, and institutional entities, and measures are designed based on the needs and risks of each destination. The place-based management approach also includes the engagement of local communities, which enhances the role of local knowledge in decision-making processes during crises, the engagement of local community resources, and the social sustainability of the tourism system.

Systematic risk analysis is a significant step in the management of tourism crises. In this analysis, risks are evaluated not as random events, but as the combination of social, economic, and environmental factors. Systematic risk analysis involves the steps of risk identification, evaluation of probability and impact, risk prioritization, and mapping of vulnerable areas. This method gives a holistic perspective of the tourism system, enables a more precise analysis of the causes and consequences of crises, and also enables the design of preventive strategies.

This approach also enables more precise and up-to-date decision-making through the application of new technologies - digital analytics, geographic information systems, and big data analysis. This enhances the flexibility of the tourism industry and its ability to respond to crises.

The strategies of post-crisis recovery are very important for the sustainability of the tourism industry. The recovery of lost tourist flows, the restoration of brand image, and the recovery of customer trust can be achieved not only through the application of financial aid, but also through the application of innovative strategies. Among these strategies, digital adaptation, the development of online services and artificial intelligence-based booking systems, the promotion of ecological and green tourism, the enhancement of energy efficiency, tourism diplomacy and brand reconstruction, the application of community-based recovery models, and the implementation of the smart place concept are very important. These strategies not only help the tourism industry to recover from the crisis, but also ensure the sustainable development of the industry.

In addition to this, integrated actions are necessary for tourism crisis management on the global and local levels. The coordination of government and international organizations on the macro-level, regional and sectoral actions on the meso-level, and the synchronization of the actions of local enterprises and communities on the micro-level are necessary for tourism crisis management. The interrelations between these levels are the basis of the integrated tourism crisis management model. Without this model, it would be impossible to deal with crises and recover from them.

Among the important aspects of tourism crisis management, place management, systematic analysis of risks, and the implementation of innovative strategies of recovery are of particular interest. With

these methods, it would be possible to get a complete picture of the tourism system and consider the impact of tourism crises on the global and local levels. Moreover, these methods would not only help to protect the tourism sector from the existing risks but would also make it more flexible and competitive. The application of these principles of tourism policy in the modern world would be considered the main condition for its development. Through the use of a coherent approach to place-based crisis management, risk analysis, and innovative recovery strategies, it is possible to move towards a sustainable model of management for the tourism sector.

It is no longer sufficient to see crises simply as economic and financial phenomena. It is necessary to analyze them also as variations in the social, spatial, and structural dynamics. This allows us to have a more general view of the tourism system, enhancing its potential for adaptation and quick recovery. In the future, some of the main issues to be addressed in the management of crises in the tourism sector will be the development of location-based risk models, the use of digital recovery strategies, and the strengthening of local participatory models. It is necessary to understand that the effectiveness of crisis management in the tourism sector is not only due to global strategies but also to the ability to adapt to the specificities of the places. This approach not only makes the tourism sector resilient to crises but also allows it to be a sustainable system for its development.

Therefore, the management of tourism crises has transcended the boundaries of a mere reaction to a crisis situation, but has become a systematic, strategic, and proactive process. The factors that play a crucial role in ensuring the sustainability of tourism at various levels, such as national, regional, and local levels, include place-based management, risk analysis, and innovative recovery practices.

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