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The mechanism influencing the residents’ support of the government policy for accelerating tourism recovery under COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

For accelerating the tourism recovery under COVID-19, gaining residents’ support is essential. However, residents’ negative emotion and their perception of the governments’ policies in responding to the COVID-19 may affect their attitude toward this support. The study aims to explore the mechanism of how Quality of Government (QoG) ultimately influences residents’ support of the government policy for accelerating tourism recovery. The results of two empirical surveys in Macau and South Korea find that the two components of QoG (policy responsiveness and information transparency) positively influence residents’ support of the government policy for accelerating tourism recovery through satisfaction with policy response and trust in government. On the other hand, these two QoG components negatively influence residents’ anxiety, and anxiety further negatively influences trust, but anxiety does not have any effect on satisfaction. The study contributes a satisfaction-trust of the governance model for researchers to taking tourism risk research. Recommendations are provided for governments in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. Introduction

COVID-19 generated great impacts on the tourism economy such as transportation and accommodations (Gössling, Scott, & Hall, 2020), and many small and medium business sectors that rely highly on tourism are looking forward to government actions to help them resume the business. Therefore, governments in tourist destinations around the world are planning a wide range of actions to accelerate the recovery of the tourism economy (Niewiadomski, 2020). However, for accelerating tourism recovery, residents’ support is essential. For example, supporting the vaccination for achieving herd immunity. Fong, Law, and Ye (2020) is the pioneer in examining how government performance influences residents’ perceptions and emotions under COVID-19. They showed that government performance in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic is negatively associated with residents’ anticipated duration of tourism recovery, through the mediating effects of perceived efficacy and negative emotions. They highlighted that residents form a positive outlook of tourism recovery if the government could control the pandemic, but they overlooked the fact that the actual recovery period is not dependent on residents’ subjective predictions. It also depends on the government policy such as the zero-infection approach vs coexistence with virus approach (Qiu, Park, Li, & Song, 2020). Instead of concerning about the anticipated recovery period, researchers should consider how governments influence residents’ willingness to contribute themselves to accelerate the recovery process (Huang, Tseng, & Petrick, 2008). In view of this, UNWTO suggested that governments should not only perform pandemic prevention actions but also encourage clear and detailed information dissemination in supporting tourism recovery (World Tourism Organization, 2020). In Fong et al.’s (2020) framework, government performance was regarded as an integrated factor and the framework did not reflect how policy responsiveness and information transparency work together to influence residents’ perceptions. Therefore, based on Fong et al.’s (2020) framework, this study attempts to fill the research gap by adding information transparency as another component to evaluate government performance on pandemic prevention that may ultimately influence residents’ support of the government policy for accelerating tourism recovery.

When setting tourism recovery policies, according to the quality of government (QoG) theory, the core elements of good governance include transparency and responsiveness (Holmberg, Rothstein, & Nasir-Rous, 2009). Transparency is defined as the open flow of information (Wong, Hsiao, & Wan, 2009), and responsiveness is the degree to which

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government’s practices consider changing needs of citizens (Eom, Hwang, & Kim, 2018). Thus, the outcomes of the government’s policy responsiveness to and information dissemination transparency about the COVID-19 pandemic should reflect the performance of the government. Residents perceived good governance may reduce their negative emotions (Fong et al., 2020). Recent studies in QoG measured the government performance in terms of trust in governance (Morgesen & Petrescu, 2011). Other than the trust in governance, researchers in QoG also tested citizens’ satisfaction with government performance (Wang, 2010). Those mistrusted and dissatisfied residents may exhibit less support in the government’s policy in the future, whatever the zero COVID-19 approach vs coexistence with the COVID-19 approach. Therefore, in this case, the satisfaction with policy response and the trust in governance should be investigated because it should influence residents’ support for the acceleration of tourism recovery.

This study aims to bring a clearer understanding of the mechanism of how residents’ emotions and perceptions on government performance in responding COVID-19 pandemic will influence their support of the government policy for accelerating recovery under COVID-19. The contributions of the study are four-fold. Firstly, it develops a research model to address the questions on how the two important works (policy responsiveness and information transparency) taken by the governments influences residents’ anxieties, satisfaction with policy response, trust in governance, and finally the residents’ support of the government policy for accelerating tourism recovery. Secondly, based on the QoG principles (Charron, Dijkstra, & Lapuente, 2015), citizens who are more satisfied with government policies tend to trust the government more (Ramesh, 2017). This study examines a satisfaction-trust mechanism of the governance model that can be applied for further crisis management research in tourism. Thirdly, unlike previous studies that explored residents’ anticipations of recovery periods (Fong et al., 2020) and industrial experts’ predictions of tourism recovery (McCartney, 2020), this study underlines a significant concept that explores how to gain residents’ support of the government policy for accelerating tourism recovery. It extends our understanding of how to accelerate tourism recovery after the crisis and presents researchers with a new research direction for COVID-19 research in tourism. Finally, most tourism research on COVID-19 was a case- or country-specific, and cross-country analyses were limited (Rasoolimanesh, Seyfi, Rastegar, & Hall, 2021). This study selected two tourist destinations in Asia (Macau and South Korea) to perform a cross-country analysis. These two destinations adopted two different approaches (zero-COVID or coexistence) to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic. Such a multi-site research setting can provide more explanatory and generalizable results (Bloom & Spybrook, 2017).

2. Literature review

2.1. COVID-19 travel and tourism research

Since the COVID-19 broke out at the end of 2019, many studies related to COVID-19 have been conducted continuously and the outcomes are various. At the early stage of COVID-19, studies focused more on the impacts of the COVID-19, for instance, social cost impacts (Qu et al., 2020) and economic impacts (Renaud, 2020). Then, researchers attempted to explore new travel behaviours such as the restart of Chinese national holiday travel (Cai, Xu, & Gao, 2021) and factors affecting tourists’ travel behaviour in times of crisis (Seyfi, Rastegar, Rasoolimanesh, & Hall, 2021). However, only a few studies considered the role of government and their responses on COVID-19 (Fong et al., 2020), which is a key aspect to help to change the pandemic situation.

2.2. The quality of government

Quality of government (QoG) is a broad view used to assess the quality of public sector output, rather than quantity, including what government does and what government does not (Charron et al., 2015). It is defined broadly as “the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised” (Holmberg, Rothstein, & Nasirirouzi, 2009, p. 137). Davidovic and Harring (2020, p1) defined QoG as “the capacity of the state to perform its activities in an efficient, fair, and impartial manner, and without corruption, impact individuals’ willingness to support different types of climate policies”. Some researchers evaluated the QoG on the national level (Charron, Dijkstra, & Lapuente, 2014; van der Meer & Hakhverdian, 2017), and some researchers examined the QoG in a particular policy area, such as health, environment, social policy, and poverty (e.g. Liu, Gao, & Huang, 2020; Ramesh, 2017). Researchers in different policy areas adopted different interpretations and employed different QoG measures (index), such as economic return (Crescenzi, Di Cataldo, & Rodríguez-Pose, 2016). This study is on the theme of crisis management. There is relatively little QoG research on this area.

For measuring QoG, some researchers used ‘government responsiveness’ to evaluate whether the public administration is doing the right things (Rothstein & Teorell, 2008). In Eom et al.’s (2018, p. 111) study, government responsiveness is regarded as “the degree to which government’s practices considering changing needs, wishes, and claims of citizens”. Morgesen and Petrescu (2011) used timeliness and efficiency to measure the responses among US federal agencies. In addition to being quick and effective, Su and Meng (2016) argued that continuous responses are also a crucial factor affecting the quality of responsiveness. Boin and Hart (2010) stated that government agencies should work together effectively and in a sustainable way to respond to the crisis, both within and across the public and private/community sectors. The above opinions were consistent with Farazmand (2001), who pointed out that the public expected the government’s responses to the crisis should be timely, good, sustainable, and well-cooperation with government agencies. Based on the discussion above, policy responsiveness in this study refers to the extent to which government responsive policies consider the changing trends and needs of residents during COVID-19.

On the other hand, some researchers considered ‘transparency’ as a dominant factor in QoG because it can enhance government account-ability to citizens (da Cruz, Tavares, Marques, Jorge, & De Sousa, 2016). Grimmelikhuijzen, Porumbescu, Hong, and Im (2013, p. 576) referred the policy transparency as “the information disclosed by the government about the policy itself: what the adopted measures are, how they are supposed to solve a problem, how they will be implemented and what implications they will have for citizens and other affected groups”. Researchers found that transparency can enhance government performance by increasing efficiency and gaining citizens’ trust (Grimmelikhuijzen, 2012). Eom et al. (2018) claimed that good QoG should reduce information asymmetry among the mayor, public officials, and citizens. From the case of SARS in Singapore, Pan, Pan, and Devadoss (2005) recommended that the information responses to the crisis disclosed by the government should be transparently, clearly, and sufficiently. Given that information transparency is regarded as a key component of QoG, it is included in the components of QoG in this study and refers to the extent to which government discloses the information of the government work and policies about COVID-19 to residents.

2.3. The government performance during a crisis

Literature in QoG indicated that the level of QoG determines citizens’ satisfaction and trust in government (e.g. Morgesen & Petrescu, 2011; van der Meer & Hakhverdian, 2017). For example, the results of Ramesh’ (2017) study in Sri Lanka showed that enhancing the quality of public service will increase satisfaction with the public sector, which in turn, leads to increased trust in government. Therefore, the measurement of citizen’s satisfaction indicates the level of ‘good government performance’ in many studies (Wang, 2010). Then, residents are satisfied with the COVID-19 government policies if the QoG in the COVID-19 pandemic is high. In addition, trust in government should also be used as an essential criterion for evaluating government performance.
Satisfaction with COVID-19 policies positively influences trust in government.

H7. Satisfaction with COVID-19 policies positively influences residents’ support of the government policy for accelerating tourism recovery.

H8. Trust in government positively influences residents’ support of the government policy for accelerating tourism recovery.

3. Research methods

3.1. Research design

For testing the generalisation of the research model, this study consists of two empirical surveys. Recently there is a trend of using two or more empirical studies in the tourism field (Tussyadiah, Wang, Jung, & tom Dieck, 2018), as it helps researchers to replicate and generalize the results and verify the robustness of the conclusions (Lv & McCabe, 2020; Tan, Lv, Liu, & Gursoy, 2018).

Macau was selected as the first research site in this study. The first reason is that it is one of the first tourist destinations with confirmed cases and is the first tourist destination to implement the zero-COVID strategy to control the pandemic. After the first case was confirmed in January 2020, Macau performed very strict approaches in response to the pandemic, including closing the casino business and the border gates, and therefore the first wave was recovered quickly. No new local cases were reported after April 8, 2020 until September 25, 2021. However, due to the high risks of imported cases, many of the strict policies are still ongoing in order to retain the zero-COVID case in the community. For example, the use of health codes to restrict and record residents’ access to restaurants, supermarkets, and transportation; to block pandemic areas and to initiate citywide nucleic acid testing when a new local infection is found, etc. Therefore, residents still evaluate government responsiveness for those strict policies and are very sensitive to information related to the pandemic. They are very concerned about information dissemination such as customs policies, patient’s conditions of imported cases, number of people in quarantine, and COVID-19 cases from surrounding cities. The second reason for selecting Macau is that tourism (including gambling) is Macau’s major source of revenue. 50.2% of the total GDP were directly generated by tourism (Statista, 2021a). Therefore, on one hand, residents are looking for a fast recovery of tourism. They welcome to have more tourists from China and other safe cities. On the other hand, residents still worry about the further outbreak of COVID-19 and therefore hope that the government can implement appropriate prevention policies to achieve the best of results that can accelerate tourism recovery and maintain zero local infection.

For the second research site, South Korea was among the first countries hit by the COVID-19 pandemic (OECD, 2020). In 2019, there were around 17.5 million visitors to South Korea, and visitors spent around 245 U.S. dollars per person per day (Statista, 2021b). The COVID-19 pandemic seriously affected South Korea’s tourism economic income (Bae & Chang, 2021), and it seems that South Korea’s fight against the COVID-19 is far from perfect. As of April 15, 2020, 10,591 confirmed cases and 225 patients passed away in South Korea (WHO, 2020). Referring to reality, South Korean residents worry about the outbreak of COVID-19, but they tend to support coexistence with viruses. Therefore, South Korea is a suitable site for validating the research model.

3.2. Instrument development

The quality of government consists of two constructs. The measurable items of policy responsiveness (4 items) and information transparency (3 items) are revised from Farazmand (2001) and Pan et al. (2005), respectively. The measurable items of the residents’ anxiety (4 items) are from Kouchaki and Desai (2015). The measurable items of satisfaction (3 items) and trust (5 items) are revised from Lai and Hitchcock (2015) and Nunkoo, Ribeiro, Sunnasseee, and Gursoy (2018),
respectively. The measurable items of accelerating tourism recovery are revised from the items supporting tourism development from Lai and Hitchcock (2017). The survey instrument had been sent to three professors in tourism management to access its content validity. Table A1 in Appendix shows the measurement items.

4. Study in Macau

4.1. Data collection

The main survey in Macau was conducted in April 2020. As pandemic cases doubled (from 18 to 43) from March 21 to March 31, the government discouraged residents from going out for gatherings, although it was stabilized in early April. Therefore, an online survey was an appropriate approach. The questionnaire was sent out to the local forums and local social media contacts via the online survey platform sqjump.com. A total of 430 samples were collected, and 57 of them were cancelled as they were not completed. Finally, 373 was valid in the study in Macau. The respondents’ information is shown in Table A2 in Appendix.

4.2. Data analysis

Since this study involves comparing the group-specific effects of two studies, so SmartPLS is selected because it provides a function to perform the multi-group analysis (Sarstedt, Henseler, & Ringle, 2011). The results of study 1 (Macau) are reported in this section. The results of study 2 (South Korea) are reported in section 5, and the Cross-case comparisons study is reported in section 6.

4.2.1. Outer model assessment

All values of item loading for Macau data exceeded the cut-off value of 0.70 as shown in Table 1. As shown in Table 2, all values of Cronbach’s alpha, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) exceed the cut-off values of 0.70, 0.70, and 0.50, respectively. Therefore, these results confirm item reliability, construct reliability, and convergent validity (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2017).

Table 3 shows the results of the examination of discriminant validity.

Table 2

| Macau | Cronbach’s Alpha | rho_A | Composite Reliability |
|-------|------------------|-------|------------------------|
| Information transparency | 0.898 | 0.898 | 0.937 | 0.831 |
| Policy responsiveness | 0.828 | 0.836 | 0.885 | 0.659 |
| Resident’s anxiety | 0.944 | 0.957 | 0.960 | 0.856 |
| Satisfaction with policy responses | 0.782 | 0.786 | 0.873 | 0.697 |
| Support for accelerating tourism recovery | 0.905 | 0.907 | 0.930 | 0.728 |
| Trust in government | 0.893 | 0.897 | 0.922 | 0.702 |
| South Korea | Information transparency | 0.945 | 0.946 | 0.965 | 0.901 |
| Policy responsiveness | 0.928 | 0.932 | 0.949 | 0.824 |
| Resident’s anxiety | 0.967 | 0.969 | 0.976 | 0.910 |
| Satisfaction with policy responses | 0.917 | 0.922 | 0.948 | 0.858 |
| Support for accelerating tourism recovery | 0.944 | 0.950 | 0.957 | 0.817 |
| Trust in government | 0.965 | 0.966 | 0.973 | 0.878 |

For the test of the Fornell-Larcker criterion, the square root of AVE for each construct is greater than its correlation with other constructs. For the test of Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio, all values of HTMT ratio are lower than the threshold of 0.90. Therefore, these results support the discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2017).

4.2.2. Structural model assessment

The results of PLS-SEM analysis for Macau data (as shown in Table 4) indicate that residents’ perception of the government policy responsiveness to COVID-19 and information transparency both significantly negatively affect residents’ anxiety (β = −0.176, p-value = 0.015; β = −0.195, p-value = 0.005). Two government works (policy

Table 1

| Macau | Mean | Standard Deviation | Excess Kurtosis | Skewness | Factor loadings |
|-------|------|-------------------|-----------------|---------|----------------|
| An1 | 3.169 | 1.384 | −0.411 | 0.347 | 0.868 |
| An2 | 2.871 | 1.301 | 0.088 | 0.482 | 0.957 |
| An3 | 2.882 | 1.349 | −0.194 | 0.479 | 0.954 |
| An4 | 2.633 | 1.300 | −0.022 | 0.566 | 0.919 |
| ATR1 | 5.528 | 1.039 | 0.559 | −0.485 | 0.739 |
| ATR2 | 5.735 | 1.109 | 0.978 | −0.858 | 0.903 |
| ATR3 | 5.641 | 1.174 | 0.417 | −0.721 | 0.893 |
| ATR4 | 5.786 | 1.211 | 0.972 | −0.974 | 0.885 |
| ATR5 | 6.019 | 0.994 | 1.406 | −0.957 | 0.836 |
| IT1 | 5.614 | 0.997 | 0.616 | −0.325 | 0.900 |
| IT2 | 5.579 | 1.026 | 0.411 | −0.311 | 0.924 |
| IT3 | 5.684 | 0.953 | −0.498 | −0.301 | 0.910 |
| PRL | 6.051 | 0.935 | 0.348 | −0.813 | 0.774 |
| PR2 | 5.887 | 0.957 | −0.052 | −0.603 | 0.820 |
| PR3 | 5.895 | 0.950 | −0.047 | −0.636 | 0.854 |
| PR4 | 5.748 | 0.879 | 0.078 | −0.365 | 0.797 |
| SPR1 | 5.440 | 0.955 | 0.289 | −0.402 | 0.804 |
| SPR2 | 5.552 | 0.966 | 0.176 | −0.471 | 0.836 |
| SPR3 | 5.523 | 0.939 | 0.251 | −0.495 | 0.864 |
| TG1 | 5.807 | 0.829 | −0.643 | −0.166 | 0.837 |
| TG2 | 5.442 | 1.036 | −0.127 | −0.412 | 0.778 |
| TG3 | 5.633 | 0.895 | 0.153 | −0.426 | 0.821 |
| TG4 | 5.574 | 0.890 | −0.597 | −0.155 | 0.868 |
| TG5 | 5.788 | 0.944 | −0.432 | −0.430 | 0.871 |

| South Korea | Mean | Standard Deviation | Excess Kurtosis | Skewness | Factor loadings |
|--------------|------|-------------------|-----------------|---------|----------------|
| Information transparency | 0.945 | 0.946 | 0.965 | 0.901 |
| Policy responsiveness | 0.928 | 0.932 | 0.949 | 0.824 |
| Resident’s anxiety | 0.967 | 0.969 | 0.976 | 0.910 |
| Satisfaction with policy responses | 0.917 | 0.922 | 0.948 | 0.858 |
| Support for accelerating tourism recovery | 0.944 | 0.950 | 0.957 | 0.817 |
| Trust in government | 0.965 | 0.966 | 0.973 | 0.878 |

Descriptive statistics.
residents’ anxiety does not have a significant effect on the satisfaction with policy responses ($\beta = -0.033$, p-value = 0.599). Two government works and satisfaction with policy responses significantly positively affect the trust in government ($\beta =$ 0.295, p-value < 0.001; $\beta =$ 0.406, p-value < 0.001; $\beta =$ 0.192, p-value < 0.001) and residents’ anxiety significantly negatively affect the trust in government ($\beta =$ -0.112, p-value = 0.001). Finally, satisfaction with policy responses and trust in government both significantly influence residents’ support of the government policy for accelerating tourism recovery ($\beta =$ 0.257, p-value < 0.001; $\beta =$ 0.338, p-value < 0.001). The values of R-square for residents’ anxiety, satisfaction with policy responses, trust in government, and support for accelerating tourism recovery are 0.111, 0.455, 0.663, and 0.291, respectively.

Since the value of R-square for residents’ anxiety is less than 0.15, the substantive significant (f-Square) test is further conducted to evaluate the effect of policy responsiveness. The f-Square value of policy responsiveness on residents’ anxiety is 0.022. This value exceeded the cut-off value of 0.020 and this effect is considered weak. Other than this effect, the effect of information transparency on residents’ anxiety, its f-

## 4.3 Discussions of the findings

The results of the study in Macau show the impacts of policy responsiveness and information transparency on residents’ anxiety negatively and on residents’ satisfaction positively. The negative impact of information transparency on residents’ anxiety is higher than the impact of policy responsiveness, showing that transparency and information sharing by the government is crucial to abate residents’ negative emotions and encourage them to the compliance (Rahimi & Abadi, 2020). However, the impact of government policy responsiveness on satisfaction with policy responses is higher than the impact of information transparency. It confirmed the important role of government response on COVID-19 and is consistent with Sager and Mavrot’s (2020) study to address that government response is crucial in crisis management. The results show that government should try their best to set up reasonable and sustainable policies and react to the situation in time, in order to gain residents’ higher satisfaction. In terms of gaining trust in government, both policy responsiveness, information transparency, satisfaction with policy responses, and residents’ anxiety have influences on it, but the first two factors have stronger effects. In order to gain residents’ support of the government policy for accelerating tourism recovery, residents’ satisfaction and trust are both important, but trust in government has a stronger effect, and this is not consistent with many of the current tourism studies to address that satisfaction has a stronger effect than trust (Al-Ansi & Han, 2019). It may imply the function of trust is more important than satisfaction under the COVID-19 pandemic.

## 5. Study in South Korea

### 5.1 Data collection

In order to validate the results from the study in Macau, a study was conducted in South Korea, another Asian tourist destination suffering from COVID-19. A set of 500 data was collected by a market research company in South Korea in April 2020 to answer the sample questionnaire of the Macau study. Different from Macau, although South Korea was in a serious pandemic period with more than 10,000 confirmed cases and over 170 countries banned South Korean travellers in April 2020, there was no general lockdown in some of the businesses like supermarkets and retails. In the 500 samples, 395 were valid; 105 of them were removed because they were marking the same rating in the questionnaire. The respondents’ information is shown in Table A2 in Appendix.
5.2. Data analysis and results

5.2.1. Outer model assessment

Referring to Tables 1 and 2, all values of item loading, Cronbach’s alpha, CR, and AVE for the South Korea data exceed the cut-off values. The reliability and convergent validity of South Korea data are confirmed (Hair et al., 2017). As shown in Tables 3 and 4, although the results of the discriminant validity tests are supported (Hair et al., 2017), the correlation value between ‘policy responsiveness’ and ‘trust in governance’ is high (0.820), therefore, the collinearity test is performed. The results of collinearity statistics indicate that all inner Variance Inflation Factors (VIF) values are lower than 3.3, hence, multicollinearity issue does not exist in both study 1 and study 2 (Hair et al., 2017).

5.2.2. Structural model

In South Korea, both two government works have a significant negative effect on residents’ anxiety (β = -0.150, p-value < 0.001) and satisfaction with policy responses (β = -0.068, p-value < 0.001). However, residents’ anxiety does not show any significant effect on the satisfaction with policy responses (β = 0.068, p-value = 0.096). On the trust in government, all factors (three positive and one negative) show a significant effect (βTR = 0.403, p-value < 0.001; βPT = 0.351, p-value < 0.001; βAa = -0.150, p-value < 0.001; βPR = 0.130, p-value = 0.019). Both satisfaction with policy responses and trust in government have a significant positive effect on residents’ support for accelerating tourism recovery (β = 0.199, p-value = 0.022; β = 0.227, p-value = 0.016). The values of R-square for residents’ anxiety, satisfaction with policy responses, trust in government, and support for accelerating tourism recovery are 0.250, 0.578, 0.781, and 0.155, respectively. Since the p-value for the effect of satisfaction with policy responses on residents’ support is low (0.022), so the f-Square test is further conduced. The f-Square value for satisfaction with policy responses on residents’ support is 0.024 (>0.020), indicating that the significant effect still exist.

5.3. Discussions of the findings

Surprisingly, as shown in Table 4, the study in South Korea shows similar results in most hypothesis tests with the one in Macau, though governments of two destinations are using different ways to respond to the COVID-19. It, therefore, confirms the generalization of the proposed model in the study. The major difference is the effects of policy responsiveness and information transparency on trust in government. In South Korea, policy responsiveness has a greater effect on trust in government than information transparency. However, Macau data shows an alternative way. In order to understand any differences in path coefficients between Macau and South Korea data, the cross-case comparisons study is performed by using Multi-group analysis.

6. Cross-case comparisons study

6.1. Multi-group analysis

Table 5 shows the results of the multi-group analysis. The highest p-value (1-tailed) is 0.962 (<0.975), and the lowest p-value (1-tailed) is 0.106 (<0.025), so there are no significant path coefficient differences between Macau and South Korea data.

6.2. Total effects

For further comparing the effects of residents’ anxiety in two studies, a table of total effects is drawn. Table 6 shows that the total negative effect of residents’ anxiety on their support is not significant in South Korea (total effect = −0.019, p-value = 0.409) but this negative effect is significant in Macau (total effect = −0.049, p-value = 0.004).

Table 5

| Path Coefficients | p-Value (1-tailed) | p-Value |
|-------------------|-------------------|---------|
| Resident’s anxiety | 0.051             | 0.304   | 0.607   |
| Policy responsiveness | 0.116             | 0.106   | 0.212   |
| Information transparency | -0.140         | 0.952   | 0.096   |
| Satisfaction with policy responses | 0.034         | 0.336   | 0.671   |
| Resident’s anxiety | -0.101           | 0.962   | 0.076   |
| Trust in government | -0.108          | 0.927   | 0.145   |
| Policy responsiveness | -0.055        | 0.218   | 0.437   |
| Information transparency | 0.038        | 0.223   | 0.445   |
| Resident’s anxiety | 0.061            | 0.200   | 0.399   |
| Satisfaction with policy responses | 0.058      | 0.298   | 0.595   |
| Support of the government policy for accelerating tourism recovery | 0.110        | 0.161   | 0.322   |

6.3. Discussions of the findings

As mentioned in the findings above, there are no significant path coefficient differences between Macau and South Korea data. However, in South Korea, the total effect of residents’ anxiety does not influence the support of the government policy for accelerating tourism recovery. But, in Macau, it has a significant total effect on the support. When the COVID-19 pandemic was under controlled like Macau, residents considered getting back to normal, and hence residents with low anxiety were more willing to support the government policy for accelerating tourism recovery; and residents with high anxiety had more concerns and not much support from the government policy for accelerating tourism recovery. On the other hand, when the COVID-19 pandemic was still severe in South Korea, residents were concerned about the loss of jobs, life-threatening, and other restrictions that the government could not be fully controlled (Choi, Hui, & Wan, 2020). Therefore, at that stage, they were generally not satisfied with the government policies. Under the strong influence of satisfaction with policy responses and trust in government, the residents’ anxiety was not enough to have a significant total effect on their support of the government policy for accelerating tourism recovery.

7. Conclusion and implications

7.1. Conclusion

Under the crisis of COVID-19, this study proposed a conceptual model and testified it to investigate how government policy responsiveness and information transparency influence residents’ anxiety, satisfaction with policy responses, trust in government, and their further support of the government policy for accelerating tourism recovery. Study 1 was conducted in Macau and confirmed most of the hypotheses but showed that residents’ anxiety did not significantly influence satisfaction with policy responses. Study 2 was conducted in South Korea and the results confirmed most of the hypotheses, but only residents’ anxiety had no significant negative influence on satisfaction with policy responses. Then, the multi-group analysis did not find any path differences, except the total effect of South Korean residents’ anxiety did not influence their support of the government policy for accelerating tourism recovery. The following section would discuss these results.

7.2. Theoretical implications

Although previous studies have addressed the impacts of COVID-19 on the tourism industry (Qiu et al., 2020), very few studies have considered the period of tourism recovery from the residents’
perspective in a tourist destination. To fill up this research gap, this study constructs a satisfaction-trust of the governance model to examine the impact of quality of government’s works, in terms of policy responsiveness and information transparency, on residents’ emotions (anxiety) and attitudes (satisfaction with government responses and trust in government) that ultimately influence the support of the government policy for accelerating tourism recovery. This study refines and enriches our understandings and deepens the research of governmental actions during a crisis in the tourist destination from residents’ perspectives.

Secondly, this study contributes to the tourism crisis research by introducing the concept of quality of government. In most cases, the effects of policy responsiveness on residents’ attitudes are higher than the effect of information transparency. However, in both Macau and South Korea, the effect of information transparency on residents’ anxiety is higher than the effect of policy responsiveness. It implies that Information transparency is the key to abate residents’ confusion and negative emotions during the COVID-19 era (Rahimi & Abadi, 2020). This study provides evidence to support UNWTO’s recommendation that clear and detailed information dissemination is essential with taking the right policy responses for supporting tourism recovery (World Tourism Organization, 2020). It contributes a satisfaction-trust of the governance model that addresses the importance of QoG in crisis management and provides insights to researchers to consider QoG and conduct further crisis management research by employing the satisfaction-trust of the governance model.

Furthermore, different from other studies that paid attention to the timing of recovery to tourism (Fong et al., 2020; McCartney, 2020), the study has focused on how to gain residents’ willingness to support the process of accelerating tourism recovery. Both findings in Macau and South Korea confirmed the research model for studying the residents’ support of the government policy for accelerating tourism recovery. Different from existing literature, this study argues that we should pay attention to the residents’ willingness to act or react, rather than their anticipation. Within the COVID-19 research theme, this study contributes to tourism recovery research by stimulating researchers’ interest in studying the actions to ‘accelerate’ tourism recovery. It is because no matter the government, the community, the tourism industry, or travellers, they are responsible to take some actions to speed up the recovery of the tourism industry.

Finally, this study is a cross-country analysis. Macau and South Korea were using different strategies to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic. Macau stuck with a zero Covid-19 approach and performed strict policies, such as social isolation, closing the business of casinos, or blocking the border gate to respond to the crisis. While South Korea tend to adopt the coexistence with the COVID-19 approach and performed a relatively gentle strategy which is similar to the actions many western countries performed. Thus, this study compared the path coefficient of the proposed framework between them. Different from our expectations, the results showed that these two tourist destinations have no significant path differences in the proposed model. However, when comparing the effects on residents’ anxiety (Table 4), this study found the source of residents’ anxiety under these two situations. This finding supplemented UNWTO suggestion that detailed information dissemination could gain residents’ support in tourism recovery by reducing the residents’ anxiety.

### 7.3. Practical implications

Since policy responsiveness is of great importance to enhance residents’ satisfaction with policy responses. Therefore, the government should develop appropriate strategies in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. When the government responds to the ongoing pandemic situation, the policy setup should be on time and sustainable during the period. Such as timing held a press conference on the latest progress of the pandemic. Furthermore, these policies need to be well-cooperated by government departments. A critical example is a cooperation with destination management organizations (DMOs). No matter the governments adopting zero-COVID or coexistence strategies, DMOs should formulate appropriate strategies for serving their target visitors who come from cities with different levels of infection risk. For example, once open quarantine-free travel bubbles with other countries, the DMOs should cooperate with hotels to arrange specific floors for tourists from the medium level of infection risk. It can reduce the anxiety of tourists who come from cities with a low level of infection risk, so as residents. The DMOs should also coordinate with the health department and hotels to establish nucleic acid test centres for overseas passengers in the hotels.

Since travel risk perceptions of travellers during COVID-19 crises are influenced by media coverage (Seyfi et al., 2021), the content of information dissemination is not only aimed at residents but also tourists. The information related to the pandemic should not be concealed. Instead, the government should deliver information as far as possible to residents and tourists in order to make them feel comfortable and gain their trust. At the same time, the government should make use of various technologies and social media channels to communicate with residents and tourists to obtain their feedback with policy responses. The information in the future is not limited to the cases of COVID-19 and the prevention arrangements of the community. As the virus mutates and weakens, people need information for self-testing and treatment. The information on the availability of therapeutic drugs and self-testing kits is important. With the gradual opening of quarantine-free travel, the governments should also release information about prevention measures of overseas passengers such as any restrictions for less than 7-day arrival tourists. This helps to accelerate tourism recovery.

As residents’ perceptions may vary at different stages of the COVID-19 crisis, the governments must pay attention to the perceptions of the public at different times. The measurement of residents’ satisfaction

### Table 6

| Total effects | Resident’s anxiety | Satisfaction with policy responses | Trust in government | Support for accelerating tourism recovery |
|---------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------------|
|                | Effect p-value    | Effect p-value                    | Effect p-value      | Effect p-value                          |
| Macau          |                   |                                   |                     |                                         |
| Policy responsiveness | −0.176 0.015 | 0.473 0.000                      | 0.405 0.000         | 0.259 0.000                             |
| Information transparency | −0.195 0.005 | 0.272 0.000                      | 0.480 0.000         | 0.232 0.000                             |
| Resident’s anxiety | −0.033 0.399 |                          | −0.118 0.000        | −0.049 0.004                            |
| South Korea    |                   |                                   |                     |                                         |
| Policy responsiveness | −0.226 0.001 | 0.593 0.000                      | 0.514 0.000         | 0.235 0.000                             |
| Information transparency | −0.312 0.000 | 0.210 0.001                      | 0.425 0.000         | 0.193 0.000                             |
| Resident’s anxiety | 0.068 0.096    |                          | −0.141 0.000        | −0.019 0.409                            |
| Satisfaction with policy responses | 0.130 0.019 | 0.229 0.003                      |                     |                                         |
| Trust in government |                 | 0.227 0.001                      |                     |                                         |
with policy response and trust in government helps the government to fine tune its strategies to accelerate tourism recovery, although the general direction (zero-COVID or coexistence) remains the same. For example, if the onset time of the new variant COVID-19 virus is shortened, the Macau government should consider reducing the quarantine time of overseas passengers. It helps the government to gain residents’ satisfaction with the recovery of the tourism economy.

7.4. Limitations and future studies

For testing the generalization of the research, this research has examined the proposed model through studies in two tourist destinations. Yet, there are still limitations that can be improved in future studies. First, both study 1 and study 2 were performed in April 2020, at that time people knew very little about the COVID-19, and the strategies governments performed were highly diverse. When residents know more about the COVID-19 (e.g. the evolution of the COVID-19, the speed of transmission, and the mortality rate), their perceptions may vary at different stages of this COVID-19 crisis. As the proposed model can be applied for any stage of the pandemic, a future study using a longitudinal method is suggested to keep track of the residents’ perceptions and reactions at different stages of COVID-19. The proposed model can also be used to compare different approaches to the COVID-19 pandemic across countries and regions.

Second, this study focused on how government responses to the COVID-19 influence residents’ satisfaction, trust, and support of the government policy for accelerating tourism recovery. As Brouder (2020) argued post-COVID-19 would bring long-term influence on tourist behaviours, and therefore future studies may consider examining how destination government responses influence tourist behaviour toward the tourist destination.

Table A1

| Code | Measurable item |
|------|-----------------|
| PR1  | The policy responses for COVID-19 from the government were timely. |
| PR2  | were good. |
| PR3  | were sustainable during the crisis. |
| PR4  | were well-cooperated with government agencies. |
| IT1  | The entire process of the COVID-19 responses was transparently disclosed. |
| IT2  | We could clearly understand the progress of the COVID-19 responses work. |
| IT3  | The government disclosed sufficient information to us on the COVID-19 responses. |
| An1  | The government works of the COVID-19 responses make me feel nervous. |
| An2  | feel anxious. |
| An3  | feel apprehensive. |
| An4  | Satisfaction with policy responses |
| SPR1 | I was fully satisfied with policy responses on COVID-19 from the government. |
| SPR2 | The policy responses on COVID-19 made by the government met my expectation. |
| SPR3 | My satisfaction with policy responses on COVID-19 from the government was high. |
| TG1  | I trust that the government made the right decisions in the works of the COVID-19 responses. |
| TG2  | I trust that the government has done what is right in the COVID-19 responses. |
| TG3  | I trust that the government has looked after the interest of the community in relation to the decisions of the COVID-19 responses. |
| TG4  | I trust the decisions of the COVID-19 responses made by the government. |
| TG5  | I trust that the government’s effort to incorporate residents into the planning process of the COVID-19 responses. |

Accelerating for the tourism recovery

| ATR1 | I believe tourism should be actively recovered in Macau/South Korea soon. |
| ATR2 | I support the promotion of tourism once the pandemic can be controlled. |

Table A2

| Background of respondents |
|---------------------------|
| Macau South Korea |
| Frequency Percentage | Frequency Percentage |
| Gender |
| Male 182 48.8% 189 47.8% |
| Female 191 51.2% 206 52.2% |
| Age |
| 18-20 4 1.1% 7 1.8% |
| 21-25 40 10.7% 25 6.3% |
| 26-30 66 17.9% 59 14.9% |
| 31-35 55 14.7% 36 9.1% |
| 36-40 72 19.3% 45 11.4% |
| 41-45 40 10.7% 40 10.1% |
| 46-50 20 5.4% 41 10.4% |
| 51-55 23 6.2% 56 14.2% |
| 56-60 21 5.6% 32 8.1% |
| Over 60 32 8.6% 54 13.7% |
| Education (completed) |
| Bachelor 246 66.0% 284 71.9% |
| Master or above 45 12.1% 42 10.6% |
| Monthly income (USD) |
| Under 1250 58 15.5% 74 18.7% |
| 1251-1875 22 5.9% 17 4.3% |
| 1876-2500 73 19.6% 81 20.5% |
| 2501-3125 66 17.7% 59 14.9% |
| 3126-3750 43 11.5% 46 11.6% |
| 3751-4375 38 10.2% 29 7.3% |
| 4376-5000 22 5.9% 24 6.1% |
| 5001-5625 11 2.9% 19 4.8% |
| 5626-6250 10 2.7% 18 4.6% |
| Above 6250 30 8.0% 28 7.1% |

Declaration of competing interest

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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