

The Effect of Coronavirus Pandemic on Tourism Industry in West Nusa Tenggara, Case Study: Travel Bureau

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Abstract: The world appeared to end in 2020 due to a remarkable Covid-19 pandemic. When COVID-19 arrived, it had an impact on every aspect of life, but particularly on the economy. This research discusses the effect of Coronavirus on the tourism industry in West Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia, which focus on travel bureau. This research aims to study the effect of Coronavirus on travel bureau's activity and company's revenue. in collaboration with ASITA, Association of The Indonesian Tours and Travel Agencies, this research qualified as descriptive research using mixed methods conveyed in grounded theory with the questionnaires and interviews as data collection methods. Results indicate that the travel bureau's revenue and package sales are significantly impacted by the coronavirus outbreak. However, this study also discovered that government assistance, including economic aid and intense program initiatives, is not equal.

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Introduction

The planet has been witnessing many outbreaks of infectious diseases in the past two decades. In terms of economic disruption and the burden on local and global public health, Ebola, Influenza A (H1N1), Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome as well-known as SARS, Middle East Respiratory Syndrome or MERS, and Zika viruses have had a significant global impact. More recently, in Wuhan City, China, the global outbreak of the new 2019 Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) identified as part of coronavirus virus family considered a significant threat to public health systems.

At the end of 2019, based on World Health Organization's situation report number 1, in Wuhan City, Hubei Province of China, the WHO China Country Office has been notified of pneumonia cases of unknown aetiology (unknown cause). A total of 44 case-patients with pneumonia of unknown aetiology were registered to the WHO by the national authorities in China from December 31, 2019, through January 3, 2020. The causal agent was not identified during this recorded period. On January 7, 2020, the Chinese authorities identified these pneumonia cases (Placeholder1)as a new Coronavirus type. Not long after the first reported cases in China, three countries also reported the first imported lab-confirmed novel coronavirus cases (2019-nCoV) from Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. On January 30, 2020, the epidemic was announced by World Health Organization as a public health emergency of international concern. On January 31, 2020, there are 9826 confirmed cases and China as a pandemic centrum (WHO, 2020).

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Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is described by Perlman and Natland as an RNA virus with a typical crown-like appearance under an electron microscope due to the presence of glycoprotein spikes on its envelope (Perlman, 2009). Another description was brought by Amanat & Krammer in *SARS-CoV-2 Vaccines: Status Report*, they explained Coronavirus (COVID-19) as an illness caused by a virus that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a new coronavirus that has spread throughout the world. COVID-19 symptoms can range from mild (or no symptoms) to severe illness. Coronavirus is a family of the virus and can cause illnesses such as the common cold, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), and the Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) (Amanat, 2020).

World health organization claimed that The COVID-19 virus spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes, so it is crucial to practice respiratory etiquette (for example, coughing into a flexed elbow) (WHO, Coronavirus-prevention. , 2020). From the same source, Until December 12, 2020, there are 69,808,588 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 1,588,854 deaths, reported to World Health Organization.

Since the Covid-19 virus was described as a life-threatening virus and spreads through airborne, the World health organization already published some rules and restrictions for public use. For example, self-protection by wearing a mask in public places or outdoor activity, physical distancing, washing hands regularly, meeting and gathering restrictions, and enforcing the quarantine. According to the World Health Organization's situational report regarding to Coronavirus number 20, at the beginning of February 2020, World Health Organization started to work with International Air Transport Association (IATA) to control the flights to and from China. The authorities jointly developed a guidance document to provide advice to cabin crew and airport workers, based on country queries (WHO, Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) Situation Report – 20, 2020).

Soon after how the virus became worst, each country around the world declared the travel restriction. As one of the busiest airports in the world, Dubai International Airport, which under control of United Arab Emirates, declared The United Arab Emirates would resume issuing visas to foreign visitors to all seven of its regions as of September 24, 2020. The UAE authorities have stated that with effect from August 11, all citizens, returning residents, transit passengers, and tourists have to undertake a COVID-19 PCR test in the country they are currently in and prove a negative result before travelling to the UAE. The test must be a PCR swab test. Other test results, including antibody tests, are not accepted. The test must have been carried out within 96 hours of departure. The test result is required for travellers from all countries arriving at all airports in the UAE (travelbans.org, 2020).

Not only in America or Europe, but also the Indonesian government declared a temporary ban on domestic air, sea, and land travel from April 24, 2020, until June 1, 2020. One of the international gates of Indonesia, Bali, were closed to foreign tourists due to coronavirus concerns until 2021. Authorities of this popular holiday destination had earlier said foreign visitors would be allowed to return, but the plan has been scrapped over Indonesia's mounting Covid-19 cases. The only international airport permitted to open the gate for foreign visitors is Soekarno-Hatta International Airport, Jakarta.

As one of the most populated countries in Asia, travel restriction was one of the hardest decisions for Indonesia. At the end of 2020, the Indonesian government already stated that commercial flights are operating to and from Indonesia. All foreign nationals are excluded from

entering and transiting through Indonesia. There are six exceptions to the ban: foreign nationals with limited (KITAS) and permanent stay (KITAP) permits, foreign nationals with diplomatic visa and working visa, holders of diplomatic stay permits and business stay permits, those working on medical and food assistance, transportation (air, sea, or land) crew, foreign nationals working on national strategic projects. A confirmed negative COVID-19 PCR test (swab test) result must be possessed by all passengers as criteria to come to Indonesia. The test must have been taken a maximum of 7 days before arrival and the certificate must be in English. Suppose the passenger arrives without a negative COVID-19 test certificate. In that case, they will be required to undergo a COVID-19 swab test and quarantine on arrival, at their own expense, until the test results are received. The results could take up to 7 days. The passenger must provide a personal statement stating readiness to be quarantined for up to 14 days if required (travelbans.org, Indonesia Travel Restrictions, 2020).

The travel restriction as known as Global travel bans at 2020 until 2021 hit entire business around the world. As one of the most affected industry, Tourism had loss for more than 2 trillion dollar. Data showed by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) that international arrivals decline by 70% to 75% for the whole of 2020. UNWTO claimed that international tourism could have returned to conditions of 30 years ago. The number of international tourist arrivals (overnight visitors) over the same period last year also decreases by 72% in January-October 2020, curbed by slow virus containment, low traveler sureness and important travel policy due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This condition in international tourism could result in an estimated economic loss of over US\$ 2 trillion in global GDP, more than 2% of the world's GDP in 2019 (UNWTO, 2020).

Indonesia has become one of the most visited places in the world. Based on Thejakartapost.com, in 2019, a total of 16.1 million international tourists visited Indonesia, falling short of the government goal of attracting 20 million tourists. According to BPS (Statistics Indonesia) data, the figure reflects a slow 1.88 per cent growth in tourist arrivals from 2018, which reported 15.81 million people visited the country, due to a substantial increase in tourist arrivals in the summer season that lasted between June and August 2019 (thejakartapost.com, 2020). The high number of visitors in 2019 turned down immediately after the coronavirus pandemic hit the world. Agustini Rahayu, head of the communication department of the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy of Indonesia, stated on Kompas.com that until September 2020, there are only 3,5 million international visitors. She also said the condition of the tourism industry back to 20 years ago (kompas.com, 2020).

Alexander Reyaan, Director of Natural and Cultural Tourism at the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economic, explained a sharp decline in the Indonesian tourism industry caused millions of job losses. It is estimated that there are only 6.5 million tourism workers left from the previous 13 million since March 2020 (tempo.co, 2020). Thousands of hotels and restaurants have been forced to close, and many airlines and tour operators have suffered losses. As good news from the government, Fadjar Hutomo, Deputy for Industry and Investment at the Tourism and Creative Economy Agency, explained that the government prepared grant funds for tourism sector for the implementation of CHSE (Cleanliness, Healthy, Safety, Environment Friendly) in order to increase the preparation in implementing health protocols in the tourism industry (dw.com, 2020).

The tourism industry is also one of the most significant sectors in West Nusa Tenggara. As a part of archipelago of Indonesia, West Nusa Tenggara offered several tourism places span from coast to coast, from the top of the mountain into the deep of the sea. This sector absorbed thousands of

employments and improved thousand and more households in West Nusa Tenggara. More than 80 (eighty) tourism attractions are entirely grown and registered in the Tourism Office of West Nusa Tenggara. Volcano attractions can be found in two mountains, Rinjani in Lombok Island and Tambora in Sumbawa Island. Rinjani Mountain, in 2008, the Indonesian government proposed to UNESCO that Mount Rinjani be one of the world official geo-park. Another story, Mount Tambora on the northern coast of Sumbawa island, also brings the historical side of volcanology world. In April 1815, it exploded in the largest volcanic eruption in recorded history. Beach attractions also one of West Nusa Tenggara famous with. Long and Wide coastline beaches, sunset views, blue sea, surfing spots, seafood stalls, even nightlife parties became a source of experience for visitors. Those attractions also became sources of income for locals.

Data of Tourism Office of West Nusa Tenggara Province showed the number of visitor in 2019 is approximately 3329700 visits. In 2020, the tourism industry in West Nusa Tenggara province was affected because of the Coronavirus pandemic. Indonesia responded to the global pandemic decision by implemented Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) in several areas that had been infected with COVID-19, included West Nusa Tenggara Province (ntbprov.go.id, 2020).

With these conditions, the tourism sector is one of the sectors affected by community activity restrictions due to global pandemic, considering that tourism is associated with crowds. This also resulted in the cancellation of several festivals/events, travels, flights, booked rooms to reduce the transmission of COVID-19. Eventhough the festival/event attracts a lot of tourists, which in the end has the potential to affect the economy⁵¹. Since the government of West Nusa Tenggara Province declared the first cases of Coronavirus in West Nusa Tenggara on March 2020, there were no specific numbers of how many visitors came and stayed in West Nusa Tenggara, especially foreign visitors (antaranews.com, 2021).

Coronavirus pandemic also affects other hospitality and tourism industry services in West Nusa Tenggara Province. One of the businesses that knocked down by the pandemic is travel bureaus. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, activities of tours and travel agencies in West Nusa Tenggara were generally closed. Activities in tourist destinations to their supporting sectors, such as hotels, restaurants, and travel agents, are disrupted some even close. The low number of visitors forced tourism workers to stay at home and find another income source. To enlighten the situation, the government of West Nusa Tenggara Province associated with the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economic assists workers by encouraging tourism workers' fiscal policies based on the association's request. As a part of the tourism industry, tour and travel agents received social grants from the government in this case. This idea was conducted to lighten the burden on the workers who are laid off (disbudpar.ntbprov.go.id, 2020).

Relieved news came when tourism activities through travel bureaus have increased between 23-30 percent on early 2021, eventhough travel service providers have to reduce occupancy rates. For example, a car with a capacity of 15 passengers now only has nine people. Tourism activities through travel agents also must be ensured to comply with Indonesian health protocols. Travel service providers must have CHSE certification to guarantee cleanliness, health, safety, and environmental sustainability. The latest circular, besides being obliged to comply with 3M (wearing a mask, keeping your distance, and washing your hands with soap), the Covid-19 Task Force also stipulates that travelers must carry out an RT-PCR health test or rapid antigen test, and fill out an e- HAC Indonesia (lombokpost.com, 2020).

Furthermore, this research is designed to explore how far has the COVID-19 pandemic affected travel agents' revenues especially in West Nusa Tenggara province. After that, related to all sustained restriction in 2020, this research also compares the packages sold by the respondents through 2019 and 2020. To show the better result, this study examines the effect through percentage on the main objectives of this study. All findings of this study provide insight into getting the tourism industry operational better and offer helpful advice to government officials, scholars, and tourism companies in the tourism industry to get all hope and revenues back to normal.

Research Method

Firstly, travel bureau is an institution that plans and packs tourism travel components such as tourism facilities, tourist objects and attractions, and other tourism services, especially in Indonesia, by distributing them to the travel agency, and selling them directly to tourists or consumers in the form of travel packages, providing tourist guide services related to the packages, the provision of tourist transport, the reservation of lodging, the restaurant, the conference hall, the sale of art and cultural tickets, the sale of tourist objects and tourist attractions, the management of travel documents such as passports and visas or other related documents, religious/pilgrimage tours and reward trips, and the license to tour and travel office of the head institution (gdrc.org, 2020).

In other hand travel agent is described as a person whose job is to organize travel for end clients (individuals, groups, corporations) on behalf of suppliers (hotels, airlines, car rentals, cruise lines, railways, travel insurance, package tours). The task is to simplify the travel planning process for their customers and provide consultation services and entire travel packages (xotels.com, 2020). In the *Tourism Glossary* of Global Development Research Center, a travel agent/agency is a person or firm qualified to arrange for all travel components (gdrc.org, Tourism Glossary, 2020).

In the *Tours and Travel Statistics* module by Indonesia Statistic has been stated types of packages, tour and travel agent generally sold. There are 6 (six) types of packages usually sold by the agencies. Those are Inbound, Outbound, Domestic, General Packages, Incentive/Convention, and Special Interest tour.

This research is mixed-method research because to obtain and describe the results of this research, both qualitative and quantitative research methods are needed. To have a better perspective, mixed-methods research is research that includes elements of both quantitative, which generated information that inherently numerical in nature or can be easily reduced to numbers, and qualitative research, where information that cannot be easily reduced to numbers, is presented; typically involves an in-depth examination of a complex phenomenon (Leedy, 2015).

This method is suitable to describe the effect of Coronavirus outbreaks towards travel bureaus in West Nusa Tenggara Province. To achieve an accurate description of the required data, the instrument of data collection are questionnaires and direct interviews. Related to distance and efficiency, questionnaires is chosen because not only help the researcher by distributed to a large number of respondents, including those who live at distant locations but also potentially ease the process by saving a researcher travel expenses. All the questions must be stated in advance by a researcher. Thus, other questions that may be posed about the problem or phenomenon are excluded. The introduction of yet another potential source of bias influencing the information obtained (Leedy, 2015). Direct interviews are needed to have clearer explanation and experience of the respondents.

Table 1. List of Questions

Questions
Name of respondents.
Company Name.
List of types of tour and travel package the company served.
The numbers of the package the company sold in 2019.
The number of the package the company sold in 2020.
Company's packages selling target in 2021
Does the company economically affected by the Coronavirus pandemic?
Rating Scale, how much does the company being affected by Coronavirus pandemic
Comparison of company's revenue in 2019 and 2020 in percentage.
Did your company get any financial grants by the government?
Are you ready for the interview?
Put your accessible number for interview (Whatsapp Number)

First, a set of questionairre is constructed based on the purpose of the study. On the list of question, the identity of respondents on question number one is not obligatory answered, but the company name must be stated as an answer. For question number three, respondents can choose more than one type based on what their company sold. Normally, there are 6 types of travel packages served by the tourism bureau, but if there are special packages offered, bureaus can put it by themselves. The numbers of the package sold by the bureaus in 2019 and 2020 need to be written specifically in order to see the differences. Not only the packages, bureaus' income also needed to be compared between 2019 and 2020 in percentage form. For question number 7, is *Yes* or *No* question which lead to question number 8 about how much the effect of Coronavirus pandemic towards travel bureaus. In the end of the questionnaires, respondents will be asked about their target, social grants and their willingness to be interviewed to find their broader point of view.

For the interview method, this research used qualitative interview where there is much greater interest in the point of view of the interviewee; the interview represents the concerns of the researcher in quantitative research. Interviewers can depart significantly from any schedule or guide that is being used in qualitative interviewing. The researcher may ask new questions following the answers of the interviewees and may change the order and even the wording of the questions. None of these things should be done in quantitative interviews, since they would undermine the standardization of the interview process and, therefore the efficiency and validity of measurement (Bryman, 2012). With the same question, the respondents would be asked about their experiences during pandemic related to their business.

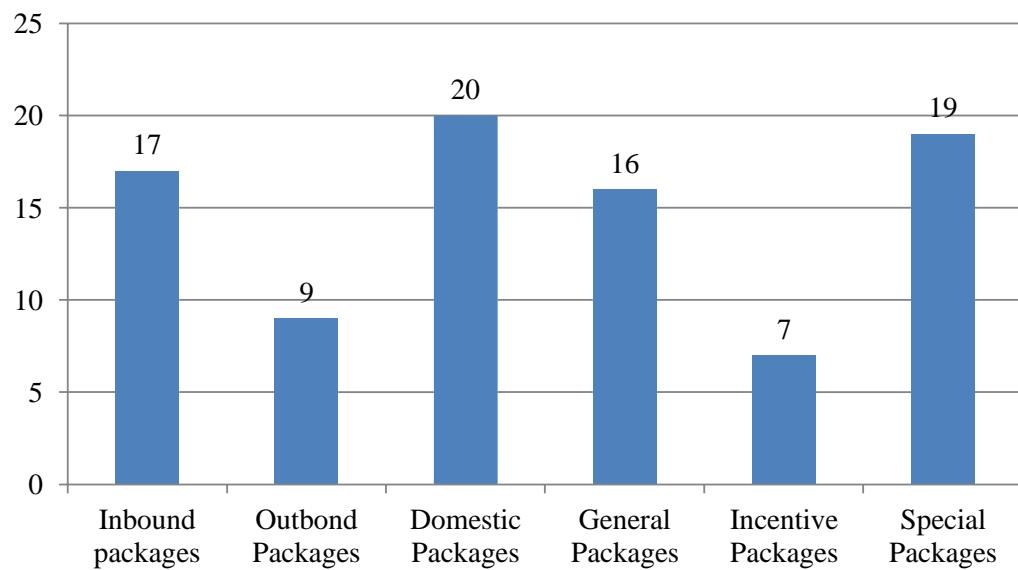
There are no set protocols for analysis, no prescriptions, no recipes. The design of the report, the types of data collected and, of course, the essence of the research problem and its sub-problems and questions depend on particular data analysis procedures. Ideally, before you collect your data, one decision you must make early in the game is whether you would (a) give equal weight to qualitative data and quantitative data in drawing your conclusions or (b) give greater priority to one type of data over the other. One collection of data you definitely can't skip just because you don't

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like what they tell you, but you may make one type of data secondary and subservient to the other form of data, with an acceptable justification. For example, if you used the qualitative answers of people in follow-up interviews to shed light on their earlier (quantitative) responses to questionnaire objects, this could be the case (Leedy, 2015).

Result and Discussion

On January 18, 2021, questionnaires of this research were distributed through e-mail and Whatsapp applications. ASITA, the parent organization of Indonesian travel agencies, is involved in this study. Complete respondent data, including names and phone numbers, is provided by ASITA. Constructed on Google Form, online questionnaires contain 12 questions and must be filled out by the respondents. Question number 1 and 2 about the identity and company's name of the respondents. Question number three is about types of travel packages sold by the travel bureau. There are 6 types of travel packages mentioned on questionnaires, and respondents can choose more than one type based on their company's product. The result showed all the respondents sold the domestic packages as their products. In the second place, special packages are chosen by 19 respondents. After that, there are 17 respondents choose inbound packages, and 16 respondents choose general packages. 9 respondents choose outbound packages, and 7 respondents choose incentive packages.



Picture 1. Type of packages

Question number 4, 5, and 6 of the questionnaires require respondents to put the numbers of packages their company sold since 2019, 2020, and their selling target in 2021.

Table 2. The Number of Package Sold in 2019, 2020, and Selling Target in 2021

Res	The Number of Packages Sold		Selling Target 2021
	2019	2020	
1	500	10	1
2	No specific data	0	As many as possible
3	20	3	>10
4	36	10	10
5	35	15	60
6	No specific data	0	50
7	>2000	0	1000
8	No specific data	No specific data	No target
9	No specific data	No specific data	No target
10	No specific data	3	10
11	2	1	100
12	1500	20	700
13	5	No specific data	No idea
14	2	0	15
15	115	93	No idea
16	115	93	No idea
17	No data	4	As much as possible
18	20	1	30

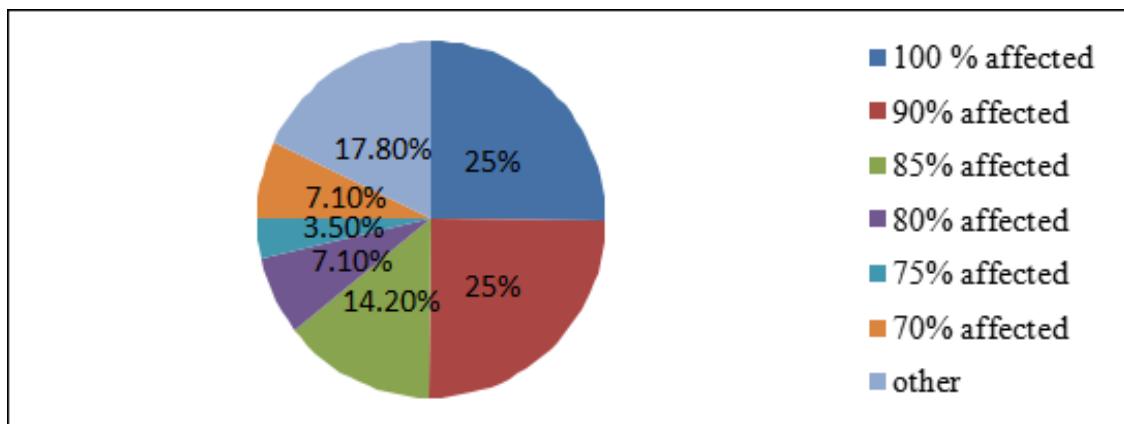
Source: Respondent's responses, processed by author.

According to the table data, if being compared to 2019, the number of sold packages are decreased in 2020. Some companies made some numbers in early 2020 (January and February), but in March 2020, the numbers became zero until January 2021. Respondent number 5 (interview session) claimed that from March (right after travel restriction) until October 2020, he got zero reservations for any type of travel package.

In other interview, respondent number 6, explained how his company loses many reservations in 2020. His travel bureau provides Cruise ship trips, land and sea adventure, and many other trips. He claimed that 90% of his guests are foreigners mostly from Italy. As we know, Italy has been locked down in a quite long period due to the high number of Coronavirus cases. He found many cancellations almost in all kinds of packages, especially from foreign visitors. He also put his hope for 2021 even he still feeling uncertain about the condition (Interview records, 2020).

Question number seven, eight, and nine on the questionnaires are quite related. The results show that all of the respondents choose *Yes* as an answer for question number 7. The question is, *does the company economically affected by the Coronavirus pandemic?*. The results show that all of the respondents choose *Yes* as an answer. Based on the interview session, respondents give a broader point of view about their economic condition. As travel bureau in a small province like West Nusa Tenggara, they are definitely affected by the pandemic. There is nothing they can do since March 2020. The next question (question number 8) is using a rating scale about how much the company is affected by the Coronavirus pandemic. Using five scales, not affected at all as the lowest, slightly affected, average, not too affected, and very much affected as the highest. The result showed 92,8 % respondents chose very affected dan 7,2 % claimed they are not too affected.

To obtain more transparent descriptions of the Coronavirus economic effect on the travel bureau in West Nusa Tenggara Province, the respondents are asked about the revenue on question number nine. It is not the exact number of their revenue, but the percentages of how much their revenue is affected if compared to 2019. As it showed in Picture number 1. 25 % of the respondents claimed that they were 100% percent affected on revenue dimension. Followed by lower percentage, the rest of the respondents claimed they are affected more than 70 %.



Picture 2. Percentage of Being Affected on Revenue

Through the interview session, the respondents explained more about their company revenue. Many of them have to close their bureau and agency temporarily, even laid off all the employees because of the uncertainty of the condition. They claimed that even it is a hard decision, but there is nothing they can do. No one wants to close their company, but the situation forces all of them to hold all of the plans. One of the respondents who work in Kuta beach, Lombok, explained her travel bureau is dying. She has to change her mindset and business concept to stay alive. Another respondent has to close his travel bureau and change it into an ornamental plant gallery. He sees another chance of business concept during this hard time (Interview records, 2020).

Question number 10 is related to government's financial grants for the travel bureau to ease some economic problems. The respondents are asked whether to they get financial grants or not. The results are 82% of the respondents claimed they do not get any financial grants from the government. The rest of the respondents (5 respondents) get financial grants from the government. Respondent number three from the interview session said that she does not achieve any financial grants from the government even she claimed that she and most of her partners in tourism industry are 99% dying because of the crisis.

Conclusion

Coronavirus pandemic hit many aspects of human life. Social, economic, health, security, psychology, education, and many other aspects on any other level of human life. The characters of Coronavirus push the tourism industry back to a very low condition. Lockdowns, large- scale social restrictions, travel restrictions, health regulations push people to stay at home. Tourism activity which acquires people to move and travel out of their original environment must be postponed, in another side tourism industry really depends on travel activity and crowd.

The data shows the number of visitors in West Nusa Tenggara in 2019 is higher than in 2020; this situation definitely affects the travel bureau in West Nusa Tenggara. This research is conducted to explore the effect of Coronavirus to travel bureau in West Nusa Tenggara, which focus on the economic side. Through 28 respondents for the questionnaire session and seven respondents for the interview session, this research present on how much the pandemic change their company economically. Most of the respondents work on a domestic type of travel package followed by an inbound package and a special package. All of the respondents agree that the Coronavirus pandemic has a great effect on their economic condition. All of them are losing their booked reservation in 2020 for any type of package they have. Even some of them still linger on zero reservation until this day. Based on the data, 92,80% of the respondents claimed very much affected by this pandemic on their revenue. The percentage of being affected in revenue is started to 70% affected to 100% affected as the highest. Based on the interview results, some of them have to find another job to survive because only 18% of the respondents get financial grants from the government.

The broader point of view is revealed through the interview session by the respondents. The uncertainty of the condition put them in a difficult position. They have to close their company even temporarily and laid off their employees. They admit their decision must be taken because zero revenue is the fact. For 2021, some of them still doubt recent conditions; they believe health and travel restrictions still be the hardest challenge for their business. On the other hand, 21 respondents put their belief in certain numbers as their selling target regarding Indonesian government projects related to tourism in 2021.

Recommendation

The research has attempted to convince readers by presenting original and empirical data. However, this research has limitations in the amount of data and research methods. This study involved limited participants, therefore necessitating further research. Future studies can explore how the travel bureau industry worked after Coronavirus pandemic. No one ever knows what will happen in the future, no one can guarantee a catastrophe will not happen again. Tourism industry need broader study in the future using more diverse research methods to provide both in-depth and broad-scale information. The results must help the government to create the emergency system in order to prevent the collapse of tourism industry.

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