

Post Pandemic Challenges of the Travel Agency Business in Bangladesh

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Abstract

The primary purpose of this study is to determine the post-COVID-19 challenges of the travel agency business. This study has also recommended some recovery plans to minimize post-COVID-19 challenges which is faced by the travel agency businesses of Bangladesh. Considerably, prevalent travel agents of Bangladesh are the target population for this study. The online survey development platform known as "Google Form" was used to formulate the questionnaire: which was distributed to the 150 respondents. The questionnaire was prepared following the non-probability convenience sampling method where responses from a total of 120 respondents of different travel agencies were collected and to examine the data SPSS 26.0 was used. This study has used descriptive statistics to analyze the results of the population's firmographic characteristics and the basic information of the travel agency business operation of the respondents. In addition, this study applied mean, standard deviation, and ANOVA tests to analyze the variables. The survey results identified the most concerning challenges for the travel agency business and the most influencing steps for the post-COVID-19 recovery of the travel agency business in Bangladesh. The findings of this research will assist the travel agents to design strategies that will accelerate their business operation which in turn will help them to overcome the post-COVID-19 challenges.



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1. Introduction:

Tourism is one of the fastest escalating global industries. Tourism products and services are organized in such a way that they make business, entertainment and recreational activities effortless for tourists who are more or less away from home. Travel agencies assist to make the tourism products or services easily accessible to the travelers (Melwin & Kutty, 2020). Thomas Cook, a British entrepreneur, planned and started operating package tours for the middle and working-class travelers to the beach resorts in the 19th century (Cheung & Lam, 2009). Over the century, millions of travel agencies were established to meet the demand of the tourists. Tourists prefer travel agencies for hassle-free and pleasant travel experiences. Travel agents guide their clients to save time and money with a personal touch (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2002). Travel agencies primarily act as intermediaries between providers of travel services such as transportation, accommodation, tours and other tourism services, and consumers of the travel services where they provide physical products and information (Cheung & Lam, 2009). Usually, a travel agent is a specialized diploma or certificate holder in travel services (Westcott & Anderson, 2015). The world's biggest organization of travel and tourism professionals is the American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA), with over 20 thousand members in over 170 countries (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2002). Travel agents' association, known as the Association of Travel Agents of Bangladesh (ATAB), has more than 3500 members who play a crucial role in developing tourism in Bangladesh and are recognized by the government. The external environment of tourism, ranging from infectious diseases to social incidents, affects the tourism industry badly. For example, according to the World Tourism Organization (WTO), the tourism industry of England and Ireland were immobilized by the foot-and-mouth disease in 2000 and 2001 where the tourism industry faced a reduction in the number of British tourist arrivals at the rate of 6% in the first eight months of its occurrence (Zhong et al., 2021). The ongoing outbreak of respiratory disease, which is familiar as the Corona virus disease 2019 (COVID-19), is the latest threat to health worldwide (Fauci et al., 2020). COVID-19 is an infectious disease because of the severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Co-ronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) virus, which has spread in the 210 plus countries and territories after its origination in Wuhan city of Hubei province in China in December 2019 (Ali & Alharbi, 2020). COVID-19 was designated a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) when confirmed cases were reported near 200,000 in which numbers of deaths exceeded 8,000 anticipated in over 160 countries (Spinelli & Pellino, 2020). The world has gone under strict lockdown, and Bangladesh govt. had also imposed lockdown in March 2020, which had made travelling restricted and a complete shutdown of travel-related enterprises like hotels, resorts, tour operators, and travel agencies. Based on the recent survey of the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), as a result of the epidemic, the tourism industry in Bangladesh suffered a \$6.9252 billion revenue loss, with hotels and resorts losing roughly 84 per cent of their income as well as travel agencies losing almost all of their revenue (The Daily Star, 2022). The forecasted loss of travel agency business in Bangladesh due to the COVID-19 epidemic is \$346.26 million and unemployment of 15000 employees in 2020 (Deb & Nafi, 2020). Tourism enterprise tried to recover and stood again after the government relaxed the travel restrictions. Tourism destinations and businesses are allowed to keep open for tourists with travel guidelines of maintaining social distance, wearing masks and so on. In this study, two research topics are addressed: (1) what post-pandemic problems travel agencies in Bangladesh face, and (2) what recovery measures may be used to recoup the losses.

2. Literature Review:

In spite of being an essential component of the tourism industry, it is stunning that studies investigating the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic on travel agency businesses are minimal. The reason why it is stunning is that tourism is one of the most afflicted sectors

because of the global epidemic of COVID-19 (ÇELİK & ATAÇ, 2021). One of the most concerning issues in the travel industry is how businesses should respond and how to recover during the COVID-19 pandemic (Sigala, 2020). The ongoing epidemic of COVID-19 is not like any other previous epidemic, which is effective in around 100 countries (Song et al., 2021). Globally, the tourist industry, according to UNWTO's secretary-general, is one of the most affected sectors of the economy (Khan, 2020). Yeh (2021) suggests, four types of impact on the tourism industry: international dispute, economic downturn, travel stop, and social distance. Also, the author provides three suggestions for effective tourism crisis and disaster management and post-crisis recovery. These include temperance, prioritizing tasks, and transparent information. Instead of over promises of cash infusion, he emphasized dealing with a slow economy, which is helpful for the companies. A significant inverse relationship between tourism demand and the COVID-19 virus is suggested by the preliminary economic modeling (Yang et al., 2020). Tourism industry can be completely paralyzed by the Covid-19 pandemic as a result of the changing 'demand' and 'supply' (Khan, 2020). Khan (2020) also identifies several challenges and concerns for the tourism industry, such as mass unemployment, survival of the industry, strengthening business accountability laws, force majeure or unforeseeable situations to overcome, stringent travel rules, and physical distancing of tourism. At least 90% of the global population has faced cross-border travel restrictions due to the covid-19 pandemic (Matiza, 2020). The global tourist arrivals have decreased at the rate of 78%, so the losses of USD 1.2 trillion in export revenues due to the loss of around 120 million jobs (Huynh et al., 2021). Bangladesh has also experienced 32.9% less contribution to GDP from the travel and tourism industry, and over 4 million unemployment (WTTC, 2021). Asian economies have been devastated by the epidemic, resulting in joblessness, insolvency, revenue declines, and budget surpluses (Huynh et al., 2021). However, in 2022, the world's travel and tourism businesses are expected to be valued at \$8.6 trillion, down just 6.4% from pre-pandemic levels (WTTC, 2022). Tourism dependent economic developing countries may suffer a lot from the chronic effect of COVID-19 (Ismael et al., 2021). Sri Lanka is experiencing the consequences of the pandemic on the tourism industry, which is affecting the entire economy as well. The effects of the pandemic influence not just local tourism but also adjacent nations and regions. (Zhong et al., 2021). Adverse impacts of tourism on dozens of industries with its multiplier effects are seen as a consequence of the COVID-19 epidemic (ÇELİK & ATAÇ, 2021). Due to the lower occupancy rates and government restrictions, accommodation providers were bound to close their business temporarily or permanently (Neuburger & Egger, 2021; Anzolin et al., 2020). Hotel industry professionals faced immense pressure due to partial or complete closings, uncertain demand for short-term or long-term hotel rooms, and financial losses (Jiang & Wen, 2020). Travel agencies and tour operators are in a severe economic crisis due to the cancellation of reservations or delays (Korkut et al., 2020). The components of tourism, such as travel agencies, the airline industry, lodging, tour operators, restaurants etc., are on the edge of bankruptcy (ÇELİK & ATAÇ, 2021). Data-driven decisions, depending on the time and demand recovery rate by market channel and segment, and promptly analyzing the changing consumer behavior, can be taken by the revenue management executives of the hotel industry (Denizci Guillet & Chu, 2021). According to Hafsa (2020), the revival of Bangladesh's tourism industry may be aided by concentrating on domestic tourism, giving discount on packages to visitors and coordinating efforts between the commercial and governmental sectors. Budget package tour is also lucrative for young Bangladeshi for outbound travel destinations (Roy et al., 2021). Large airlines worldwide are in a miserable condition of bankruptcy and uncertainties because of the COVID-19 pandemic as the restriction of social distance reduced the seating capacity of the entire global fleet of aircraft by 62 per cent, and consequently, only four companies operate profitably following this condition where the majority of airline companies faced negative profitability under the current price policy even

most of the companies meet the break-even point after selling 75% tickets (Gole et al., 2021). Cancellation of flights were more than two million worldwide until 30 June 2020 (Deb & Nafi, 2020). Passenger's health is important, but government and international health organizations should impose flexible laws and regulations for the survival of the airline industry (Gole et al., 2021). COVID-19 epidemic has adverse impact on the travel agency business, which is one of the key subsectors of the tourism industry. Travel agency businesses have suffered substantial losses because of cancelling reservations that they made before the crisis had begun (Araújo Vila et al., 2021). To reduce the adverse aftermath of the COVID-19 epidemic on travel agency business, financing methods such as getting credit, using equity, borrowing from the market, selling firm fixtures, and borrowing from firm partners, are applied (ÇELİK & ATAÇ, 2021). The pandemic has changed the consumers' behavior as the travelers would prefer low-density tours because of social distancing issues moreover, the demand for outdoor activities and fitness-oriented tourism products, self-driving and family tours would be more prevalent after covid-19 pandemic (Zhong et al., 2021). To reduce the cost of the business, market or product diversification and searching for new distributor methods were applied by some of the travel agents; at the same time, most of the travel agencies had laid off personnel, and many travel agencies have moved to another sector due to the insufficient support of the state and related organizations (ÇELİK & ATAÇ, 2021). According to (WTTC, 2020), for the recovery of the travel agency business, four trends are predicted to emerge: traveler behavior, health and safety, innovation of new technology and sustainability. Pandemic has transformed the shape of tourist behavior in Bangladesh, where digital platforms like social media and online reservations let travelers exchange and acquire travel information, effecting their spending and choosing behaviors (Halim, 2022). Craven et al., (2020) suggest that seven actions should apply in all kinds of businesses to regain the industry: employee protection, creating a cross-functional COVID-19 response team, ensuring sufficient liquidity to weather the storm, stabilizing the supply chain, staying close to the consumers, practicing the plan, and demonstrating purpose. Travel agencies can build travelers' confidence by providing up-to-date resources and helping travelers navigate choices (WTTC, 2020) as travelers are now more used to the innovation and technology because of the Covid-19 (WTTC, 2020; Halim, 2022).

3. Methodology:

The quantitative research method was applied for this study. The study was operated from July 2021 to December 2021. The target population for this study was taken from travel agents who are considerably prevalent in Bangladesh. For this study, the non-probability convenience sampling method was used to collect data from 120 respondents of different travel agencies. The inclusion eligibility of the respondents was (i) the registered travel agencies of the Association of Travel Agency of Bangladesh (ATAB) and (ii) travel agencies who have operated business for at least two years. Travel agencies whose business tenure is less than two years had been excluded from the study. Fulfillment of these criteria was the eligibility of a respondent to participate in the survey process. Both primary and secondary data were utilized for this study. The online survey development platform known as Google Form was used to develop the questionnaire along with the printed copies. The literature and the personal views of the industry professionals were considered while designing the survey questions. The questionnaire was designed in such a way that it was divided into three sections: the first section consisted of the questions about the characteristics of the population and the basic information about the travel agency business operation of the respondents the post-COVID-19 challenges of the travel agency business were enquired in the second section of the questionnaire and the last section of the questionnaire asked the respondents about the steps that can be helpful to regain business after the pandemic. A five-point Likert rating ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) were used for the second and last sections (Likert,

1932). Although the questionnaire was first developed in English, the Bengali translation was included for the better understanding of the respondents. The developed questionnaire was sent to the emails of the travel agencies and the printed copies of it were distributed to the office of some travel agencies. The respondent's consent was attained before doing the survey. Questionnaires completed by the eligible respondents, through emails and printed copies, were counted for the further study. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS v.26.0) was used in this study for the analysis of the data. To illustrate the firmographic characteristics of the respondents, descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, frequency etc., were used. In addition, the variables of this study were analyzed using Pearson Correlation.

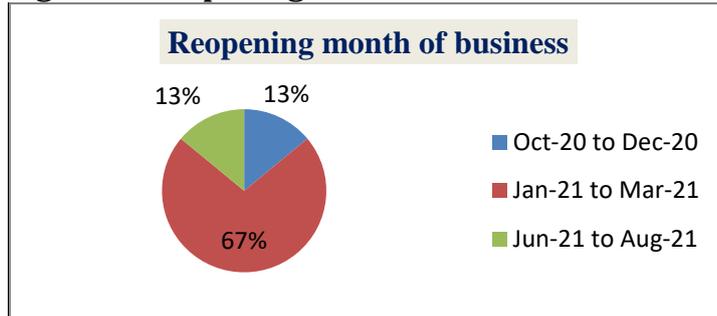
4. Findings and Discussion:

4.1. Characteristics of the population and the basic information of the respondents:

This study was carried out on the well-established travel agents, in which 80 per cent of their business age was more than 5 years, and only 55% had been running their business for 6 to 10 years. It is revealed from the findings that the majority (60.8%) of respondents are retail travel agents and a significant (25%) of them run both retail and wholesale business. It was found that 63.3% of total respondents were able to operate domestic, inbound, and outbound tours altogether. In addition, it is observed that 59.2% of total respondents sell economy packages, whereas very few sell luxury and executive packages (6.7% and 6.7%), respectively). Moreover, 95.8% of total respondents could not continue their business operation during the COVID-19 pandemic and 79.2% need subsidies for the survival of their business.

Table 1: Firmographic profile of the respondents

Numbers of years in Business	Frequency	Percent (%)
2- 5 years	23	19.2%
6-10 years	66	55%
11-15 years	18	15%
More than 15	13	10.8%
Total	120	100%
Continue your business during COVID-19		
Yes	5	4.2%
No	115	95.8%
Total	120	100%
Type of Travel agency		
Retail	73	60.8%
Wholesale	17	14.2%
Both (Retail & Wholesale)	30	25%
Total	120	100%
Type of Tour Operated		
Domestic Tour	13	10.8%
Inbound Tour	11	9.2%
Outbound Tour	10	8.3%
Ground Operators	10	8.3%
Domestic, Inbound & Outbound	76	63.3%
Total	120	100%
Type of package		
Economy	71	59.2%
Executive	8	6.7%
Luxury	8	6.7%
All	33	27.5%
Total	120	100%
Need subsidies for the survival		
Yes	95	79.2%
No	25	20.8%
Total	120	100%

Figure 1: Reopening month of the business

Source: Survey data

Figure 1 shows that the majority of the travel agencies reopened their operations in the first quarter of 2021, which was forced to close due to a strict lockdown imposed by the government on 8 March 2020.

4.2. Post COVID-19 challenges of the travel agency business and its recovery strategies:

Table-2 represents the overall score of 10 (ten) variables identified to evaluate the challenges for the business operation of travel agency during or after the COVID-19 pandemic. In this study, out of 10 (ten) variables, the mean score of 4 (four) variables is more significant than 4.00 ($M > 4.00$), where the most significant challenge is tourist's preferences for budget packages over luxury ($M = 4.41$) and laws, policies, and regulations are changing and challenging to always adjust ($M = 4.18$), tourists are unwilling to maintain quarantine guidelines ($M = 4.13$), reopening is challenging without proper funding ($M = 4.11$) are also substantially impact the travel agency business. Four other variables' mean score are ($M > 3.50$), and only two variables' score are ($M < 3.5$). Lack of skilled workforce due to long business break ($M = 3.98$), tourists are concerned about health safety than before ($M = 3.83$), specific vaccination requirements demotivate travelers ($M = 3.73$), and tourists are more anxious about travelling again ($M = 3.51$) are also considered as challenges of travel agency business. However, the most minor significant post-COVID-19 challenges of travel agency business are tourists prefer luxury packages over the budget package (mean=2.35) and emerging trends of using online services than previous (mean=3.10).

Table-2: Evaluate the following statement about challenges during or after the pandemic

No	Items	N	Mean	S. D
V1	Tourists are concerned about health safety than before	120	3.83	.640
V2	Tourists are unwilling to maintain quarantine guidelines	120	4.13	.879
V3	Specific vaccination requirements demotivate travelers	120	3.73	.923
V4	Emerging trends of using online services (e-booking) than previous	120	3.10	.749
V5	Tourists are more anxious about travelling again	120	3.51	.879
V6	Tourists prefer budget packages over luxury	120	4.41	.815
V7	Tourists prefer luxury packages over the budget package	120	2.35	.932
V8	Laws, policies, and regulations are changing and challenging to adjust always	120	4.18	.635
V9	Lack of skilled workforce due to long business break	120	3.98	.635
V10	Reopening is challenging without proper funding	120	4.11	.776

Table-3: Evaluate the following statement about the steps that can be helpful to regain the business

No	Items	N	Mean	S. D
V11	Government should allocate accessible loan facilities	120	4.23	.658
V12	The government should facilitate Bangladeshi tourists' entry	120	4.40	.653
V13	Domestic tourism is a survival tool	120	4.37	.697
V14	Hygiene and safety should be closely monitored	120	3.76	.850

Table 3 demonstrates the steps that can be helpful to regain the travel agency business after the COVID-19 pandemic, where all the variables' scores represent a positive perception ($M > 3.76$). It is indicated that most of the respondents emphasized on taking necessary steps and added that the government should facilitate Bangladeshi tourists' entry ($M = 4.40$), domestic tourism is a survival tool (mean = 4.37), government should allocate accessible loan facilities (mean = 4.23), and hygiene and safety should be closely monitored (mean = 3.76) as the leading influential factors for the recuperation of the catastrophe of the travel agency business after covid-19.

Table-4: Mean scores for the questionnaire items and results ANOVA (type of travel agency)

No	Items	Type of Travel Agency	N	Mean	S. D	P
Challenges faced by Travel Agency						
V1	Tourists are concerned about health safety than before	Retail	73	3.81	.680	.542
		Wholesale	17	3.65	.786	
		Both	30	4.00	.371	
V2	Tourists are unwilling to maintain quarantine guidelines	Retail	73	4.11	.792	.009
		Wholesale	17	4.00	.866	
		Both	30	4.27	1.081	
V3	Specific vaccination requirements demotivate travelers	Retail	73	3.84	.834	.269
		Wholesale	17	3.82	.883	
		Both	30	3.43	1.104	
V4	Emerging trends of using online services (e-booking) than previous	Retail	73	3.05	.762	.029
		Wholesale	17	2.94	.827	
		Both	30	3.30	.651	
V5	Tourists are more anxious about travelling again	Retail	73	3.51	.868	.446
		Wholesale	17	3.06	1.029	
		Both	30	3.77	.728	
V6	Tourists prefer budget packaging over luxury	Retail	73	4.38	.844	.982
		Wholesale	17	4.41	.870	
		Both	30	4.47	.730	
V7	Tourists prefer luxury package over the budget package	Retail	73	2.27	1.004	.049
		Wholesale	17	2.59	.712	
		Both	30	2.40	.855	
V8	Laws, policies, and regulations are changing and challenging to adjust always	Retail	73	4.12	.666	.419
		Wholesale	17	4.29	.686	
		Both	30	4.27	.521	
V9	Lack of skilled workforce due to long business break	Retail	73	3.95	.575	.306
		Wholesale	17	4.00	.707	
		Both	30	4.07	.740	
V10	Reopening is challenging without proper funding	Retail	73	4.08	.702	.026
		Wholesale	17	4.47	.717	
		Both	30	3.97	.928	
Steps to Regain the Business						
V11	Government should allocate accessible loan facilities	Retail	73	4.19	.616	.212
		Wholesale	17	4.18	.809	
		Both	30	4.37	.669	
V12	The government should facilitate Bangladeshi tourists' entry	Retail	73	4.42	.644	.013
		Wholesale	17	4.00	.612	
		Both	30	4.57	.626	
V13	Domestic tourism is a survival tool	Retail	73	4.36	.632	.467
		Wholesale	17	4.29	.920	
		Both	30	4.43	.728	
V14	Hygiene and safety should be closely monitored	Retail	73	3.79	.781	.009
		Wholesale	17	3.41	1.064	
		Both	30	3.87	.860	

Table-4 summarizes the mean, standard deviation, and ANOVA test results of variables which indicate the post COVID-19 hitch for the effective business operation of the travel agency and recovery steps that can be taken to help reclaim the business. Furthermore, this investigation aimed to determine the relationship between the challenges faced by the travel agency and their type of their travel agency business (retail, wholesale, and both). Considerable dissimilation among retail, wholesale, and both (retail and wholesale) types of travel agencies in the sphere of challenges the travel agency faces is found. This dissimilation is determined by the variables like- V2: tourists are unwilling to maintain quarantine guidelines ($p=.009$), V10: reopening is challenging without proper funding ($p=.026$), V4: Emerging trends of using online services (e-booking) than previous ($p=.029$), V7: tourists prefer luxury packages over the budget package ($p=.049$). On the other hand, in the sphere of the type of travel agency (retail, wholesale or both), a significant discrepancy among some factors is notable in taking steps that can be helpful to regain business after the covid-19 pandemic. Indication of the study is that there are huge discrepancies among the type of travel agencies (retail, wholesale, or both) on the recovering factors of the post-COVID-19 challenges of the travel agency business. These factors include- V14: hygiene and safety should be closely monitored ($p=.009$), and V12: the government should facilitate Bangladeshi tourists' entry ($p=.013$).

5. Discussion:

This study appraises Post COVID-19 obstructive and recovering factors of the travel agency business. These factors examine which variables influence travel agents as per the type of the business. According to the survey results, it is clear that the most concerning variables, which are the post-COVID-19 challenges for travel agency business, are- V2: tourists' unwillingness to maintain quarantine guidelines, V4: emerging trends of using online services (e-booking) than previous, V7: tourists prefer luxury package over the budget package, and V10: reopening is challenging without proper funding. It is obligatory to maintain hotel quarantines for travelers in many countries however, travelers do not want to maintain hotel quarantine due to the additional quarantine costs in the hotel. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, global consumer behavior has been influenced by digitalization, and consumer purchasing habits have been reshaped (Gu et al., 2021). Travelers were motivated by online booking during the pandemic, which changed their buying methods or habits. Because of the personalized demands for the best level of quality services, monitoring luxury tourism is very difficult (Abdo & Kataya, 2021). Widespread cancellations, severely, adversely impacted travel agents in 2020 and 2021 and in lockdown. In addition, they could not run their business (96%) during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many travel agencies were forced to close their business either temporarily or permanently. Moreover, most travel agencies agreed they need subsidies for their business's survival because of the business discontinuity during the COVID-19 pandemic. For the lack of proper funding, it is challenging for travel agents to reopen their businesses. In terms of recovery steps, the most significant steps are- V12: the government should facilitate Bangladeshi tourists' entry and V14: hygiene and safety should be closely monitored. Tourists were under travel restrictions in many countries, including Bangladesh: the Bangladesh government should increase democratic promptness to ensure easy access for tourists. The tourism industry needs more robust control in health aspects and the responsibility of the industry's primary stakeholders in terms of health and safety standards (Farzanegan et al., 2021). The respondents also recognize the loan facilities supported by the government. There is a stimulus program for the tourist industry in Bangladesh, where banks would lend to hotels, motels and theme parks to pay their workers' wages at 8% interest, with government subsidies of 4% and the balance being borne by businesses themselves (The Daily Star, 2021) where the interest of travel agencies and tour operators are entirely ignored from government subsidies (Anadolu Agency, 2021). According to this study, retail travel agency is identified as the most

widespread type of travel agency. This study also reveals that most travel agencies prefer economy packages because of the travelers' huge demand and the lack of considerable capital for the luxury package. Travel agents should give more attention in providing a specialized economy package to persuade travelers as most of the traveler's demand for economy packages has increased because of their current changing financial condition for COVID-19. Travel agents should operate domestic, inbound, or outbound tours with maximum hygiene and health safety as travelers will be motivated to travel again if they are ensured safe travel. Travel agents should adapt and adjust themselves to changing laws, policies, and regulations due to the COVID-19 pandemic and encourage and educate tourists about its importance. Employees of the travel agency business can be trained again to make them skilled as there is a paucity of dexterous personnel owing to the protracted hiatus of the business during COVID-19 although their expenditure will be escalated for it. In addition, travel agents should also adapt themselves to emerging technological trends in their business promotion, get access to information, and clear cancellation policies to catch the attention of travelers. Government cooperation is highly appreciated for the post-COVID-19 recovery of travel agency business such as loan facilities, ensuring easy access for Bangladeshi tourists, focusing on domestic tourism etc.

Conclusion:

It will be very laborious to overcome the catastrophe and recoup the post-pandemic challenges of the travel agency business in a rapid pace because of the wreckage of COVID-19. Tourist behaviors of choosing economic packages have changed the entire market scenario so more market research is needed to identify the changing demands of travelers for the pandemic. Tourism suppliers and policymakers need to concentrate on the emerging issues of travelers like hygiene concerns, social distancing, and health safety while offering and designing travel products. Policymakers need to give more focus/ need to be more focused on creating flexible travel regulations to encourage tourists to visit again. Travel agents, working as intermediaries between tourists and suppliers, will have to deal with these challenging issues, which will decline the tourist flow if not adequately addressed. However, this study was conducted in the last quarter of 2021, when the world suffered a lot from COVID-19. It could not address the environment of the travel agency business when the situation stabilized. Researchers have scope to address more challenges of the travel agency business and recovery strategies in changing the travel behavior of the travelers. In addition, based on the current circumstances, researching post COVID-19 challenges and recovery strategies for other sectors or other stakeholders in the tourism industry or any other business is obligatory as it can be very productive for the growth of the business in future.

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