Tourism Industry in France in Consideration of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Main Selected Issues

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Abstract:
COVID-19 led to a shockwave in all aspects of the tourism sector, generating an increase in significant studies. The research regards the selected problems within the tourism industry in France: the participation in tourism for personal purposes; the total contribution of travel and tourism to GDP; domestic tourism expenditure; spending of international tourists; the direct contribution of travel and tourism to employment; the average price of a standard double hotel room in Paris in terms of the COVID-19 pandemic. The fundamental aim of the paper is the assessment of the situation within the tourism industry in France in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The paper is using of statistical, dynamics, comparative and documentation analysis. The discussion shows that the tourism sector in France within the chosen aspects impacted various COVID-19 pandemic related shocks in the examination time. The authorities applied the relevant instruments, solutions, and activities that mitigated the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and, in result, positioned tourism industry in France on the proper way to return to the position as one of the most visited countries in the world. Originally from 2021, similar tourism tendencies to those noticed in 2020 (country lockdowns, quarantines, border closures), modifications of structure beginning from summer 2020 can result in hysteresis consequences in 2022. The inference process took place in a deductive way.

The presented paper regards the leading tourist country. It focuses on the considerations in such scientific areas as participation in tourism for personal purposes; the total contribution of travel domestic tourism expenditure; spending of international tourists; employment. Applying the instruments and measures of the analysis enables one to examine the crucial problems of the tourism industry. The arguments indicated in the paper can be beneficial for practitioners, decision-makers, and managers. The pandemic's trajectory is challenging to be forecast. The COVID-19 pandemic modifications can cause the growth of infected people.

Furthermore, the defined economic activity within the tourism sector resulting from additional lockdowns may have a meaningful influence on the different aspects of the socio-economic ground. The paper can inspire additional research and examination in the ground of crucial issues of the tourism industry in France and other stimulating scientific analysis.

Keywords: tourism; participation; expenditure; employment; COVID-19 pandemic; France.

JEL Classification: L83; Z30; O50.

Introduction

Tourism has turned into one of the most meaningful industrial driving factors in many dynamic growing nations during the last years. Travel and the forms of tourism contribute to the development of particular economies in a variety of ways, considering foreign currency earnings, international investment, enlarged tax revenues, and the establishment of new employment places possibilities (Alam and Paramati 2016). Thusly, expanding tourism is profitable to economic advancement, and encouraging ecological civilization construction, sustain-driven and green advancement are substantial aspects. It is also developed in the tourism sector.

Since the 1980s, citizens with a long-reaching range of views have come up with the significance and description of sustainable tourism (Tang et al. 2013), and it has constantly advanced and also turned into the focus of research. Meantime, tourism destinations apply as the structural bearer of tourism, and their assessment and advancement have developed into research hotspots. Found on a review of the connected literature on tourism, the paper would condense the concepts of the scientists on the issues of tourism, to figure out the research status and have a perspective on its prospect research developments. International tourism has been critically influenced by the Covid-19 pandemic. The constraints on movement implemented by every nation on both tourist arrivals and departures, connected with internal actions, caused a global decline of 74,00% in international arrivals and 66,00%
in receipts in 2020. France, as the prominent tourist destination, when it comes to the number of visitors and the third biggest in respect of receipts, felt the full force of a chief industry stoppage, losing half of its travel receipts. Nonetheless, the summer loosening of constraints margined the scope of the decline of the European Union, in contradiction to travel outside the European Union, which maintained quite depressed.

France’s market portion earns over other European nations in 2020 maintain to be accepted. The tourism sector witnessed extraordinary disorder in 2020, with international travel drop by 74% as contrasted with the earlier year. Foregoing crises, like SARS in 2003 and the 2008 worldwide economic crisis, caused limited declines in arrivals of 0.40% and 4%, appropriately, but 2020 disregards all comparisons. In this way, the worldwide flexibility exposed by international tourism while the 2000s seems to have been disabled at the beginning of these 10 years. The year-on-year drop in international arrivals grew in April (by 97% in contrast to April 2019, as reported by the World Tourism Organization), when the most contrary movement constraints were in place. Arrivals then continuously grew until August- still far below the norm-before decreasing repeatedly in November 2020. Whilst the 1.5 billion year-on-year declines in tourist amounts impacted all nations, it was unsteadily distributed across continents. The Asia Pacific faced the biggest decline, at 85%, followed by Africa, the Middle East, and the Americas (70%), and then Europe (69%). With the addition of an important decline in the number of trips, the 2020 crisis was differentiated by a structural modification in tourism. Asia's growth as a tourist destination over the last two 10-years- explaining for 13% of international arrivals in 1990 in contrast to 25% in 2019 has thusly been unexpectedly paused, decreasing to 14% of arrivals in 2020.

The Asia Pacific faced the biggest decline, at 85%, followed by Africa, the Middle East, and the Americas (70%), and then Europe (69%). Along with an important decline in the number of journeys, the 2020 crisis was determined by a structural modification in tourism. Asia’s growth as a tourist destination over the last two 10-years- considering 13% of international arrivals in 1990 in contrast with 25% in 2019 - has thusly been unexpectedly interrupted, decreasing to 14% of arrivals in 2020.

The extraordinary decrease in international arrivals was rooted mainly in two aspects: on the one hand, entrance constraints to foreign nations (tests, quarantine, and in some cases constraints on access), and on the other hand, departure limitations (lockdown, interregional migration restrictions), associated with a depressed encouragement to tour by cause of the imposed shutdown of the chief travel attractions (hotels, restaurants, cultural and recreational venues). France has been the world's most famous travel destination for several years, with 89 million visitors in 2018, ahead of Spain and the United States, whilst ranking second in overnight stays, because people do not stay as long in France as they do in Spain. In accord with mobile phone data, shutdowns, when associated with international travel constraints, decreased the number of overnight stays in mainland France by 54,00% over the year. Following these figures, the number of nights spent in France by non-resident tourists declined by 89,00% year on year in April, enhanced amid the summer- with the year-on-year drop standing at only 39,00% at the start of August and then decreased repeatedly in the autumn, however to a lesser extent.

1. Literature Review

The theoretical and empirical findings of the COVID-19 outbreak and the global tourism industry are the focus of this section. The tourism industry has been identified as a key economic sector that has faced additional challenges as a result of COVID-19. The study contends that the tourism sector plays a significant role in a country’s economic growth, and it further demonstrated that the COVID-19 pandemic affected the tourism sector, ultimately posing risks to a country’s economic growth. The following sections develop the main argument of the current literature review.

Tourism is one of the most important sectors in the global economy, contributing significantly to global GDP (Burrell et al. 2016). Tourism is defined as a “social, cultural, and economic phenomenon that causes people to travel to a country, outside destination, or environment for personal or business reasons” (UNWTO 2022, Lin et al. 2017, Lu et al. 2020). Tourism is a major source of employment worldwide, and it is a labor-intensive industry. Tourism's supporting industries include lodging, transportation, food and beverages, retail and culture, hospitality, and sports (WTTC 2020, Kramer et al. 2006). A country's tourism sector provides benefits and opportunities for its citizens. The tourism industry is part of the economy's service sector, which has its distinct characteristics (Haq et al. 2014, Gamage et al. 2017, Haedrich et al. 2010). Tourism’s main characteristics fall under specific attributes of a service product. They are as follows: inseparability, heterogeneity, intangibility, and perishability (Löke et al. 2018, Ventura-dias 2011, Ritchie 2009).

Tourism plays an important role in economic development in the global economy, and an increase in the tourism industry may have a positive impact on economic growth. A significant number of previous scholars have considered the tourism industry’s significant role in economic development (Gamage et al. 2020, Dreyer et al. 2016). The tourism industry plays a key role in the economy, and an increase in the tourism industry may have a positive impact on economic growth. A significant number of previous scholars have considered the tourism industry’s significant role in economic development.
Tourism is regarded as one of the driving forces for economic development by the World Tourism Organization (WTO). Tourism contributes the most foreign exchange, job opportunities, and revenue to a country’s economic growth (Steiner 2006; Glaesser 2005). According to some researchers, tourism is the fastest growing industry in both developed and developing economies, and tourism is regarded as the largest source of employment opportunities and the highest revenue creator in an economy (Gamge et al. 2010; Kreilkamp 2005).

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative impact on almost every country’s economic development. It resulted in the worst economic downturn in history. More advanced economies, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan, and Europe, are also seeing their economies suffer as a result of the spread of Covid-19. The World Trade Organization predicts that trade activity will fall by 32% in 2020. The poor economic performance is caused by low demand, supply chain disruptions, travel restrictions, and the Lockdown policy, which are all preventive measures to prevent the virus from spreading further. These constraints may put a damper on global economic growth. The International Labor Organization (ILO) estimates that the COVID-19 pandemic will increase global unemployment by 5.3 million to 24.7 million people (ILO 2020). This results in a loss of economic activity, as well as job losses. The COVID 19 outbreak has a significant economic impact on all sectors of the economy, including manufacturing, tourism, finance, service, trade, transportation, and people in every field in every country. Due to the uncertainty and fear of the pandemic, most businesses are more likely to have low profits as people are advised to stay at home, with travel bans and event cancellations, and the prohibition of mass gatherings (Horowitz 2020, Elliot 2020, Kampf et al. 2020).

The COVID-19 outbreak causes unexpected economic disruptions with demand and supply shocks in nearly every sector of the economy (El-Erian 2020, Wang et al. 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic is more likely to affect the travel and tourism industry (Shretta 2020). The global tourism sector accounts for more than 10% of global GDP and 30% of global export services (World Bank 2020). Tourism is one of the most important economic sectors, as many governments impose travel restrictions, travel bans, airport closures, and mass passenger cancellations. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the tourism industry has suffered a revenue loss of more than US$ 820 billion worldwide (Ozili and Arun 2020, Sigala 2020).

Furthermore, the hospitality industry has been primarily impacted by most governments’ stay-at-home and social distancing policies, as well as cancellations of bookings, which may cost up to US$ 150 billion globally. According to some researchers, coronavirus has a significant impact on the Chinese tourism industry (Soltani and Patini 2020). The hospitality and tourism industries in China typically earn huge profits, but the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the postponement of most tourist visits to China, severely affecting the tourism industry in China (Aljazeera 2020, Eichengreen et al. 2021). Furthermore, the positive impact on online travel agencies, hotels, bars, restaurants, and other travel agencies was revealed. Scholars have identified the economic and tourism impacts of previous epidemics.

Previous research has determined that such pandemics have a lower impact than the COVID-19 outbreak in 2020. H1N1 influenza, SARS, the HIV, AIDS pandemic, the Ebola virus, the Zika virus, and now COVID-19 are among the notable epidemics and pandemics that have had an impact on the global economy. Globally, pandemics and epidemics cause enormous economic losses. SARS was the most significant disease in the tourism industry, affecting international air travel for six months. Nonetheless, the COVID-19 outbreak may have a disproportionately larger impact than previous pandemics. As the COVID-19 epidemic spreads around the world, international tourist arrivals fell by 30% in 2020, resulting in a loss of US$ 450 billion in global tourism revenue (UNWTO 2022). This is ten times the global economic impact of the SARS outbreak (Shretta 2020, Alvesson and Sandberg 2020). Thus, in comparison to previous pandemics and outbreaks around the world, the COVID-19 outbreak is expected to have a significant impact on international tourism. The decline of the tourism industry may have a significant impact on employment and supply chain income. Countries that rely heavily on tourism may experience severe recessions in both the labor market and the country’s GDP.

Health, finance, construction, trade, air transport, accommodations, food and beverages, transportation, and communication are the major sub-sectors involved in the tourism sector. As a result, the decline of the tourism sector has a negative impact on all of these sub-sectors. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council, the tourism industry is more likely to recover slower than other sectors of the economy, as previous pandemics took more than 19 months to recover (WTTC 2020). A substantial amount of research has been conducted on the negative impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on economic growth. Only a few of these have identified the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the global tourism industry (Shretta 2020, Aljazeera 2020, Ozili and Arun 2020). As a result, the current literature is much needed to review the coronavirus’s impact on the tourism industry, as tourism is one of the most important sectors in both developing and developed economies around the world. The findings could aid in overcoming the economic shocks caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on the
above theoretical and empirical findings on COVID-19 and the tourism industry, the following is the study's main argument: The COVID-19 pandemic has been identified as the most common severe economic shock in every country around the world. In just six months, it caused significant global financial losses (Eichenbaum et al. 2021, Jones et al. 2021). Travel restrictions, social distancing, and quarantine policies, all of which are common features of major governments, but international tourism was in the most vulnerable position during the pandemic. In this regard, the tourism sector may be identified as the sector most severely and negatively impacted by unexpected economic shocks in countries.

2. Research Questions and Methodology

The paper regards the selected problems within the tourism industry in France in 2016 - 2020. The fundamental aim of the paper is the assessment of the situation within the tourism industry in France in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The author presents the following research problems:

- What is the diversification of situation of the tourism industry in France in light of the COVID-19 pandemic?
- Which of the research aspects of tourism industry in France with regard to COVID-19 pandemic have the highest, middle, and lowest level in the research time scope?

In the theoretical part of the paper is depicted the literature review. The studies are carried out within the documentation, statistical, comparative, dynamics analysis. The results showed that the research tourism industry in France have different tendencies from 2016 to 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic influenced on the studied scientific areas what is noted in the 2019 and 2020. The inference process took place in a deductive way.

3. Analysis and Research Results

In the research was carried out the documentation, statistical, comparative, dynamics analysis. The time scope of the research was 2016-2020. The territorial scope of the study was one country of the European Union: France.

The analysis was carried out on the following issues:

- participation in tourism for personal purposes in France in 2016-2020 by a geopolitical entity (Figure 1);
- participation in tourism for personal purposes (tourists as a share of the total population) in France in 2016-2020 (Figure 2);
- total contribution of travel and tourism to GDP in France from 2016 to 2020 (in billion euros) (Figure 3);
- domestic tourism expenditure in France from 2016 to 2020 (in billion euros) (Figure 4);
- spending of international tourists in France from 2016 to 2020 (in billion euros) (Figure 5);
- direct contribution of travel and tourism to employment in France from 2016 to 2018 and in 2028 (in 1000 jobs) (Figure 6);
- the average price of a standard double hotel room in Paris from February 2020 to August 2021 (in euros) (Figure 7).

Data from the Figure 1 shows that the highest level of Participation in tourism for personal purposes was recorded in all countries of the world for all the researched periods within the category "1 night or over" and "4 nights or over". The highest value was observed in 2019 (39.144.173) within the area "1 night or over" but in terms of the lowest value within the section "all countries of the world" was noticed in 2017 (30.076.449) for "4 nights or over". The middle values were recorded for Domestic Country for categories "1 night or over" and "4 nights or over" for 2016-2019. In 2020 noted that the values were above the middle ones. The lowest level of the researched variables was seen within the section "domestic and outbound" for categories "1 night or over" and "4 nights or over" for all the researched period time.

It should be indicated that throughout the all researched period there were noticed declines in the researched variables in 2020 within the section "domestic and outbound" and "all countries of the world" for categories "1 night or over" and "4 nights or over", in comparison with 2019. In terms of the section "Domestic Country," there was noted a decline in 2018 within the category "1 night or over" in comparison with 2017. When it comes to the category "4 nights or over" within Domestic Country the declines were observed in 2017 and 2019, in comparison with the previous year.

Below was depicted the data regarding the level of participation in tourism for personal purposes in France in 2016-2020 by the geopolitical entity (Figure 1).
Below was showed the data regarding the level of participation in tourism for personal purposes (tourists as a share of the total population) in France in 2016-2020 (Figure 2).

The data from the Figure 2 shows that the highest rate of participation in tourism for personal purposes was noticed within the category "1 night and over" from 2016 to 2020. The downturn within that researched area was recorded in 2020 at the level of 74,31% tourists as a share of the total population.

However, that all the time positioned that category with the biggest rate. The lowest share of participation in tourism for personal purposes was seen within "from 1 to 3 nights" from 2016 to 2020. From 2016 to 2018 was an increasing trend within that category. The middle shares were observed within the category named "4 nights or over" as of the participation in tourism for personal purposes. The highest rates within that area were noticed in 2016 (63,06%) and 2020 (59,4%). In terms of the dynamic change of the participation in tourism for personal purposes (tourists as a share of the total population) it should be told that the highest increase occurred in 2017 within the category "from 1 to 3 nights" (9,80%), in comparison with 2016. At the same time, there was a decline at the level of -9,05% within "4 nights or over". It is worth saying that the lowest values were observed in 2019 within all the researched categories.

Below was presented the data regarding the level of the total contribution of travel and tourism to GDP in France from 2016 to 2020 (in billion euros) (Figure 3).
Figure 3. The total contribution of travel and tourism to GDP in France from 2016 to 2020 (in billion euros)

Source: Own elaboration on the base of Eurostat, Tourism data (2022); Statista, France: travel & tourism's total GDP contribution (2022)

The data from Figure 3 shows that the highest level of the total contribution of travel and tourism to GDP in France occurred in 2019 (210.7 billion euros). The growing trend was recorded from 2016 to 2019. The period of prosperity within that aspect lasted from 2016 to 2019. But this tendency does not last so long because in 2020 it could be observed the downturn and the lowest value at the level of 107.9 billion euros. In terms of the dynamic change of the total contribution of travel and tourism to GDP in France, it should be told that the decline was noted in 2020 (-48.79%), in comparison with 2019.

The rest of the research period characterized itself with positive amounts. Moreover, the occurrence of the increases from 2016 to 2019 was not so significant. Below was presented the data regarding the level of domestic tourism expenditure in France from 2016 to 2020 (in billion euros) (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Domestic tourism expenditure in France from 2016 to 2020 (in billion euros)

Source: Own elaboration on the base of Eurostat, Tourism data (2022); Statista, Domestic tourism expenditure in France (2022)

The data from Figure 4 shows that the highest level of Domestic tourism expenditure in France was recorded in 2019 (115.5 billion euros). The growing trend lasted from 2016 to 2019. The lowest level of the researched variable was noticed in 2020 (58 billion euros) and this was connected with the implementation of the actions regarding the COVID-19 Pandemic and mitigating the spreading of the coronavirus. As the consequence, the operation of the businesses was restricted by imposed lockdown within particular sectors of the economy in France also within the travel and tourism industry. Social distancing and sanitary regulations limited using the services by potential customers and as a result stagnation of the particular trades. It should be noted that the research period from 2016 to 2019 was observed the increase values at the level of 0.52% to 2.32%.

However, the meaningful decline occurred in 2020 reaching -49.78%, in comparison with 2020. Such development of phenomenon indicates that the COVID-19 Pandemic affected in a significant way on that sector. People stayed at home, in the light of implementing new order within socio-economic life. Below was depicted the data regarding the level of spending of international tourists in France from 2016 to 2020 (in billion euros), Figure 5.
Figure 5. Spending of international tourists in France from 2016 to 2020 (in billion euros)

Source: Own elaboration on the base of Eurostat, Tourism data 2022, Statista, Inbound tourism spending in France (2022)

The data from Figure 5. shows that the highest level of spending of international tourists in France was recorded in 2019 (60.4 billion euros). But this trend does not last any longer because in the last year of studies (2020) it could be noticed the downturn tendency, where the variable reached the level of 28.5 billion euros. It was the lowest value and that means the development of the COVID-19 pandemic and implementation of restrictions on running the businesses and introduced lockdown in the national economy. It should be pointed out from 2016 to 2019 the tendency was rising and the existence of the COVID-19 Pandemic from the end of 2019 changed the situation substantially.

Below was depicted the data regarding the level of the direct contribution of travel and tourism to employment in France from 2016 to 2018 and in 2028 (in 1000 jobs) (Figure 6).

Figure 6. The direct contribution of travel and tourism to employment in France from 2016 to 2018 and in 2028 (in 1000 jobs)

Source: Own elaboration on the base of Eurostat, Tourism data (2022); Statista, Travel, and tourism employment direct contribution France (2022)

The data from Figure 6. shows that the highest level of the direct contribution of travel and tourism to employment in France was recorded in 2018 (1221.7 in thousand jobs). The trend is increasing which means that the situation is better and better within that issue. But when it will be paid attention to the upcoming years it can be seen that in 2028 the variable will be at the level of 1470.90. That means that the increase in the direct contribution of travel and tourism to employment in France will be at the value of 20.40%. Such a situation means that it will be the biggest growth throughout the research period. There were no recorded declines within that issue.

Below was depicted the data regarding the level of the average price of a standard double hotel room in Paris from February 2020 to August 2021 (in euros) (Figure 7).
Contrarily, as of 2021, international vacations in Europe noticed an affront improvement in the summer of 2020, probably because of the epidemic's restoration in given territories outside Europe in 2021. The tendency observed during the summer of 2020 thusly modified the prospects, with France gaining market division because of the European customers particularly. Spain, in opposition, lost a meaningful share of its receipts because, unlike France, its customers come practically completely by flight, whether European or Non-European. Health constraints and a decline in demand did have an especially contrary influence on flight tourism. Originally from 2021, similar tourism tendencies to those noticed in 2020 (country lockdowns, quarantines, border closures), modifications of structure beginning from summer 2020 can result in hysteresis consequences in 2022.

On the one hand, the continuing modification in tourism arrangements can carry on, principally with a decreasing demand for business travel, owing partly to the growth of online meeting opportunities. On the other hand, the geographic reorientation of tourism to European nations might maintain. In point of fact, through 2021, there was not enough global vaccination advancement for non-European stays to restore, with concerns maintaining elevated, especially in dynamic rising nations, by cause of complications in introducing country vaccination plans, but also because of the epidemic's restoration in given territories outside Europe in 2021. Contrarily, as of 1st of July 2021, the European Commission's and Member States' joint actions to introduce a “health pass" should favor the resumption of internal EU tourism. In 2020, this could cause a long-lasting growth for Intra-European tourism at the expense of non-European travel. Nonetheless, such a redefining of Europe does not secure the sustainability of France's Intra European market portion outcomes observed in 2020, as the
improvements that Europe's different nations and territories struggle to draw tourists can refocus the profile of Intra-European tours starting from summer 2021.

References


