

Destination Resilience and Competitiveness in Times of COVID-19 Coronavirus: The Case of United Arab Emirates.

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Abstract

Tourism is one of the fastest-growing industries; many countries' GDP highly depends on the tourism industry, but there were moments recently where countries experienced a setback that caused a considerable effect on people's lives due to the pandemic. In the case of the current study, we analyzed the destination resilience and competitiveness in the face of setbacks, from Covid-19 in the United Arab Emirates. To carry out this research, we used primary and secondary methods through a survey and KH Coder Analysis based on the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index model from the World Economic Forum (2007). This study is crucial as it can strongly support by giving important guidelines to local authorities on how to remain competitive and resilient during the Covid-19 pandemic through the proposed tourism sustainability map model.

Keywords: Tourist destination; competitiveness; TTCI; Covid-19; UAE; KH Coder

Introduction

The catastrophic pandemic caused by COVID - 19 has affected the world's most influential travel markets. The tourism sector was one of the most affected since the tourism industry is considered a highly vulnerable industry due to different socio-economic and political risks (Sigala, 2020). The pandemic significantly impacted the socio-cultural, political, and economic systems at the global level and mitigated the need for effective measures to contain the rapid spread of the coronavirus through global lockdowns (Aref, 2020; Uğur and Akbıyık, 2020). The change caused by the crisis affected the tourism industry in several unprecedented ways, and the industry was not ready to accept the transformation caused by the situation. This scenario brought many challenges for tourism destinations concerning competitiveness and resilience.

Tourism Destination Competitiveness, commonly known as TDC, has been hardly studied and is vital in the literature review due to the fact it is primordial that tourist destinations maintain their competitiveness since more tourists are entering the international panorama daily (Andrades and Dimanche, 2019; Almeida-Santana and Moreno-Gils, 2018). However, a lack of studies in the literature review was noticed relating tourism competitiveness and resilience and the covid-19 pandemic, which is a clear gap in the literature and the primary goal of our study. The authors intend to assess the destination resilience and competitiveness of the United Arab Emirates during the COVID-19 Coronavirus pandemic through policies and techniques that the country and each tourism and travel-related company should consider to create resilience to pandemic effects.

The goal is to produce a tourism sustainability model in the face of the Covid 19 pandemic for the UAE. This model will help firms struggling with the tourism response to the pandemic to be able to survive. This model will

apply to as guidance to dealing with future crises. This study is very important since tourism is a key industry sector in the United Arab Emirates over the past ten-year period, turning out to be a vital constituent of the UAE's effective economic variation strategy.

Literature Review: Tourism Destination Resilience and Competitiveness

During the last decades, tourism literature has grown interested in the notion of a competitive destination. Destination competitiveness is the ability of a destination to deliver goods and services that perform better than other destinations on those aspects of the tourism experience considered to be essential by tourists (Dwyer and Kim, 2003; Sul et al., 2020; Crouch & Ritchie, 1999; Hassan, 2000). Competitiveness in tourism can be described as the elements that make a destination competitive such as its ability to increase tourism expenditure, attract visitors while providing them with satisfying and memorable experiences in a profitable way while enhancing the well-being of destination residents and preserving the natural capital of the destination for future generations (Ritchie and Crouch, 2003; Bris and Caballero, 2015; Sul et al., 2020; Nematpour & Faraji, 2019).

Competitiveness has become a central platform of tourism policy. As competition increases and tourism activity intensifies, tourism policy focuses on improving competitiveness by creating a statutory framework for monitoring, controlling and enhancing quality and efficiency in the industry (Michael et al., 2019). In the preceding decades' competition in tourism was very often identified with the price component and was frequently restricted to the micro-level. It cannot be denied that for a destination as well as for an enterprise, price is a vital element of competitiveness (Dwyer et al., 2000). However, since the beginning of the 1990s, the tourism sector and tourism scientists have been aware that besides comparative advantages and price, many other variables determine the competitiveness of a tourism enterprise or destination.

There are several prominent destination competitiveness models comprising a set of indicators that have been extensively recognized in the literature (seen in table 1), even though the majority of them focus on the supply side, which brings severe limitations (Cronjé and du Plessis, 2020). Perhaps the most recent and most applicable framework to measure tourism competitiveness is structured by WEF (2019) is the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI).

Table 1. Main TDC model assessments

Authors	Model and determinants
Ritchie and Crouch (1993)	Conceptual model of destination competitiveness Combination of comparative and competitive advantages of the tourism industry (combination of micro and macro factors)
Ritchie and Crouch (2003)	Calgary Model with 36 attributes over 5 layers which are core resources and attractors, supporting factors and resources, destination management, qualifying and amplifying determinants, and destination policy, planning and development. Calgary Model is one of the most comprehensive in the tourism literature as it recognizes macro and micro economic factors.
Dwyer and Kim (2003)	Combines Porter and tourism competitiveness elements Combination of core resources, supporting factors and resources, destination management, situational conditions and market performance.
Health (2003)	Destination competitive framework in the form of a house building model that consists of the foundation, building blocks, cement, and the roof. Heath's model is influenced by Ritchie and Crouch (2003) and provided an extension through its emphasis on human resource development, communication, and information management.

Gooroochurn and Sugiyarto (2005)	Based on the secondary data provided by the WTTC database. Combination of price openness, technology infrastructure, human resources, social development, and environment to rank tourism destinations worldwide.
World Economic Forum (2007)	Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index TTCI Combination several varieties of tourism variables, such as, policy of government, business environment and economy, human, cultural and natural resources.

Source: Own elaboration based on Hanafiah and Zulkifly (2019), Bire et al. (2021), Drakulic Kovacevic (2017)

The Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index is a comprehensive framework incorporating indicators that are widely agreed upon to be crucial to destination competitiveness, and it has been developed under the auspices of the World Economic Forum (WEF) with input from the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) adopted from the competitiveness monitor model from Gooroochurn and Sugiyarto (2005). The objective of the TTCI is to help explore the factors driving T&T's competitiveness worldwide, such as the government's policy, business environment and the economy, economy, human, cultural and natural resources. TTCI intends to contribute through a competitiveness index encompassing various tourism variables, highlighting the importance of tourism data in supporting tourism decisions (Hanafiah and Zulkifly, 2019).

Its explicit aim is to provide a comprehensive strategic tool for measuring the factors and policies that make it attractive to develop the Travel & Tourism (T&T) sector in different countries through 14 pillars under the four-sub indexes. The 14 pillars are presented below after an in-depth analysis and correlation with the context of our study.

Sub index 1. Enabling Environment

- **C1. Business Environment.** C1, this pillar captures the extent to which a country has in place, a policy environment, conducive for companies to do business. Research has found significant links between economic growth and aspects such as how well property rights are protected and the efficiency of the legal framework. Similarly, distortions in taxation and competition policy—including both domestic and international competition, measured in terms of foreign direct investment (FDI) facilitation—impact the efficiency and productivity of a country. These factors are important for all sectors, including tourism, and travel (T&T). In addition, we consider the cost and time necessary to deal with construction permits, which is a particularly relevant issue for T&T development;
- **C2 Safety and Security.** Safety and security are critical factors determining the competitiveness of a country's T&T industry. Tourists are likely to be deterred from traveling to dangerous countries or regions, making it less attractive to develop the T&T sector in those places. Here we consider the costliness of common crime and violence as well as terrorism, and the extent to which police services can be relied upon to provide protection from crime;
- **C3 Health and Hygiene.** Health and Hygiene is also essential for T&T competitiveness. Access to improved drinking water and sanitation is important for the comfort and health of travellers. In the event that tourists do become ill, the country's health sector must be able to ensure they are properly cared for, as measured by the availability of physicians and hospital beds. In addition, high prevalence of HIV and malaria can have an impact on the productivity of the T&T labour force and play a role in discouraging tourists from visiting a country;
- **C4 Human Resources and Labour Market.** High-quality human resources in an economy ensure that the industry has access to the collaborators it needs. The components of this pillar measure how well countries develop skills through education and training and enhance the best allocation of those skills through an efficient labour market. The former includes formal educational attainment rates and private sector involvement in upgrading human resources, such as business investment in training services and customer care. The latter includes measures of the flexibility, efficiency and openness of the labour

market, and the participation of women, to assess the depth of the country's talent pool and its ability to allocate human resources to their best use;

- **C5 ICT Readiness.** Online services and business operations have increasing importance in T&T, with the internet being used for planning itineraries and booking travel and accommodation. However, ICT is now so pervasive and important for all sectors, it is considered part of the general enabling environment. The components of this pillar measure not only the existence of modern hard infrastructure (i.e. mobile network coverage and quality of electricity supply), but also the capacity of businesses and individuals to use and provide online services.

(UAE Information and Services, 2020; MEED, 2020; Ali, Chandra and Sharma, 2019; World Economic Forum, W, 2007)

Sub index 2. T&T Policy and Enabling Conditions

- **C6 Prioritization of Strong Leadership and Management.** It is necessary to have strong leadership in order for the tourism industry to succeed. This means a management and leadership that is conscious, strong and effective. Also, it is a leadership that expressly prioritizes success of the tourism industry sector. Including recognizing importance of the importance of sustainable development, and how it can be applied in business organizations;
- **C7 International Openness.** Developing a competitive T&T sector internationally requires a certain degree of openness and travel facilitation. Restrictive policies such as cumbersome visa requirements diminish tourists' willingness to visit a country, and indirectly reduce the availability of key services. Components measured in this pillar include the openness of the bilateral air service agreements which the government has entered, which impacts the availability of air connections to the country, and the number of regional trade agreements in force, which proxies the extent to which it is possible to provide world class tourism services;
- **C8 Price Competitiveness.** Lower costs related to travel in a country increase its attractiveness for many travellers as well as for investing in the T&T sector. Among the aspects of price competitiveness considered in this pillar are airfare ticket taxes and airport charges, which can make flight tickets much more expensive; the relative cost of hotel accommodation; the cost of living, proxied by purchasing power parity; and fuel price costs, which directly influence the cost of travel;
- **C9 Environmental Sustainability.** The importance of the natural environment for providing an attractive location for tourism cannot be overstated, so policies and factors enhancing environmental sustainability are an important competitive advantage in ensuring a country's future attractiveness as a destination. This pillar consists of policy indicators such as the stringency and enforcement of the government's environmental regulations and variables assessing the status of water, forest resources and marine life, proxied by fish stock status. Given the environmental impacts of tourism itself, we also consider the extent to which the T&T industry is developed in a sustainable manner.

(Ali, Chandra and Sharma, 2019; International Trade Administration, 2020; United Arab Emirates Ministry of Cabinet Affairs, 2020; Vision, 2021; World Economic Forum, W, 2007)

Sub index 3. Infrastructure

- **C10 Air Transport Infrastructure.** Air connectivity is essential for travellers' ease of access to and from countries, as well as movement within many countries. In this pillar we measure the quantity of air transport, using indicators such as available seat kilometres, the number of departures, airport density and the number of operating airlines, as well as the quality of air transport infrastructure for domestic and international flights;
- **C11 Ground and Port Infrastructure.** The availability of efficient and accessible transportation to key business centers and tourist attractions is vital for the T&T sector. This requires a sufficiently extensive road and railroad network, proxied by road and railroad densities, as well as roads, railroads, and ports infrastructure that meet international standards of comfort, security and modal efficiency. The pillar also

accounts for unpaved roads, which enable local connections, and to some extent, can proxy the existence of picturesque roads, which can, in very specific contexts, attract tourists;

- **C12 Tourist Service Infrastructure.** The availability of sufficient quality accommodation, resorts and entertainment facilities can represent a significant competitive advantage for a country. We measure the level of tourism service infrastructure through the number of hotel rooms complemented by the extent of access to services such as car rentals and ATMs.

(Gulf News, 2020; UAE Information and Services, 2020; Committbiz, 2020; World Economic Forum, W, 2007)

Sub index 4. Natural and Cultural Resources

- **C13 Natural Resources.** Countries with natural assets clearly have a competitive advantage in attracting tourists. In this pillar we include a number of attractiveness measures, including the number of UNESCO natural World Heritage sites, a measure of the quality of the natural environment which proxies the beauty of its landscape, the richness of the fauna in the country as measured by the total known species of animals, and the percentage of nationally protected areas, which proxies the extent of national parks and nature reserves;
- **C14 Cultural Resources and Business Travel.** A country's cultural resources are another critical driver of T&T competitiveness. In this pillar we include the number of UNESCO cultural World Heritage sites, the number of large stadiums that can host significant sport or entertainment events, and a new measure of digital demand for cultural and entertainment—the number of online searches related to a country's cultural resources can allow the level of interest to be inferred. The number of international association meetings taking place in a country is included to capture, at least partially, business travel.

(Gulf News, 2015; World Economic Forum, W, 2007)

The TTCI uses primary and secondary data and assesses the tourism competitiveness on a destination's macro (national) level. TTCI is commonly used since 2007 as the leading tourism performance indicator (Mazanec and Ring, 2011). The TTCI provides a basis for implementing policies to improve destination competitiveness country-by-country. The TTCI covers 140 countries, accounting for 98 per cent of the world population and 98 per cent of world GDP.

In 2022 the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index transitioned to Travel & Tourism Development Index, reflecting higher coverage of travel and tourism concepts, an extensive role of sustainability, and resilience-focused on the sector's economic and social development to mitigate pandemics impacts. The new Travel & Tourism (T&T) sector in different countries" through 17 pillars under the five-sub indexes.

Destination competitiveness is linked with the ability of a destination to deliver goods and services that perform better than other destinations on aspects of the tourism experience that are important for tourists. All stakeholders need to know how destination competitiveness (price and non-price) is changing and why these changes are occurring. An industry's competitiveness is a critical determinant of how well it performs in world markets; therefore, all tourist destinations need to access their competitiveness and implement strategies for improvement.

The following section presents the methodology, including the research methods chosen to support this research, including primary and secondary research and qualitative and quantitative approaches.

Methodology and Conceptual Framework

This chapter focuses on examining and stating the research methodology selected for this research; including data collection and analysis technique. The section will aim to explore and define qualitative research methodology and several data collection phases.

The main issue that has been experienced in the past few months, due to the Covid-19, is that the tourism part of the economy became weakened due to no flights and no tourism from abroad. However, destination resilience of the UAE tourism sector, was observed in the region, and as soon as the scenario got a little better in the region,

the visitors began to pour into the state, and started to improve the prospects for the UAE's tourism industry (Abbas, 2020). Thus, the research problem is to analyze the factors that can encourage tourism to make a comeback in the UAE and bring it back to its original height by producing a sustainability model correlating the primary constructs in terms of competitiveness and resilience.

In support of answering the research problem, the following research questions/ objectives have been identified as follows:

- **RQ1:** What are the policies and factors that can be helpful in the reincorporation of tourism and the economy?
- **RQ2:** What new ways can reinstate tourism in UAE after the Covid-19 pandemic?
- **RQ3:** What is the impact of destination resilience on the country's tourism industry?
- **RO1.** Recognize the policies and factors that can be helpful in the reincorporation of tourism and economy;
- **RO2.** Identify the new ways that can reinstate tourism in UAE after the Covid-19 pandemic;
- **RO3.** Analyze the impact of destination resilience on the country's tourism industry.

This research has opted to use primary data collection as the supplementary source of deduction. The use of primary data involved an online survey form which was filled by different respondents. This data collection method was selected because of its advantage for the research implications and findings. The survey method was selected because it is accessible and provides easier data collection. This research has adopted a close-ended survey design method for achieving the research purpose. The close-ended survey form has helped the respondents to select from a range of different options. This includes providing a Likert scale point option for the respondents. The secondary method involved in this research includes a big data approach with different types of text sources that address the 14 primary constructs the researchers identified from the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index plus a 15 construct identified as the main pillars for the United Arab Emirates economy (Goundar, 2015). This included journal articles which were selected on basis of their relevancy with the research.

- **C15 Privatization.** Once a sector or an industry is privatized, the owners are responsible for its success or company failures. They will be responsible for the management, leadership, and sustainable development. In tourism agencies, the company leader is responsible for the decision that the company makes; in the article "Tourism destination competitiveness in UAE: The role of strategic leadership and strategic planning effectiveness," the author explained strategic steps taken by the tourism agencies in UAE. In this article, a quantitative research approach is used to investigate competitiveness in tourism agencies in the UAE. A questionnaire was built, and it was distributed among people. This survey-based research gave the author much clear information about the exact opinion that people have about the research topic. The results of the froths study showed the importance of strategic planning in tourism. At the end of the article, the author also mentioned the importance of a marketing plan for tourism agencies' good working. As more and more tourists are satisfied, they will increase the fame of the agency. The coming tourists would work with the best-reviewed tourism agency (Tourism Destination Competitiveness in UAE: The Role of Strategic Leadership and Strategic Planning Effectiveness, 2019).

This research has adopted quantitative data collection methods, which include graphs and charts adopted from the survey. The qualitative data involved in this research has been adopted from different kinds of literature. Authors worked collaboratively in sharing the survey all over social media, but since the time was tight, the researchers focused on a few responses only to analyze. Besides the survey, extensive data of over 7000 targeted words per construct has been collected, for analysis using KH Coder (Higuchi, 2016).

KH coder is a mixed method technology that uses quantitative analysis to interpret qualitative data and an open-source software application that is well received by researchers worldwide. It helps to analyze qualitative data, quantitative data analysis, text mining, and computational linguistics. The software helps process etymological information of text in more than six languages such as English, Japanese, Italian, Spanish, French, German, and Portuguese. The friendly tool helped us to identify themes in large unstructured data sets such as articles (Higuchi,

2016). Authors plan to gather a large quantity research data and use KH Coder operatively upon the gathered data to achieve the research objectives of modeling factors of resilience and competitiveness for the UAE tourism sector. The qualitative and quantitative research methods both contribute value to the achieving the desired result; thus, a mixed research method of research will be used.

In general, researching an entire population will not be possible, for instance when performing a questionnaire survey. Sampling is a method which allows researchers to deduce population data depending on the outcomes from a subset of society without always person having to investigation. Reduction in the number of research participants decreases costs and workload. However, this must be weighed against the large adequate samples with the ability to detect true correlation. It can also make collecting accurate information easier. The sampling method used in this research is known as a convenience sampling technique. This convenience sampling method is used because it helps to select readily accessible yet unbiased respondents. The survey is design allows any type of participant to answer the question because the research topic targets a general research.

The sample for this research defines a target population which has been used to answer the survey and find different deductions. The sample size selected for this research included 20 randomly selected tourists travelling to UAE. This sample size was selected because of easier management and limited resources due to Covid-19. The location of this survey involved online communities of tourist who have travelled before. This was done by uploading the survey to online communities which helped to garner different responses. The location of this survey is not fixed because tourists belong to different locations.

The survey data has been analyzed using the response rate method which focuses on answering the survey with the percentages. One such number is the response rate of the survey or the percentage of respondents. The individuals who had the privilege of finalizing the survey are your participants. The number of participants" to whom you e-mailed the survey is for an individual or net supporter survey. This is assisted by presenting different graphs and charts which has helped to present the data in a sequential manner.

This research has followed different ethical implications which is important for maintain the code of conduct for both personal and academic reasons. These ethical implications firstly include respecting the right to privacy. This research involves selection of respondents and their personal information such as name and answers. This personal information includes their phone number and email which have been kept confidential. For achieving this purpose, the survey contained a small consent form for the participants. This consent form allowed the participants to find about the research and agree to it's the mentioned terms. Secondly, the research has also followed several other implications such as providing valid and reliable results. This reliability is ensured by using both primary data and analyzing it in accordance with past research.

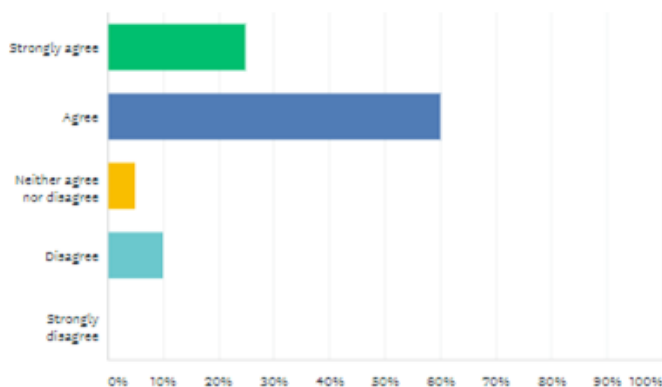
In the following section, the detailed results from the research will become apparent, allowing authors to achieve important conclusions and address fruitful recommendations.

Findings: Collation, Presentation and Analysis of Primary Data Collected

This section of the research aims to present a comprehensive analysis of the data collected from the research.

Regarding the primary data the survey responses have been analyzed using response number data analysis technique. The tourism industry functions on different tourists and needs these people for its long-term sustainability in the world. This industry is supported by different types of travelers coming from different locations. However, the corona virus has dented the viability of the industry, as travelers actually fear the virus and its infections. The finding of the survey has shown different results which support the claim. This includes 25% respondents who have strongly agreed with the provided statement in the survey. The results show 60% respondents who have simply agreed with this statement whereas 10% respondents have simply disagreed. The results also show 0% respondents who have strongly disagreed with the statement. This proves that the statement is backed by majority respondents in the survey (see graph 1).

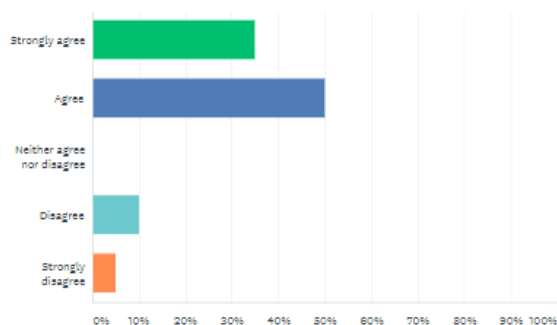
Graph 1. The tourism industry has been badly impacted by the Covid 19 spread?



Source: Own elaboration

In regards to the spread of these corona virus pathogens, authorities around the world have taken and enhanced their strategies for standard operating procedures (SOPs). This includes providing protective gear to security officials at Airports and other commuting options. This is mainly because these preventive measures help authorities to contain infection and protect themselves as well. The finding of the survey has shown different results which support the claim. This includes 35% respondents who have strongly agreed with the provided statement in the survey. The results show 50% respondents who have simply agreed with this statement whereas 10% respondents have simply disagreed. The results also show 5% respondents who have strongly disagreed with the statement. This proves that the statement is backed by majority respondents in the survey (see graph 2).

Graph 2. There is a need to form effective safety policies and SOPs to control the spread of Covid 19 during travelling?

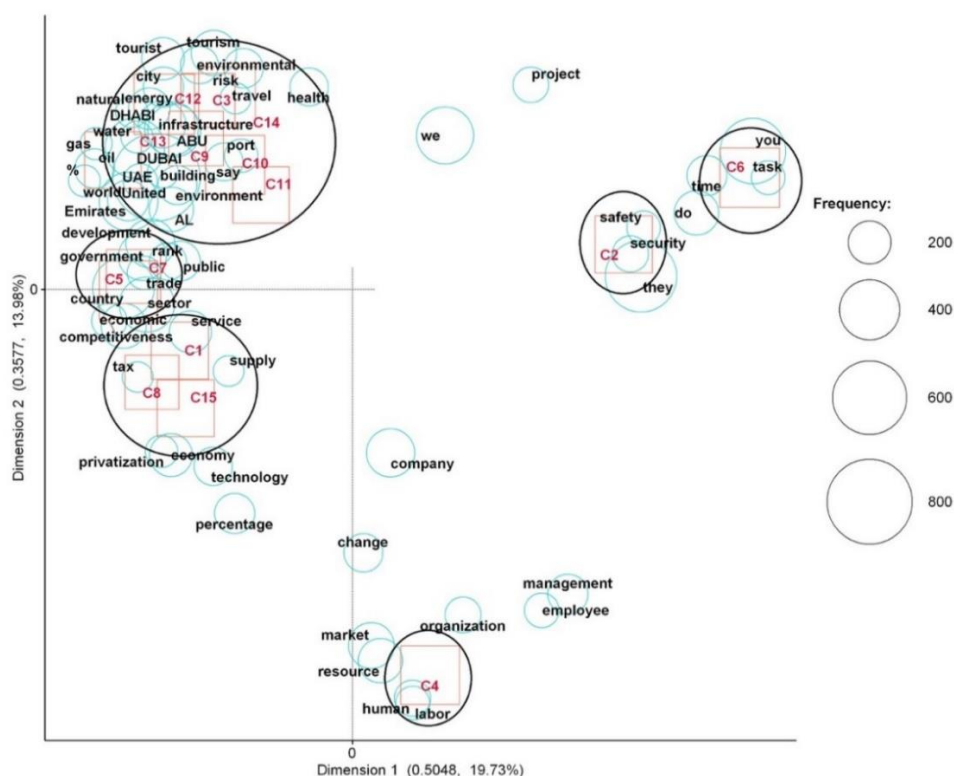


Source: Own elaboration

From the survey results, the authors can conclude that the Covid 19 pandemic badly impacted the tourism industry since most correspondents agree with the statement. It was also evident through the presented results that there is a strong need to develop effective safety policies and SOPs by governments and tourism companies to avoid the spread of the covid-19.

Concerning the secondary data, the authors used the KH coder data analysis and performed correspondence analysis to show the relationship between the chosen topics; this relationship is classified as two groups of variables. In this model, we will be discussing the 15 topics, and how they are related to each other, these topics were searched in the big data and went to the KH Coder (see graph 3).

Graph 3. Co-occurrence network for tourism resilience in times of COVID-19



Source: Own elaboration

The background circles signify the scale of the topic and proximity of the foreground circles, indicate the more its relatedness of material and data mentioned. Whereas, the smaller the circle, the less material and less related to the topic. The correspondence analysis model demonstrated the proximity of a range of constructs as follows:

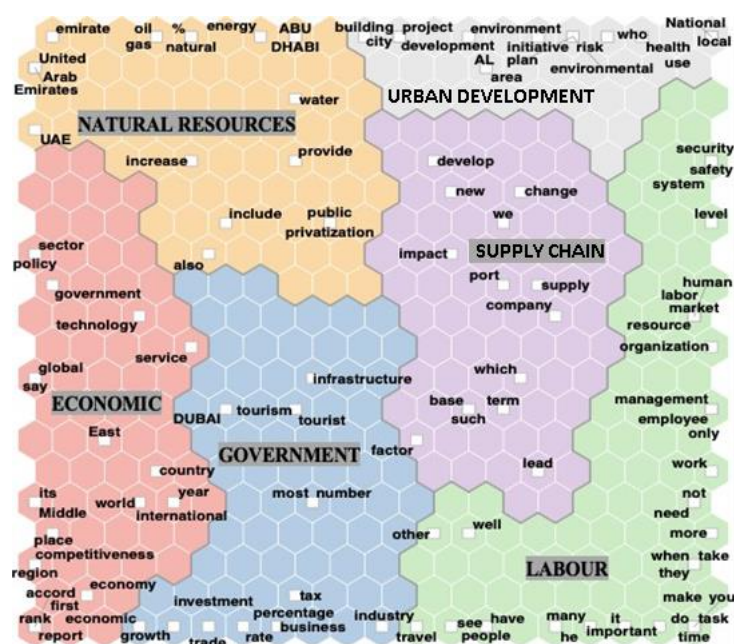
- **First: C3, C9, C10, C11, C12, C13:** These topics represent: C3 - Health and Hygiene, C9 - Environmental Sustainability, C10 – Air transport Infrastructure, C11 - Ground and port infrastructure, C12 - Tourist Services infrastructure, and C13 - Natural resources. These topics are related to each other and there was relatively more data and material found in the research;
- **Second: C5, C7:** Representing (C5 - ICT readiness and C7 - International Openness). These topics are closer to each other according to the correspondence analysis and more related;
- **Third: C1, C8, C15:** representing (C1 - Business Environmental, C8 - Price competitiveness and C15 - Privatization). These were related topics which can be grouped together.

There were several topics which were spatially less related to the others, and thus unique.

- **C4: Representing** (C4 - Human resource and Labor market). Less related to the rest of the topics.
- **C2: Representing** (C2 - Safety and Security) is closer and related to C6 but less to the rest. C6: Representing (C6 - Prioritization of Strong Leader Ship and Management)

The model shows that C4, C2, and C6 are less related and have a peripheral rather than core influence, and seem to function more as mediating factors. Furthermore, the remainder of constructs has greater tourism influence and contains many key points of that was data collected. Dimension 1 is accounting for (19.73%), of the variance and Dimension 2 accounting for (13.98%) percent of the variance between factors. We have not determined what constitutes each dimension. The relative scale of the data collected for each construct is denoted by the physical size of each orange rectangle. The light blue circles denote prevalence of words in the sample. Besides this analysis authors decided to perform a self-organizing map which will enrich the obtained results (see figure 1).

Figure 1. KH Coder Data Analysis Using a Self-Organizing Map



Source: Own elaboration

In the Self-Organizing map, we understood that the colors closer to blue, like purple and green, are more related, and are topics in the foreground. Colors closer to white, such as grey shown as Urban Development on the map, are neutral, and the shades closer to pink like orange and red are less related and more distant spatially from the other constructs located on the map. Constructs are listed on the below by color from the more to the less related topics.

- **Blue** (Representing the Government): Tax Percentage, Infrastructure, Tourism, Investment, Growth, Trade;
- **Purple** (Representing Covid 19 Supply Chain): Develop, Lead, Company, Supply, Port, Factor, Base, Term, Change, Impact;
- **Green** (Representing Labor): Safety, Security, Human, Labor, Organization, Resource and Management;
- **Grey** (Urban Development): City, Development, Building, Environment, Health, National.
- **Orange** (Representing Natural Resources): Energy, Gas, Oil, Water, UAE, Natural, Public Privatization;
- **Red** (Representing Economics): Economic, Growth, International, Policy, Technology, Government, Region, Place-based Competitiveness.

The results from the sustainability map will support the United Arab Emirates in recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic and any other future crises that might arise. This model guides the factors that encourage destination recovery, resilience and competitiveness. The following section reveals answering the research as mentioned earlier questions, main conclusions and recommendations.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Tourism destinations have been experiencing many crises caused by climate variation, natural disasters, financial recession, political uncertainties, internal chaos, and violence over the years now. These kinds of crises affect significantly incoming tourism flows and, accordingly, the tourism industry or tourism destinations. In 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic hit the globe badly revealing a humanitarian crisis disturbing people's lives, prompting a global financial crisis. This situation has very tangible impacts intended for the tourism subdivision, which is dangerous for several people, places, and businesses related to it. UAE is no safety from the threats and impacts

of this pandemic and got affected by all means. However, its competitiveness, resilience and restrictive policies helped it get back on its development; particularly, the tourism industry is beginning to strive back again.

The UAE ranked first in the Arab world, in the indicator of economic recovery from the effects of the Covid-19 epidemic published by the Horizon Research Group, to assess the capabilities and assets that countries possess, which help them overcome the crisis and recover from it, with the aim of developing effective policies to deal with this challenge, and according to support efforts to achieve full recovery in all sectors. The UAE's investment in developing digital infrastructure for various sectors with the aim of harnessing modern technology in managing the country's economy and its services, because technology has a tremendous impact on these technologies in charting the way of the future, so that the quality of the UAE's digital infrastructure is no less than the quality of the traditional infrastructure.

The destination's competitiveness and resilience did not let it fall behind its value as it has alternate ways to attract visitors, and many people living there kept on having visits to the destination after some leniency in the laws made for Covid-19, the country has not faced any resistance in its tourism (Hatemi, 2016). The recovery is part of the UAE strategy towards resilience. With the UAE population is still rising, the government is especially targeting the tech-savvy millennials through smartphones, exploiting universal technology infiltration. With increasing technology usage globally, the UAE anticipates transitioning into a universal smart state by positioning world-class disruptive technologies for improved connectivity digitally. Authors researched the policies and techniques that the country and each tourism and travel-related company should consider to create resilience to pandemic effects, and create opportunities for tourists to begin revisiting the destination presented through the sustainability map. Authors also have several recommendations to the UAE government as follows:

- Developing the readiness of the health system to deal with epidemics and health risks, will be positively reflected during the health system's handling of the crisis of the spread of the "Covid-19" epidemic. Through the continuous development of treatment protocols based on advanced technologies and the latest scientific research findings, to achieve high cure rates in exchange for low mortality rates. And the development of a promising drug for the virus;
- Creating additional opportunities that businessmen and investors can benefit from. The enormity of financial assets, the superiority of the infrastructure and logistical and the diversity of the UAE's economic relations with various countries of the world help to attract investors. Attracting businessmen improves the credit, financial and monetary situation in the country and achieve stability and full recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic;
- Launching several initiatives in various sectors in the field of health care technology, government investment in manufacturing medicines and vaccines to cope with epidemics, establishing flexible response units for rapid containment of future epidemics, and strengthening the supply chain management system to provide medical products;
- Strengthening the national campaign for sterilization at the state level in the event of another wave of the epidemic, launching platforms for electronic health protection, intensifying awareness campaigns and physical distancing, in addition to strengthening the psychological aspect of society. Moreover, the adoption of distance education and study to avoid the spread of infection among people;
- Focusing on the health of the population in the country is the most important priority because the human being is the basis of development and its main focus, and he must always be healthy in order to ensure that he plays his role in the development of society and the sustainability of its prosperity.

Based on the conducted research, some limitations can be identified, such as the sample size of the survey, which was very limited, and the fact that many critics were addressed to the TTCI, the selected model used in our research. The prominent critics are related to the fact that advanced economies fare significantly better across most of the variables considered in the model, TTCI tends to rank advanced economies higher than countries in lower stages of development, the arbitrary weighting of the variables, the reliability and validity of the index and the statistical methods involved in formulating and developing the index (Hafiz Hanafiah et al., 2016; Kester and Croce, 2011; Mendola and Volo, 2017). Also, recent literature review discussions strengthen that destination

competitiveness should not be exclusively determined based on a destination's competitive advantages but the actual performance of tourism revenues. Therefore, further studies in this area should be broader and embrace different tourism competitiveness models and include not only the tourism supply perspective.

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