Reflections on the theme issue outcomes

Tourism and hospitality post-disaster and crisis: How can global resilience be enhanced?
Theme Editor DeMond Miller shares his reflections on the significance and outcomes of the theme issue with Managing Editor Richard Teare.

Overview

The Policy Brief on Tourism and COVID-19 issued by the Secretary General of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), opens with the following statement:

> The crisis is an opportunity to rethink how tourism interacts with our societies, other economic sectors and our natural resources and ecosystems; to measure and manage it better; to ensure a fair distribution of its benefits and to advance the transition towards a carbon neutral and resilient tourism economy. www.unwto.org/tourism-and-covid-19-unprecedented-economic-impacts

In this issue, DeMond Miller, a specialist in disaster science and emergency management and his team of 21 contributors explore aspects of the impact of the COVID-19 on tourism and hospitality operations with particular reference to post-crisis resilience building. A list of the articles in this issue can be found in the Appendix.

Why in your view is your theme issue strategic question important?

We have witnessed a number of disasters in recent memory including: the Mt. St. Helens volcanic eruption (1980); the September 11 terror attacks (2001); the Indian Ocean Tsunami (2004); Hurricane Katrina (2005); L'Aquila, Italy earthquake (2009); Australian Wildfires (2019-2020); the Christchurch, New Zealand terrorist attacks (2019); Greek Wildfires (2007, 2018, 2019); COVID-19 (2019-current) and on-going global climate change. Clearly, tourism and hospitality operations globally and locally have suffered numerous shocks. In some cases, local and regional destinations have recovered and even surpassed pre-disaster performance while others have not been able to bounce back from ecological impacts, perceived risk due to lack of security and safety or severe damage to the destination's image. Amid the current COVID-19 pandemic, travellers for business and leisure are planning for life after the pandemic, and they are asking: When will we know it is safe to travel again? Hence, the need for this theme issue's industry-led question: *Tourism and hospitality post-disaster and crisis: How can global resilience be enhanced?* The aim is to provide insights and recommendations for industry, government, health and security professionals, communities where destinations reside and the travelling public.

Thinking about your theme issue plan and approach, what worked well?

This theme issue was conceived and written during the COVID-19 pandemic, and although the issue's question relates to a broad understanding of *disasters*, many of the articles directly address COVID-19 in some way. COVID-19 and its impact on hospitality and tourism operations allowed for several reflective discussions that are insightful and productive in shaping the scope of the issue. Moreover, the evolving situation, coupled with risks, governmental policies and public health standards enabled the writing team to reflect beyond traditional facets of hospitality and tourism research.

How did you engage with different stakeholder groups?

Industry stakeholders were consulted before the theme issue plan was developed. Different stakeholders including continuity planning specialists, social scientists, tourism/hospitality small business entrepreneurs and researchers all participated in this issue. Their respective contributions to addressing the issue's question took the form of collaborative interviews, case studies and other exploratory research informed by industry leaders, government officials and prior academic work. The breadth of content enriched the issue in a variety of ways and provided local, regional and global insights that inform the discussion.

What were the highlights from stakeholder group interactions?

During meetings with local tour facilitators, industry leaders and academics, a number of themes surfaced. Namely, the concern for industry resumption following a disaster or crisis, the number of local and global job losses and the impacts of the disaster or crisis shocks on the destination's image. Additional issues such as travel safety, global risk assessment and government regulations are important external factors that influence travel behaviour. Additionally, we heard that the hospitality industry is often overlooked. While global transport companies tend to receive assistance, we encountered local hospitality-related businesses that had struggled during disasters and crises – especially during the immediate phase of a disaster and recovery is for them, much harder to achieve.

Thinking about your peer-review process: What went well and why?

The need to reschedule reviews presented a challenge and extended the timeframe relating to completion of the theme issue. However, the authors remained patient with the process and were willing and able to promptly address the points arising from reviewer feedback.

What are the most significant outcomes of your theme issue in terms of the contributions to knowledge and/or professional practice?

The most significant outcomes include the recognition that disasters fundamentally challenge existing paradigms, business models and the way we conceive tourism and hospitality operations. In fact, most of the articles in the theme issue explain and illustrate how practitioners, governments, local industry leaders and small business entrepreneurs have been able to absorb the shocks of disasters, crises and civil unrest and as an outcome, become more resilient.

What are the implications for management action and applied research arising from your theme issue outcomes?

Several management implications arise from the content of this theme issue and above all, the need for more timely, industry-specific information flow that is inclusive of all stakeholders to facilitate better local, regional and global decision-making. Second, several papers explore how a "local" focus and ways to rebrand local ventures and venues enables them to remain operable through disasters and crises. Hence, one of the keys to resilience in tourism and hospitality is the ability to adapt and become "local". Additionally, key applied research themes can be identified that have direct application to management practice. They include ways to engage in rapid vulnerability assessments at each stage of the value chain and the integration of community planning techniques in hospitality and tourism and management strategies to guide re-opening as crisis dissipates. The knowledge arising from *lessons learned* from past disasters and crises and *to be learned* as we exit the current situation enriches the body of knowledge and informs management practice in terms of how

to enhance resilience. Finally, incorporating an all-hazards approach to planning for disasters and crises of the future must be incorporated as part of management practice.

Having served as a *WHATT* theme editor, what did you enjoy about the experience?

The timeliness of this theme issue is just as important as the question. Each article explores the concept of resilience in an applied way and addresses the question via data analysis, applied theory and conceptual development. This yields meaningful recommendations regarding policy development, best practice and lessons learned about the concept of resilience and how to withstand shocks within an all-hazards approach. In so many ways, local challenges represent obstacles that redefine how tourism and hospitality operates as the disaster landscape transitions through stages of closure, partial opening, re-opening and different combinations of these. The theme question also enabled us to incorporate ideas from different countries, policy contexts, economies and cultural contexts, and it is satisfying to know that we were able to incorporate perspectives from: Greece, India, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Sri Lanka, the UK and the USA.

About the Theme Editor

DeMond S Miller, PhD, LCADC, is a Professor and Director, Disaster Science and Emergency Management, Professor of Sociology, Coordinator, Office of Academic Affairs-Camden Campus and Director, Liberal Arts and Sciences Institute for Research and Community Service, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Rowan University, USA. He can be contacted at millerd@rowan.edu.

Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes (*WHATT*) aims to make a practical and theoretical contribution to hospitality and tourism development, and we seek to do this by using a key question to focus attention on an industry issue. If you would like to contribute to our work by serving as a *WHATT* theme editor, do please contact the Managing Editor, Dr Richard Teare, via the Emerald website.

Richard E. Teare
Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes, Emerald Group Publishing Ltd,
Bingley, UK

Appendix 1. Theme issue contents (*WHATT* v13 n3 2021)

Abrupt new realities amid the disaster landscape as one crisis gives way to crises

DeMond S. Miller

This paper highlights the roles of sudden change and social disruption in the disaster landscape that shapes the environment of tourism destinations when hazards intersect with human systems. The paper serves as a call for bold solutions and better practices that foster community relationships in a more integrated way for a more resilient future.

Social disruption of the tourism and hospitality industries: Implications for post-COVID-19 pandemic recovery

Connor Chapman, DeMond S. Miller and Geremy Salley

This paper examines how societal disruptions in the wake of disasters and crises also disrupt hospitality and tourism by drawing on a case study approach. Specifically, three cases in which disasters impacted local, regional and global tourism are examined: Hurricane Katrina, the Arab Spring and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Disaster management in Indonesian tourist destinations: How institutional roles and community resilience are mediated

Fitri Rahmafitria, Vidi Sukmayadi and Karim Suryadi

This paper evaluates the current collaborative model of disaster management initiated by the Indonesian Government at the regional level and provides recommendations for a more functional model of local communities' resilience by promoting the synergy of roles among the community, industry and local government.

The Israeli travel and tourism industry faces COVID-19: Developing guidelines for facilitating and maintaining a nuanced response and recovery to the pandemic

Joshua Schmidt and Alex Altshuler

This paper discusses how the tourism industry is contending with the economic and inter-organizational challenges wrought by the COVID-19 outbreak and heightened by a lack of communication between the government and local businesses in the state of Israel.

Tourism in the post COVID-19 era: Evidence from hotels in the North East of England

Maria Zoi Spanaki, Andreas Papatheodorou and Nikolaos Pappas

This paper examines the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on hotels in the North-East of England. Draws on semi-structured interviews with hotel managers, explores the level of preparedness for the pandemic and provides managerial implications for developing resilience.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourism operations and resilience: Stakeholder perspectives in Sri Lanka

A.C.I.D. Karunarathne, J.P.R.C. Ranasighe, U.G.O. Sammani, K.J.T. Perera

This paper explores the impact of COVID-19 on Sri Lanka as a tourism destination and the resilience of the tourism industry as an important component of the economy. The findings contain implications for the ways in which the resources and capacities of the country could be used to develop post-pandemic resilience.

Natural disasters, terrorism, and civil unrest: Crises that disrupt the tourism and travel industry -A brief overview

Rosalyn D. Harrington

This paper provides case study examples and a summary of how disasters, natural and human-induced disasters, terrorist attacks, civil and political unrest and other crises affect tourism positively and negatively. The article includes recommendations to enhance the resilience of future tourism development.

An interview with Romira Young: Opportunities and challenges for local small business owners in the tourism and hospitality industries in times of disaster

Anita D. Bledsoe-Gardner

The interview explains how small travel agency businesses faced with challenges arising from natural disasters can develop the resilience to overcome them when they are able to provide turn-key services for their clients.

Tourism as a bridge for inter-cultural understanding and reconciliation despite the COVID-19 challenges. An interview with Dr Itsik Peres

Alex Altshuler

The interview provides a set of insights from the field – through global, Middle-Eastern and Israeli lenses – on some of the major challenges for the tourism industry in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Post-pandemic tourism resilience: Changes in Italians' travel behaviour and the possible responses of tourist cities

Fabio Corbisiero and Salvatore Monaco

To study post-pandemic tourism, the article reports on a survey of 700 Italian tourists that explores questions such as: *What will tourism be like after the pandemic? What will the main changes in travel behaviours be? What role will new information technologies play in future tourism?*

Towards a proactive, capabilities-based continuity framework for the hospitality and tourism industry

Kimberly Carty

Most tourism firms are micro-, small- and medium-sized businesses that lack the capabilities and resources to dedicate to disaster preparedness planning. The article provides a framework to guide hospitality and tourism organizations and their communities on how to develop a proactive, capabilities-based continuity plan.

Why does resilience matter? Global implications for the tourism industry in the context of COVID-19

Alex Altshuler and Joshua Schmidt

This paper aims to explore the concept of resilience both through conceptual lenses and its applied relevance and importance to tourism and hospitality in the context of identifying the most effective approaches to coping with the worldwide epidemic of COVID-19.

Re-building tourist destinations from crisis: A comparative study of Jammu and Kashmir, and Assam, India

Abdul Gani and Ramjit Singh

This paper explores preparedness and recovery activities and strategies used by respondents during the phases of natural disaster/crisis in Jammu and Kashmir and Assam, India. This study provides implications for practitioners, government agencies and researchers on re-building tourist destinations and enhancing resilience.

Building resilient destinations and communities: The need for greater industry, community and academic collaboration

DeMond S. Miller

This paper provides a conclusion by commenting on the contributions made by the writing team and draws on research and best practices cited in the preceding papers that link theory and practice. The paper advocates the use of interdisciplinary teams to build resilience in the global tourism and hospitality industries.