

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Research Background

In December 2019, a pneumonia-like disease caused by the novel *Beta coronavirus* named 2019 novel coronavirus [2019-nCoV] was firstly identified in Wuhan, China (Lupia et al., 2020). Also known as COVID-19, its infection was associated with severe respiratory illness and with high ICU admission and mortality (Huang et al., 2020). Due to its profound impact on global supply chains and continuous disruptions, COVID-19 disease has been labelled as pandemic by WHO in March 2020 with the consideration of its alarming levels of contract and severity (Mahase, 2020). As per 24 February 2021, according to the surveillance conducted at the Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) of Johns Hopkins University by Ensheng Dong (2020), there are 112,158,348 cases confirmed in 192 countries worldwide with total 2,486,405 global deaths.

According to *World Economic Forum*, the coronavirus impact is severe when compared to the Great Financial Crisis in 2007-08 since it hit households, businesses, financial institutions, and markets all at the same time—started in China and now across the globe. Tourism is one of the most disrupted sectors by the widespread of COVID-19. The rate of international tourist arrival is expected to fall by 180 million. During January to April 2020, UNWTO reported the international tourist's arrival declined by 44%, deciphering into a loss of about US\$195 billion in export revenues from

international tourism due to 100% destinations are complying with travel restrictions. During the same period, Asia and the Pacific was the first regional area to be hit by the pandemic and its arrivals down by 51%. Therefore, these condition hits Indonesian tourism as well.

In the last five years, the Indonesian tourism has grown appreciably as it become one of the substantial contributors to country's revenue. Indonesia is ranked ninth in the World Travel & Tourism Council and ranked three for the fastest growing tourist country in Asia region and ranked one in Southeast Asia (Hendriana, 2019). However, the spread of COVID-19 has caused a decrease in the number of tourists visiting Indonesia.

Table 1. 1
International Visit Rate to Indonesia in 2020 vs 2019

Month	2019	2020	Growth of 2020 to 2019
January	1,201,735	1,272,083	5.85%
February	1,243,996	863,960	-30.55%
March	1,311,911	470,970	-64.10%
April	1,274,231	158,718	-87.54%
May	1,249,536	163,646	-86.90%
June	1,434,103	158,256	-88.96%
July	1,468,173	159,793	-89.12%
Total	5,031,873	2.765.731	-64.64%

Source: Central Bureau Statistic (2020)

The table 1.1 shows the comparison of monthly number of foreign tourists visit to Indonesia in 2020 and 2019 reported by the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy. In January 2020, the number of visits was relatively increasing 5.85% compared to the number of visits in January 2019. However, as the COVID-19 spreading has been out of control, many places has restricted their international access. It can be seen that the monthly number of visits since February up to July is declining sharply. The most significant declines in monthly growth comparison of 2019 to 2020 was recorded in March. Where in February it is declining for 30.55%, it declines drastically for 64.10% in March. This probably due to the confirmation of the first COVID-19 case in Indonesia. The following months fell rapidly, with the highest impact in the first semester of 2020 is recorded in the growth comparison of June 2020 to June 2019 with a -88.82% growth rate. The overall international visit rate in the first semester of 2020 reached -59.96 percent compared to the first semester of 2019. However, the condition got worsen as the international visit rate in July kept declining. The table also shows that the cumulative number of foreign tourists visit to Indonesia during January-July 2020 compared to January-July 2019 has declined for 64.64%.

The impact of pandemic in tourism sector was also indicated by the decline in the rate of hotel occupancy. It fell by 50% in 6,000 hotels and affecting the continuity of the hotel business (Hanoatubun, 2020). According to the Indonesian Central Bureau Statistic, the Room Occupancy

Rate of star-classified hotels in Indonesia in July 2020 reached an average of 28.07% or decreased by 28.66 points compared to the room occupancy rate for July 2019, which was 56.73%.

As 100% of all worldwide destination has complied travel restrictions in the response of the pandemic on April 28, 2020, the lockdown and quarantine has been introduced. Indonesian government has initiated a large-scale social restriction, where citizens are advised to stay at home and avoid any crowded gathering. These sudden changes have obviously transformed daily lives activities, and also, the tourism activities. Many travelers cancelled their plans to go to other places for any purposes, such as business trips, or holidays and their behavioral intention has been affected due to the current condition. These group of people later in this study are called quarantined residents, those who were unable to travel and had to stay at home due to the travel restrictions.

In tourism behavioral aspect, the perspective of quarantined residents on their physical and health risk might shift due to the COVID-19. As the disease has high positivity rate, people can perceive the risk of COVID-19 by the possibility of getting infected and the severity of the pandemic. Looking at the potential of how the perceived risk of COVID-19 can influence the travel behavior intention, previous study has shown that these perceived risk has negative influence on travel intention (Sánchez-Cañizares et al., 2020). However, there are still limited studies that analyze

the influence of risk perception on travel intentions in the setting of the COVID-19 crisis. Therefore, this study will examine more deeply on the impact of the risk perception of COVID-19 toward the travel behavior intention.

Furthermore, the seriousness of this pandemic is also considered affecting the tourist in terms of the psychological view. Gerhold (2020) pointed out that the negative feeling essentially arises, such as individuals are experiencing stress and fearful of being contaminated by COVID-19 and adopting coping strategies to overcome the negative feeling by attempting to act calm. For instance, many individuals are active on social media and implicitly adopting humor coping mechanism through humorous content regarding traveling.

With regard to humor, the topic itself is a universal thing and is found in wide range of topics, cultures, and society. In tourism settings, a numerous paper has established the humor (Filep, 2012; Pabel et al., 2018; Pearce et al., 2015). Most studies on the relationship exploration between tourism and humor focus on purpose of entertainment to attract and leisure discipline, such as fulfilling the topic of tourism promotion (Chang et al., 2014; Porres-Guerrero et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2016), ensuring the involvement between the tourism and local communities (Frew, 2006; Pabel et al., 2019; Tu et al., 2019), and cultural translation of tourism (Bendi, 2019). However, studies rarely assessing in depth whether, and how, the

reactions of individuals who are subjected to humor in the crisis settings. Nevertheless, the existing literature of tourism disregard the conceivable outcome that humor also plays an imperative role and can be used as a coping behavior for tourist while dealing with the crisis situation.

Several latest studies have examined the existence of humor through online platforms during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a global occurrence, some studies are representing each countries context, such as research by Outley et al. (2020) that focus on the Black American communities that use humor to cope with inequalities during pandemic and the studies from Oduor et al. (2020) that representing Kenyan who use online humor as a coping mechanism through social networking sites.

Along with the occurrence of online humor, the number of Social Networking Services users has been identified to increased, such as Instagram is reportedly gained 40% of new users and TikTok apps has increased 18% in downloads during the quarantine (Dubras, 2020). In the manner of how they reflected their emotion on the social media for being unable to travel, both of this social media has ended up being a media for the quarantined residents to cope in the midst of the difficulty.

On July 2020, there are numerous funny posts indicated by several hashtags in Instagram and TikTok, such as #fakeplane and #faketravel where they are pretending to sit by an airplane window and look around, although it is originally a video of view from the window that is played on

the monitor and they are actually at home, or the #airportchallenge, where they pretend to carry their suitcases on the treadmill at their home as if they are putting their suitcases on a conveyor belt at the airport and getting ready for a trip.

Occasionally, hashtags use is not only platform-specific, the similar hashtags can be found across several social media. It is contextually specific to the individual user to enhance and simply describe the caption of the posts. Previous researches that focus on analyzing hashtags has found that the use of hashtags correlates with the user intention of posting and it might express emotional information of the user (Fiallos et al., 2018). These searchable funny content trends on social media during early stage are one of the background issues of this research and can be identified as the source of adopting humor coping mechanism by the quarantined residents when dealing with the perceived risk of COVID-19.

Linking the impact of COVID-19 pandemic toward humor coping mechanism from the psychological side of tourists, this study intends to find out and contribute to the relationship concept among the quarantined residents' travel behavior intention, their perceived risk of COVID-19 pandemic, and humor coping mechanism. Therefore, it is fitting that the scope of study for this research is the domestic quarantined residents who have traveled at least once in the past two years and engaged in the online humor as their source of humor coping mechanism. The period of collecting

primary data through online questionnaire was from the end of September to the beginning of October 2020, which is third quarter after the first case of COVID-19 was identified in Indonesia. According to the tourism disaster management framework by Faulkner (2001), the time frame was correlates with the emergency phase, where the protection policy and regulations was actively implemented to protect people. Although this context of research result may have time limitation due to its volatility of the pandemic, it still expected to be reference for Tourism Crises and Disaster management and future comprehension research in the field of psychological and behavioral aspect of tourists.

1.2. Problem Statement

The problem that can be formulated based on the description on the background are as follow:

1. How does the perceived risk of COVID-19 pandemic by the quarantined residents influence their travel behavior intention?
2. How does the perceived risk of COVID-19 pandemic by the quarantined residents influence their humor coping mechanism?
3. How does the humor coping mechanism influence the quarantined residents' travel behavior intention?
4. How does the perceived risk of COVID-19 pandemic mediated humor coping mechanism influence the quarantined residents' travel behavior intention?

1.3. Research Objectives

The research questions addressed in this research are:

1. To analyze the influence of perceived risk of COVID-19 pandemic on the quarantined residents' travel behavior intention
2. To analyze the influence of perceived risk of COVID-19 pandemic on the quarantined residents' humor coping mechanism
3. To analyze the influence of humor coping mechanism on the quarantined residents' travel behavior intention
4. To analyze the influence of perceived risk of COVID-19 pandemic on the quarantined residents' travel behavior intention mediated with humor coping mechanism

1.4. Research Benefit

From this research, researcher expects to give a contribution for the parties concerned, namely:

1. For further theoretical research

This research is presumed to be a theoretical reference or input for further studies relating to the scope of perceived risk and humor coping mechanism and relevant variables in the future of behavioral tourism studies.

2. For managerial of tourism marketing industry and stakeholders

The research is expected to contribute in helping the post-recovery stages of COVID-19 crisis in tourism sector. It is presumably be beneficial for the tourism stakeholders i.e. tourism marketer, tourism organization, and

government in arranging new strategies and policies for tourism development post crisis. Hence, the tourism stakeholders could have a better understanding with the behavioral aspect of tourist in order to deliver better service on tourism, especially in Indonesia.

1.5. Scope of Research

The research is focusing on the Indonesian quarantined residents who have traveled at least once in the past two years. This research is done during the third quarter of COVID-19 pandemic time frame in Indonesia. In addition, the concentration in conceptual aspect of this research is consisted of three variables which are perceived risk, humor coping mechanism, and travel behavior intention within the crisis context.

1.6. Outline of Research

To present systematic discussion and facilitate research understanding, the structure of this paper is as follow;

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

This introduction part elaborates a brief explanation on the background of the problem and formulation of the problem. It limits the problem to identify factors influencing perceived risk in order to understand its influence on travel behavioral intention. The detailed explanation is then provided within the context of this research (COVID-19 pandemic) and the

target market (quarantined residents). The objectives and benefits of research are also identified together with the structure of the research.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides an overview of conceptual variables, as well as the hypotheses that endorse and highlight the variables used in the analysis and framework. The corresponding literatures are discussed systematically and explains how the development of the research questions.

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODS

The research methodology is used by the researcher to put forward about the details of research object, population data and data sources, techniques for data collection, operational definitions of variables, data presentation techniques, and techniques for data analysis.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the result of the quantitative stage is presented. It is a discussion that includes the characteristics of respondents, the description of the respondent's answers, and the results of data analysis and discussion.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The final chapter that contains the conclusion of the research result along with its key findings. The research implementation for theory and practice are reviewed. The suggestion, research limitation and recommendation are all brought up in the context of further research in relevant scope.