

PPRR MODEL ANALYSIS OF TRAVEL AGENCIES BUSINESS OPERATIONS AMIDST THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: BASIS FOR CONTINUITY PLAN

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 outbreak affects all economic sectors, including tourism in every country. People are encouraged to stay at home, events are canceled, and mass gatherings are prohibited due to the uncertainty and fear resulting from the Pandemic. Subsequently, the travel agency industry has been weakened, with some firms forced to close. The primary goal of this study was to analyze the operation of the travel agencies in the province of Nueva Ecija using the PPRR Model amid the Pandemic. The researchers also identified the problems encountered by the respondents in different aspects of their business and proposed a business continuity plan for their profitability and longevity. The descriptive approach was utilized in this study. The respondents were the managers/owners of different travel agencies operating within the province. Frequency, Percentage, Weighted Mean, and Thematic Analysis using Colaizzi's seven-step method were used to analyze the data. The study found that most respondents claimed that travel agencies' business operations had been temporarily halted, with revenue losses ranging from 51% to 100%. Nonetheless, the respondents have a backup plan to keep the firm running. It was also found out that the respondents had issues that may be used to create a company continuity strategy.

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INTRODUCTION

A travel agency is a business or public service that represents providers, such as airlines, car rentals, cruise lines, hotels, trains, and package tours, to offer tourism-related services to the public. Many travel agencies offer a department that handles the needs of commercial travelers, and some agencies focus exclusively on this type of corporate travel. It can provide a tailored travel experience at a reasonable price and high quality and save time and energy for the consumer, making travel agents valuable.

In the wake of the COVID-19 Pandemic, no industry has seen as steep a decline as the travel agencies. The technology that has helped people travel quickly and cheaply and drives one billion trips each year is incapable of halting a virus that keeps us close together by keeping us at home. According to De Jesus et al. (2021), tourism is one of the industries that has been hardest hit by the Covid-19 Pandemic, which has impacted economies, livelihoods, public services, and opportunities worldwide. Emir (2010) defined the travel agency as an intermediary company that delivers the products produced by accommodation businesses to tourists. The COVID-19 pandemic situation badly hit on the economic development of almost all countries in the world. It caused the most significant downfall of the economy in history. De Jesus et al. (2021) added that the global impact of the coronavirus disease outbreak (COVID-19) is astounding.

The COVID-19 outbreak impacts all sectors of the economy, such as manufacturing, tourism, financial, service, trade, transport, and people in every field in every country with more significant economic shocks. Due to the uncertainty and fear of the Pandemic, most firms are more likely to have low profits as people are advised to stay at home, with travel bans and cancellation of events and the prohibition of mass gatherings. Hence, these effects have impacted the travel agency industry, with some travel agencies being forced to close their doors. While travel agencies wish to continue operations, they are forced due to global restrictions forcing partner agencies, such as resorts, event centers, and other attractions, to close temporarily.

Due to COVID-19, The International Labour Standard, actions are being taken to assess the impact of a pandemic in the business sector. The PPRR Model or the Prevention, Preparedness,

Recovery, and Response model can assist travel agencies in maintaining and preparing for operations even if there is a pandemic. This is one of the instruments that can help assess the effect of a pandemic. It is advantageous for them to be prepared for and knowledgeable about the impact of a pandemic.

The primary goal of this study was to analyze the operation of the travel agencies in the province of Nueva Ecija using the PPRR Model amid a pandemic. Specifically, it answered the following questions:

1. How may the business operations of the travel agencies be analyzed in terms of:
 - 1.1 Operation Status;
 - 1.2 Cashflow;
 - 1.3 Revenues;
 - 1.4 Bookings (Orders); and
 - 1.5 Workforce?
2. How may the business operations of the travel agencies be assessed using the 4 phases of pandemic planning (PPRR model) in terms of :
 - 2.1 Prevention;
 - 2.2 Preparedness;
 - 2.3 Response; and
 - 2.4 Recovery?
3. How may the problems encountered by the managers/owners of the travel agencies be described in terms of:
 - 3.1 Organization and Management Aspect;
 - 3.2 Marketing Aspects;
 - 3.3 Technical/ Operation Aspect;
 - 3.4 Financial Aspect?
4. What business continuity plan may be proposed to sustain the business operations of the travel agencies amidst the Pandemic?

Travel Agencies

Adriano (2020) believed that the pandemic has edified her in various ways. It was highlighted the numerous critical challenges that have come to light, including the need to improve, evolve, and secure standard papers required for credit card authorizations to protect advisors; and establishing liability protections when booking with suppliers. Likewise, Adriano advised to utilize the American Society of Travel Advisors' tools, which include "vetted travel agency owners, travel advisors, and independent contractors who collaborate to enhance our industry, livelihoods, and mental health." "This crisis has been a true revealer for the travel industry," she said. "We have discovered an excessive number of inefficiencies in the way we conduct business. I advise people to instill a sense of urgency for creativity in order to expedite the healing process."

Based on Tourism Notes (2021), the travel agency's primary source of revenue is a commission from vendors. However, the commission rate varies by organization and travel component. A travel agency earns approximately 95% of its revenue from the commission, with the remaining 5% coming from consultation services and other sources.

Coronavirus

In addition to that, based on WTTC (2020), annual research indicates that the travel and tourism sector not only contributes over 10% to global GDP but also employs one in every ten people in the world and accounts for one in every four new employment generated internationally in the last five years. COVID-19 has fundamentally transformed life as we know it, and the travel and tourism industry is particularly vulnerable. As we evaluate the crisis's implications, we recognize that it can profoundly alter the future of the travel agency company.

Harris (2020) mentioned the challenges have been numerous for travel consultants and advisors, including the initial effort to address cancellations, refunds, and rebooking, often for little or no compensation, all of which have been exacerbated by an amplified crisis that extends well beyond the travel industry. While we all manage the numerous crises that have marked 2020, one thing is certain: the importance of human connection has never been greater. The travel agency company has a favorable long-term outlook, emphasizing advisers who understand their clients and provide professional guidance and support, making travel more manageable, more pleasurable, and more accessible.

Haas (2020) said that Vice President, Travel Products and Services at AAA — The Auto Club Group, when travelers face uncertainty, they seek additional assistance in navigating the changing landscape, and the Travel Advisor's role becomes even more valuable and critical in assisting travelers in making informed decisions.

Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery (PPRR) Model

Cronstedt (2002) defined the Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery (PPRR) Model as a disaster risk reduction and emergency management method that outlines the various stages of the catastrophe cycle. Additionally referred to as the 'complete framework,' the model aims to develop a holistic approach to catastrophe risk reduction and emergency management. The American Governors Association created the model in 1978.

Consequently, it has gained considerable international acceptability and is frequently regarded as the bedrock of global emergency management practice. The model was developed to expand the scope of disaster management beyond the 'response' phase, which was the prevalent notion of emergency management. Despite widespread acceptance, there has been increased debate about the PPRR model's relevance and utility in contemporary emergency management practice.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

This study used the descriptive research method to analyze the business operations of travel agencies in the midst of the COVID-19 Pandemic using four (4) Phases of Pandemic Planning known as the PPRR Model. The descriptive research method focuses on describing the nature of a demographic segment. The main emphasis of descriptive research is to describe the nature of the demographics under study instead of concentrating on the "why" (Voxco, 2021).

Research Locale

This research was conducted in Nueva Ecija. Nueva Ecija is a Philippine province in the Central Luzon area. It encompasses the entirety of the island's central region. Palayan City is the

capital. Nueva Ecija is endowed with an abundance of cultural assets. Christianity's growth and the influx of migrants from the Ilocos region and Pampanga provinces influenced the development of Nueva Ecija's distinct culture. The territory served as a melting pot of many cultures, which affected the style of life in Novo Ecijanos. Their ideas and faith are expressed through a range of distinctive practices and customs that have created the Novo Ecijanos region.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of this study were the 30 managers/owners of travel agencies operating in Nueva Ecija. The list of respondents was furnished by the heads of the Solid Travel Operation of Nueva Ecija (STONE) and Nueva Ecija Association of Travel Operation (NEATOP), the travel agency associations in the province which served as the formal groups for all the travel agencies in the research locale.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

Total enumeration was utilized to collect data in this investigation. Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013) defined total enumeration as examining every unit, individual, or thing in a population. Additionally, it is referred to as complete enumeration, which simply implies a complete count. The researchers chose this sampling technique because the total number of respondents was sufficient to obtain accurate data and information.

Data Collection

The researchers collected secondary data and relevant information from the Internet. The questionnaire was guided by the related studies and underwent reviews from competent individuals for validation. The comments and suggestions were incorporated into the instrument.

The reliability coefficient of the instrument has a good internal consistency with a .990 result. The validity of the research instrument was established by presenting the developed research instrument for the expert's comments who together rated the instrument with a 4.64 weighted mean with a verbal interpretation of "very good."

The researchers inform the respondents about the significance of their participation in the study. Some terminologies were clarified with the respondents to answer the questionnaire with full awareness about their critical roles.

Before the distribution, the researchers asked permission from the heads of the travel agency associations through a request letter duly signed by the researchers. After the distribution, the answered questionnaires were retrieved, and the data were tallied for interpretation.

Data Analysis

The data gathered in the area was encoded, tallied, and evaluated. These were treated using statistical tools such as Percentage, Frequency Distribution, Weighted Mean, and Thematic Analysis using Colaizzi's method seven steps. The item questions about the business operations anchored with the PPRR model were interpreted using a 4-point Likert scale as shown below:

Table 1. Scale on Data Interpretation for Business Operations Using the PPRR model

| Scale | Verbal Interpretation | Verbal Description |
|--------------|------------------------------|---|
| 4 | Strongly agree | The respondents are highly in favor of the statement. |
| 3 | Agree | The respondents are slightly in favor of the statement. |
| 2 | Disagree | The respondents are slightly not in favor of the statement. |
| 1 | Strongly disagree | The respondents are highly not in favor of the statement. |

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings obtained from the primary instrument used in this study. The responses were organized, quantified, and interpreted using different statistical tools. The presentation observed the sequence of the specific problems formulated for the study.

Business Profile Of Travel Agencies

- **Operational Status**

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents According to Operational Status

| Operation Status | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Operations are still running | 5 | 17% |
| Temporary Stopped | 22 | 73% |
| Stopped operation but currently Running again | 3 | 10% |
| Permanently Stopped | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 30 | 100% |

The table above shows the distribution of respondents according to operational status. The majority of respondents indicated that their business was temporarily stopped operating due to the covid-19 outbreak. They claimed that the business operations had been hampered due to the restrictions imposed by the Government to control the Covid-19 outbreak.

Based on the Philippine Travel Agencies Association (2020), 419 of its 439-member travel agencies are temporarily shuttered, with no date set for their restoration. PTAA member travel agencies may first exercise caution and begin operations only when there is a substantial demand for travel among Filipinos to pay their overhead costs.

- **Cashflow**

Table 3. Distribution of Respondents According to Cashflow

| Cashflow | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Shortage | 20 | 67% |
| Surplus | 0 | 0% |
| No effect | 10 | 33% |
| Total | 30 | 100% |

The table above shows the distribution of respondents according to cash flow. A huge percentage of the respondents had financial difficulties. Travel agencies' cash flow was also

impacted as a result of the travel restriction. It has a significant effect on the travel agencies' business operations as well as the cash flow. As derived from the findings, there was a cash scarcity caused by constrained travel operations associated with the Covid-19 epidemic. Due to the Covid 19 restrictions, no one knows when they will resume operations.

Zhang et al. (2021) said that the employees and cash flow coefficients are negative and significant, indicating that the impact was more substantial for smaller enterprises (with fewer employees) and businesses experiencing an impending cash flow shortage. Additionally, the positive and significant coefficient of revenue decline suggests that a higher drop in sales revenue had a more significant impact. As a result, it appears as though the self-evaluated impact of COVID-19 is dictated mainly by the size of the organization and its current financial status.

- **Revenues**

Table 4. Distribution of Respondents According to Revenues

| Revenues | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| No effect | 10 | 33% |
| Decrease by 1% to 25% | 0 | 0% |
| Decrease by 26% to 50% | 0 | 0% |
| Decrease by 51% to 100% | 20 | 67% |
| Increase | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 30 | 100% |

The table above shows the distribution of respondents according to revenues. Most of the respondents stated that their revenue declined by 51% to 100%. This implied that as a result of policies imposed by the Government in the midst of the covid-19 Pandemic, like the limited number of tourists, travel businesses' revenues are reduced by more than half of their regular day-to-day revenue. The traveler population is changing, which has a relevant effect on their revenue.

According to Dzambazovskis and Metodijeskis (2020), despite substantial company cuts and projections that regular travel patterns would take years to restore, half of 2020 revenue could be lower than the previous year. It is vital for business owners to evaluate both their financial status and the financial situation of their consumers, as both of these things affect future demand.

- **Booking (Order)**

Table 5. Distribution of Respondents According to Booking (Order)

| Booking (Order) | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| No Effect | 5 | 17% |
| Decrease by 1% to 25% | 0 | 0% |
| Decrease by 26% to 50% | 0 | 0% |
| Decrease by 51% to 100% | 25 | 83% |
| Increase | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 30 | 100% |

The table above shows the distribution of respondents according to the booking (order). A huge percentage of the respondents reported a decrease in booking ranging from 51% to 100%. Most travel agencies had to suspend their operations and cancel flights due to the Pandemic. The number of bookings during this period was less than half of the total number of bookings in regular day operation. It demonstrated that there were changes in the number of bookings as a result of the limited number of travelers due to the restrictions that had been implemented. The respondents added that the Covid-19 Pandemic greatly impacted the number of bookings due to cancellations and a limited number of travelers wanting to fly.

Vila et al. (2020) mentioned that the entire world is experiencing an unprecedented health crisis, which has impacted all sectors of the global economy. In practice, COVID-19 has a particularly negative impact on the tourism industry. The current chapter focuses on one specific subsector in this context: travel agencies. These companies have had to cancel bookings made prior to 2020 as well as stop booking new trips. As a result, many agencies did

not survive, and those that did are struggling. Taking this scenario into account, the current study aims to characterize state of the art on this phenomenon—the effects of COVID-19 on travel agencies.

- **Workforce**

Table 6. Distribution of Respondents According to Workforce

| Workforce | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| No Effect | 10 | 33% |
| Decrease by 1% to 25% | 0 | 0% |
| Decrease by 26% to 50% | 0 | 0% |
| Decrease by 51% to 100% | 20 | 67% |
| Increase | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 30 | 100% |

The table above shows the distribution of respondents according to the workforce. The majority of the respondents had decreased their workforce by 51% to 100%. This means that there was a decrease in the number of workers due to the implementation of a protocol that every business must follow to reduce employee contact within the business operation. Respondents stated that the industry must adhere to the protocols to continue to operate. In this light, the workforce is shrinking, and most employees must work at home to ease the risk.

According to WTTC (2020), 50 million jobs in the global tourism industry have been lost because of hotel cancellations since the quarantine's implementation. Room occupancy rates have dropped by 50%, and the future is dark as the pandemic is reported across the world.

Assessing the business operation of Travel Agencies using the PPRR Model

- **Prevention**

Table 7. PPRR Model of the Travel Agencies in terms of Prevention

| Prevention | WM | Rank | VI |
|--|-------------|------|-----------------------|
| I am asking the clients for the required documents as evidence for safe travelling. | 3.83 | 2 | Strongly agree |
| Provide the Public of Information about the new Regulations of the Business. | 3.25 | 4 | Agree |
| The business gets updated news and notifications from the local Government Unit and IATF about the Pandemic. | 3.73 | 3 | Strongly agree |
| The business has a contingent plan and fund to support the business in a time of the pandemic. | 3.87 | 1 | Strongly agree |
| Average Weighted Mean | 3.67 | | Strongly agree |

As can be seen from the table above, “The business has a contingent plan and fund to support the business in a time of the pandemic,” ranking first with a weighted mean of 3.87 and verbally interpreted as Strongly Agree. On the other hand, “Provide Public Information about New Business Regulations” received the lowest weighted mean of 3.25 and was interpreted as Agree.

The researchers discovered that most of the respondents had a concrete plan and funds to support their businesses during the Pandemic. This will assist them in minimizing the occurrences of the problems during their operations. Additionally, although they were in the midst of a pandemic, it gave them a sense of security and safety. Further, it will alleviate their concern, as they will have financial backups and strategies. On the other side, they must temporarily close their firm to avoid depleting the contingency reserve. Given the ongoing epidemic, it is more advantageous for them to close the firm to avoid depleting the contingency reserve temporarily.

Meade (2010) states that the Contingency Plan is designed to address high absence levels during a pandemic while maintaining normal operations. Additionally, it seeks to safeguard volunteers against catching the virus while doing their jobs.

- **Preparedness**

Table 8. PPRR Model of the Travel Agencies in terms of Preparedness

| Preparedness | WM | Rank | VI |
|--|-------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| Conduct planning and coordination to Government | 3.67 | 3 | Strongly agree |
| Conduct situation and monitoring assessment | 3.23 | 4 | Agree |
| Adaptation and implementation of safety protocol as approved and recommended by IATF | 3.63 | 2 | Strongly Agree |
| Continuous communication and compliance with the government agencies | 3.69 | 1 | Strongly agree |
| Average Weighted Mean | 3.55 | | Strongly agree |

As can be gleaned from the table above, “Continuous communication and compliance with the government agencies” ranked first, with a weighted mean of 3.69, and verbally interpreted as Strongly Agree. On the contrary, “Conduct situation and monitoring assessment” received the lowest weighted mean of 3.23 and was interpreted as Agree.

It signifies that most respondents maintain constant contact and cooperation with government agencies, which aid them in being informed on issues concerning travel agencies. With this, they will be equipped to deal with whatever may arise in the future. Communication also encourages travel agencies to make informed decisions. In this way, they could ready and improve their facilities to ensure clients' convenience and safety when travelling in the event of a pandemic.

Liao et al. (2020) mentioned that the Government should closely monitor social media data to improve the timing of epidemic communications. As the epidemic progresses, simply sharing situation updates and policies may not be enough to pique public interest in the messages. The

government may adopt a more empathic communication style to address public concerns as more people are affected by the disease.

- **Recovery**

Table 9. PPRR Model of the Travel Agencies in terms of Recovery

| Recovery | WM | Rank | VI |
|--|-------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| The business assesses the financial damage of the Pandemic. | 3.63 | 3 | Strongly agree |
| The business recalibrates its business plan according to the new normal. | 3.55 | 2 | Strongly agree |
| The business applies for a business loan to be used as a recovery fund. | 3.24 | 4 | Agree |
| The business uses its contingency plan for recovery. | 3.67 | 1 | Strongly agree |
| Average Weighted Mean | 3.52 | | Strongly agree |

As can be derived from the table above, “The business uses its contingency plan for recovery” which is ranked first with a weighted mean of 3.67 and is verbally interpreted as Strongly Agree. Meanwhile, “The business applies for a business loan to be used as a recovery fund” received the lowest weighted mean of 3.24 and was interpreted as Agree.

Based on the findings, a vast percentage of respondents used a business contingency plan for recovery. It helped them assess any potential issues that may arise during the operation and take immediate action in the face of an unexpected event to maintain continuous operation. Part of their plan was to close temporarily; this gave them a more concrete bounce back in the business. Moreover, they claimed that it was possible to assess the business's losses using a recovery plan. It will assist them in resuming operations in the industry after reaching a breaking point due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. A recovery strategy can mitigate the overall negative impact of the Pandemic, not only in the business but also in the industry.

Pongsakornrunsilp et al. (2021) suggested focusing on tourists who may be immune after recovering from COVID-19. However, new evidence suggests that people can be re-infected with COVID-19. This could complicate matters. The highly vulnerable tourism industry is

currently sailing in uncharted waters, exacerbated by the inability to predict when the COVID-19 Pandemic will end. However, in this situation, crisis management theory can assist businesses in dealing with the ongoing disruption that threatens their survival.

- **Response**

Table 10. PPRR Model of the Travel Agencies in terms of Response

| Response | WM | Rank | VI |
|--|-------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| Maintain a balance between customer service and business objectives. | 3.67 | 3 | Strongly agree |
| Protecting employees and organizing your workforce through the practice of safety protocols. | 3.87 | 1 | Strongly agree |
| Give workers and stakeholders clarity through communications and ensure business continuity | 3.83 | 2 | Strongly agree |
| Acquire an update on the pandemic and estimate your risk exposure. | 3.22 | 4 | Agree |
| Average Weighted Mean | 3.65 | | Strongly agree |

As illustrated from the table above, “Protecting employees and organizing your workforce through the practice of safety protocols” is ranked first with a weighted mean of 3.87 and is verbally interpreted as Strongly Agree. While “Acquire an update on the pandemic and estimate your risk exposure” received the lowest weighted mean of 3.22 and was interpreted as Agree.

Safety comes first, and it is critical for everyone. The implemented protocol was designed to assess an individual's risk. Wearing a mask, avoiding contact with others, and washing one's hands properly are all ways to respond to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Failure to comply with COVID-19 safety measures may jeopardize the health and safety of front-line employees, the business's viability, and the general public. To improve daily living, the protocols were followed daily.

As extracted in the Maine.Gov (2013) website, the owners are responsible for maintaining a safe and healthy work environment. A safety and health management system, or safety program, can assist you in concentrating your efforts on enhancing your workplace. Whatever you call it, your plan details the steps taken by your organization's employees to prevent occupational injuries and illnesses.

Problems encountered by the travel agencies

- **Organization and Management Aspect**

Table 11. Organization and Management Aspect

| Organization and Management | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) | Rank |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| The workplace was temporarily closed due to the current situation | 20 | 67% | 1 |
| New Safety and Health Protocol to follow | 10 | 33% | 2 |
| Total | 30 | 100% | |

The above findings implied that most of the respondents' problems under the organization and management come from government restrictions. Based on the survey, many employees from the travel agencies have lost jobs, and businesses have been forced to close temporarily due to the Covid-19 outbreak. Covid-19 wreaked havoc in this area, not just on the organization itself but also on its employees. The owners reasoned that it would be preferable to temporarily close the firm than jeopardize their employees' safety and health. Consequently, temporarily stopping their businesses will provide multiple business discourses but will significantly assist society in following and adhering to the limits.

The world is currently in a state of emergency due to the global Pandemic of COVID-19, and the tourism industry's outlook remains severely uncertain. Travel agencies are confronted with unprecedented obstacles, and some are forced to close temporarily or permanently. The Government has taken emergency measures to assist domestic tourism in reducing losses and protecting jobs and companies (Krnche & Nikoloska, 2021).

- **Marketing Aspects**

Table 12. The problem encountered by the travel agencies in terms of Marketing Aspects

| Marketing | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) | Rank |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| Limited physical marketing activities due to implementation of the protocol | 20 | 67% | 1 |
| Limited linkages and partnership | 10 | 33% | 2 |
| Total | 30 | 100% | |

Based on the result, ranked 1 showed that the respondent encountered difficulties in physical marketing activities. Because the Government imposed travel restrictions, travel agencies had been unable to publicize their services; instead, they were using modern or online marketing strategies to promote their travel services. Since a travel agency needs exposure for big companies and other groups of people and trades and expo to cater to group deals and expand their network, it was difficult for them now to market their product due to this restriction. Afanasyeva et al. (2021) said that the entire world has changed as a result of COVID-19, and this altered the course of all business around the world. Business leaders recognize the need to change the way marketing agencies, departments, and companies operate and their structure and use of modern digital technologies. Hence, the impact of digitalization on the business's marketing structure is essential. In the context of coronavirus, the use of neural network technologies in marketing to improve business quality is considered.

- **Technical/ Operation Aspect**

Table 13. The problem encountered by the travel agencies in terms of Technical/ Operation Aspect

| Technical/ Operation | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) | Rank |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| Travel restrictions as a result of COVID-19 | 5 | 17% | 2 |

| | | | |
|---|-----------|-------------|---|
| Ticketing difficulties as a result of rescheduled flights or rebooking of flights | 25 | 83% | 1 |
| Total | 30 | 100% | |

The result showed that the major problem encountered was difficulties in ticketing due to rescheduled flights or rebooking of flights. This suggested that the respondents' business operations were congested because of the flight rebooking. In line with this, rescheduling and cancellations of travel significantly impacted the business operations. The respondents claimed that these actions result in excessive business interruptions, leaving respondents with no alternative but to deliver high-quality services to their clients. Apart from that, there were situations when clients requested a refund for their bookings. As a result, travel agencies are impacted by these types of withdrawals and were compelled to offer refunds by their policies. Folinas and Mextas (2020) assessed the impacts on those countries initially affected by COVID-19, causing significant damage to the tourism sector, and estimated to be 230 million USD for the first quarter of the year. In this light, it is self-evident that this epidemic has had a detrimental effect on the travel and tourism industry's business operations.

- **Financial Aspect**

Table 14. The problem encountered by the travel agencies in terms of Financial Aspect

| Financial | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) | Rank |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| Decreased income due to travel restrictions | 20 | 67% | 1 |
| No Sales/Bookings | 10 | 33% | 2 |
| Total | 30 | 100% | |

The result for rank 1 indicated that the respondents' income was reduced because of travel restrictions. It was evident that without enough money, a business would not work. Money is considered the blood of a business. No bookings, travel restrictions, book cancellations, and changes in business operations can all harm the company's financial standing. It resulted in

financial shortages. The respondents argued that they need to consider alternative methods of replenishing their funds.

Capturing a snapshot of tourism losses is difficult because data changes as quickly as the virus spreads. As a result, many agencies did not survive, and those that did are struggling. In this light, the travel agencies should adopt and use a continuity plan so that they can still go back on their business operations (Becker, 2021).

Proposed Continuity Plan

Based on the data gathered, a business continuity plan was crafted to improve the operation of the travel agencies. The business continuity plan consisted of six (6) sections: 1) Aspect of Business, where the researchers discussed which aspects of the business had problems that the travel agencies mostly encountered; 2) Problems Encountered which tackled the difficulties encountered by travel agencies; 3) Business Impact Analysis which covered the impact of business problems; 4) Recovery Strategies/Solutions which devised a solution to the problem; 5) Plan Development on which the researchers developed procedures to improve the business operations of travel agencies during pandemics and disasters; and 6) Through testing and exercises, the proponents produce an output for the future of travel agencies that could assist them in business operations (*Please see the appendix*).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the analysis results, the researchers concluded that most respondents had been temporarily stopped operating and experiencing a cash flow shortage with revenue decreased by 51 percent to 100 percent, including their bookings (orders) with 51 percent to 100 percent decrease. Also, because of the covid-19 Pandemic, workforces are shrunk by 51 percent to 100 percent.

It can be determined that the travel agencies which participated in this study were practicing prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery in their operations.

Thus, the researchers recommended that travel agencies establish and adhere to a strategy to ensure that services can be provided even in the event of pandemic. Although in the face of the Covid-19 outbreak, the travel agencies should solicit customer feedback to boost revenue.

Additionally, the researchers suggested using self-service portals to allow clients to conveniently arrange a vacation without having to make numerous physical interactions. As a result, they will be able to provide an excellent customer experience and expand their personnel. Additionally, it was also proposed to have a concrete continuity plan for both external and internal operations to ensure coordinated response in the case of an unforeseen circumstance that could jeopardize the organization. Travel sector employees must be safe and secure both outside and inside the business, particularly during this period. Likewise, it should assess the risks by considering what might happen in the event of an emergency, where the firm is most vulnerable, and which assets are most critical to protecting and enhancing the company's recovery and operational condition to maintain a healthy cash flow.

Lastly, it is recommended that the continuity plan crafted by the researchers be used to help the travel agencies to continue operating, where the ventures stated in the proposed continuity plan may augment their income and may expand, grow, and also help the tourism industry and economy in the long run.

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APPENDIX

Proposed Business Continuity Plan

| Aspect of Business | Problems Encountered | Business Impact Analysis | Recovery Strategies/ Solutions | Plan Development | Testing and Exercises |
|------------------------------------|--|---|--|---|--|
| Organization and Management Aspect | The workplace was temporarily closed due to the current situation | Travel agencies have been forced to lay off employees and shut operations temporarily as a result of the Covid-19 epidemic. | Follow the IATF's guidelines and regulations for travel agents so that you may keep your business running even if there is a pandemic. | Strict implementation of health protocols and guidelines provided by the IATF . | Maintain a safe working environment for employees and consumers by providing adequate facilities and keeping them clean. Consistency in safe operations is ensured through the application of discipline. |

| Aspect of Business | Problems Encountered | Business Impact Analysis | Recovery Strategies/ Solutions | Plan Development | Testing and Exercises |
|--------------------|--|--|---|--|---|
| | New Safety and Health Protocol to follow | Only a small number of passengers are permitted because of the deployment of safety precautions. | Create a policy that emphasizes the importance of workplace safety and health so that the client can travel that are inclined with the national policy. | Wearing a face shield (if required) and a facemask, as well as agreeing to take a free swab test for safety, will let travelers establish ground rules before they arrive. | Putting these safety measures into place can help to make travel more secure. |
| Marketing Aspects | Limited physical marketing activities due to implementation of protocol | As a result of their limited promotion options, it's possible that bookings will be affected. | Because we live in the digital age, when anybody can view and read public information, use online promotion to your advantage. | Create a website where people can book without physical contact and discuss the new guidelines they are implementing | Positive ratings of the clients who availed different services of the business. |

| Aspect of Business | Problems Encountered | Business Impact Analysis | Recovery Strategies/ Solutions | Plan Development | Testing and Exercises |
|-----------------------------|--|---|---|--|---|
| | | | | in this Pandemic. | |
| | Limited linkages and partnership | Failure of travel agencies to attract young entrants may result in limited partnership. As a result, the opportunity to expand the business will be harmed. | Companies should create new, possibly unconventional partnerships to re-establish travelers' trust. | Travel companies should take advantage of this reset opportunity to embrace and maintain their crisis-induced agility. | Expanded partnership gained from different businesses under the tourism sector. |
| Technical/ Operation Aspect | Ticketing difficulties as a result of | The respondents' company | Create a policy that will provide | Limitation of booking cancellations; | Customers and the business will have a |

| Aspect of Business | Problems Encountered | Business Impact Analysis | Recovery Strategies/ Solutions | Plan Development | Testing and Exercises |
|--------------------|--|--|--|---|---|
| | rescheduled flights or rebooking of flights | activities were disrupted as a result of the flight rebooking, according to this. The repercussions in the company operations are rescheduling and cancellations of travel in this line. | solution to this kind of problem. Include the said policy in the contract of agreement with the client so that they will be aware of the Do's and Don'ts. | Rescheduling is allowed with a given period. | strict contract with regards to their booking agreement. |
| | Travel restrictions as a result of COVID-19 | Losses from canceled leisure and business travel plans. Visitors and revenue are both down. Job losses, as well as a drop in hotel occupancy, rates, and | Travel should reduce costs by laying off employees. Closing facilities and floors/wings of lodging areas, as well as employees taking vacation or unpaid leave. In addition, | While traveling, it is necessary to wear a face mask and to check vaccine cards. It is vital to be completely vaccinated, and if you are not, you should follow the | The findings of this study may aid in transportation planning and policy formulation during pandemics by providing insight into people's travel requirements. |

| Aspect of Business | Problems Encountered | Business Impact Analysis | Recovery Strategies/ Solutions | Plan Development | Testing and Exercises |
|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|--|--|---|
| | | overall hotel performance. | they redirected their marketing and sales and offered discounted packages to increase hotel occupancy. Checking travel behavior before and during the COVID-19 Pandemic will be investigated, as well as adhering to all state and local recommendations and requirements, such as mask wearing and social distancing. | advice for non-vaccinated individuals. | Government officials, in particular, might utilize this data to plan for intelligent and partial lockdowns. |

| Aspect of Business | Problems Encountered | Business Impact Analysis | Recovery Strategies/ Solutions | Plan Development | Testing and Exercises |
|--------------------|--|--|---|---|---|
| Financial Aspect | Decreased income due to travel restrictions | Travel restrictions, book cancellations, and changes in business operations can all have an adverse effect on the company's financial position. It resulted in financial shortage. | Provide a low-cost option for booking in order to attract more passengers. Also, those that completed the travel protocol will receive a discount. | A 10% discount will be given to the passengers undergo swab test and 20% discount for family package with a minimum of 5 members. | Meet the target profit even at midst of Pandemic and technicalities of the flight. |
| | No Sales/Bookings | Lack of strategic ways to attract more passengers and it could be disadvantage of organization or travel agencies. Also, it will decrease the number of customers, and | Do advertising and promotion using online platform, so that even there is no sale/bookings the company or organization will be recognized to many people. | Make a website, page or account in social media or any other online platform in order to reach out large number of people. | Passengers is expected to increase than the usual and because of this it will be seen if it is effective. |

| Aspect of Business | Problems Encountered | Business Impact Analysis | Recovery Strategies/ Solutions | Plan Development | Testing and Exercises |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| | | that would be less profitable. | | | |

