



# Hotel Academy Multiplier Event

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## **Presentation:**

**Hospitality and Tourism In Cyprus post Covid- period  
(Challenges and opportunities)**

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# Hospitality and Tourism In Cyprus post Covid-period (Challenges and opportunities)

The COVID-19 (declared as a pandemic by March 2020) of significantly impacts the global economic, political, socio-cultural systems. Health communication strategies and measures (e.g. social distancing, travel and mobility bans, community lockdowns, stay at home campaigns, self- or mandatory-quarantine, curbs on crowding) have halted global travel, tourism and leisure.

Being a highly vulnerable industry to numerous environmental, political, socio-economic risks, tourism is used to and has become resilient in bouncing back from various crises and outbreaks. However, the nature, the unprecedented circumstances and impacts of the COVID-19, demonstrate signs that this crisis is not only different, but it can have profound and long-term structural and transformational changes to tourism as socio-economic activity and industry.

Indeed, the global and huge scale, the multidimensional and interconnected impacts challenging current values and systems and leading to a worldwide recession and depression are the most distinctive characteristics of this pandemic.



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COVID-19 tourism impacts will be uneven in space and time, and apart from the human tool, estimates show an enormous and international economic impact: international tourist arrivals are estimated to drop to 78%.

Within the burgeoning industry discussions and research about tourism and COVID-19, there is an unanimous call to see and use the pandemic as a transformative opportunity Industry should not only recover but also reimagine and reform the next normal and economic order while researchers should not solely use COVID-19 as another context to replicate existing knowledge for measuring and predicting tourism impacts.

Although such studies are important for managing the pandemic, they do not advance knowledge and/or guide the industry to a step beyond. Moreover, because of the interlinked socio-cultural, economic, psychological and political impacts of COVID-19 of this magnitude, unforeseen trajectories instead of historical trends are expected and the predictive power of 'old' explanatory models may not work.

Moreover, there is enough evidence to claim that both the tourism industry and research have matured to a good extent providing sufficient knowledge about how to study and effectively:

- Design and implement crisis recovery and response strategies
- Build resilience to address future crises



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What is still lacking is knowledge about how crisis can foster industry change, how companies can convert this crisis disruption into transformative innovation and how to conduct research that can enable, inform and shape the rethinking and resetting of a next normal.

Crises can be a change trigger, but none crisis has been so far a significant transition event in tourism. Crises have also been used as a political tool to stabilize existing structures and diminish the possibility of collective mobilization. As change can be selective and/or optional for the tourism stakeholders (e.g. tourists, operators, destination organisations, policy makers, local communities, employees), the nature and degree of crises-led transformations depend on whether and how these stakeholders are affected by, respond to, recover and reflect on crises.

Consequently, to better understand, predict but also inform and shape change, tourism COVID-19 research should provide a deeper examination and understanding of the tourism stakeholders' (behavioral, cognitive, emotional, psychological and even ideological) drivers, actions and reactions to their COVID-19 impacts. Research should also examine and understand the stakeholders' lived and perceived COVID-19 experiences as well as their consciousness, mindfulness, capabilities and willingness to understand and act (pro-actively and re-actively) to the pandemic, as all these can equally influence their attitudes, behaviours and change potential.



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COVID-19 tourism research should also advance our knowledge for informing, fostering, shaping or even leading such crises-enabled transformations.

Otherwise, we will simply experience one crisis after the other. Responding to the mushrooming euphoria of COVID-19 tourism related research, also plead for transformative e-tourism research that can shape tourism futures by making value systems, institutional logics, scientific paradigms and technology notions visible and transformable.

To achieve scientific paradigm shifts, e-tourism research should embrace historicity, reflexivity, transparency, equity, plurality and creativity. To avoid the bubble of the COVID-19 research orgasm and advance tourism research, others have also suggested adopting inter-disciplinary multi-disciplinary or even anti-disciplinary research to enable out-of-the-box, creative and flexible thinking that challenges and goes beyond existing pre-assumptions and mindsets.

The major impacts, behaviors and experiences that three major tourism stakeholders (namely tourism demand, supply and destination management organizations and policy makers) are experiencing during three COVID-19 stages (response, recovery and reset).



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This analysis is useful because it provides an overview and understanding of the type and scale of the COVID-19 tourism impacts, while it also demonstrates that the way in which stakeholders and researchers understand, react and behave in each stage may form and set the next (new) normal in the post COVID-19 era.

Responding to the call for transformative research, discussions are developed based on the rational that tourism research should go beyond replicating and reconfirming existing knowledge within the COVID-19 context; instead tourism COVID-19 research should see new things and see them differently to inform and guide tourism futures. Hence, the paper suggests potential new research areas and theoretical lenses that can be used for advancing and resetting industry practice and research.

The paper does not aim to provide a fully comprehensive and inclusive analysis of all the impacts, theories, topics and tourism stakeholders that COVID-19 tourism research can examine. Instead, it aims to provide practical and theoretical implications on how to better research, understand, manage and transformative valorize COVID-19 tourism impacts.

At a micro-level, COVID-19 tourism research should question and reset why tourism is viewed, practiced and managed as a way to 'escape', 'relax', 'socialize', 'construct identities/status', 'learn' and reward themselves from a routine, unpleasant and meaningless life.



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Why tourism should be researched and practiced as an escape from a boring life, instead of life being rewarding and meaningful itself? Why people have to travel thousands of miles away from home to 'learn' and 'be happy'? Why companies have to commercialize and commoditize communities, people and their tangible and intangible resources as tourism attractions 'please' the tourists' needs and drive economic development?

Tourism paradigms and mindsets like this, have led and intensified crises like COVID-19 and this cannot be sustainable for much longer. Consumerism and tourism should not be seen as the sole way to achieve happiness, self-expression, and (economic) development.

COVID-19 tourism research should inspire tourists, businesses and destinations alike to re-imagine and reset new mindsets, frontiers and behaviours such as: how to use and develop tourism to valorize and not consume tourism resources, to generate well-being, sustainability and transformational learning; how to study and practice environmental/sustainable management not as a legal necessity for lobbying and formulating policies, not as marketing tool to build brands' and people's identities, not as an expense to be minimized, but as a mindful business investment and personal lifestyle for a responsible future.





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