

## **Impact of Coronavirus Crisis (Covid 19) on The Sentiments of Traveler's in UAE**

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### **Abstract**

*The Covid-19 or better known as Coronavirus which has come to known as a Pandemic has caused a great shift in the economies of the World and the United Arab Emirates is also among those economies but the major industry of the United Arab Emirates which has been impacted the most is the Travel and Tourism Industry.*

*With all the travel restrictions in place for international travel, the Travel and Tourism industry of U.A.E are utilizing other options and opportunities from which one among them is Domestic tourism. But with Covid-19 in place would the residents of the country opt for Domestic Tourism? To understand the changes brought by Coronavirus (Covid-19) in domestic tourism of U.A.E. To understand the perception of the potential consumer towards domestic tourism.*

**Keywords:** *domestic tourism, Travel and Tourism industry.*

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Coronavirus or also scientifically known as Covid-19 is a virus that was discovered from a meat and seafood market from a city of China, Wuhan - a city with a population of 11 million approximately. The word the word corona comes from Latin meaning "halo or crown" and now has become a virus known as corona virus which affects the respiratory system of bats, pigs, small mammals and also humans.

As of November 2020, the virus has affected 191 countries and regions with more than 66 million cases and also resulted in more than 1.5 million deaths due to such high numbers the World Health Organisation (WHO) as declared the virus to be a Pandemic. The symptoms for the virus are very common and small such as cough, fever, shortness of breath which could be misunderstood for a seasonal sickness.

The Travel and Tourism (T&T) Industry being a global market has greatly been impacted by this on-going pandemic. Due to increase in numbers of cases, globally borders were closed down so that the virus doesn't spread further or infects them through others which affected the T&T industry hugely economically and the United Arab Emirates was no less in that race.

The T&T industry plays a major role in the Emirates economy and with the travel restrictions coming place because of the virus, the country has suffered economically hugely but this doesn't stop the industry has every industry tries to have minimum loses and that's the same with the T&T industry of the U.A.E and they have started to utilise to

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which they have the access to, which is their own domestic market. What if there are restrictions when it comes to accessing the international market but that doesn't mean one should stop but instead it could also provide the chance to search out other opportunities which this pandemic has taught which is utilising your own internal strength which the domestic market and try to increase domestic tourism with following all the rules and regulations imposed by the government of the country.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

There have been a very few studies and research on the U.A.E economy after the Coronavirus came around and from which some were:- The MICE industry is one of the industries that the T&T industry plays a great role in and after the virus came around things started to be conducted online on virtual platforms. When compared the scheduled flights in 2019 it has decreased by 82 % in compare to 2020 in June which has greatly affected the MICE industry.

Consequently, imposed confinement led to an increase in fear and anxiety, the emergence of behavioral disturbances, and other important psychological and psychiatric impacts. With the loss of freedom due to imprisonment, people became separated from their loved ones, without neglecting the negative effects on many economic sectors that extend over many years. This can harm the stability and development of countries. Many countries found themselves in a difficult situation, and this prompted the World Bank group to devote up to \$160 billion for actions to help more than 100 countries during the next 15 months, in order to recover their economy. According to the evaluation of the French Observatory of Economic Conjunctures (OFCE) in April 2020, world GDP fell by 19% while world trade fell by 25%. Globally, the added value of the accommodation and food services sector was the most affected and is said to have fallen by 47%.

Subsequently, these negative impacts on the world economy forced many countries to start thinking about effective gradual exit strategies to return to normal life, in order to revive trade and the economy. The populations, for their part, also needed to regain their freedom, change their surroundings, relax and get out of the lifestyle imposed inside their homes, knowing that on a psychosocial level, leisure is essential for psychological balance. It is thus noted that the strategies for exiting containment following COVID-19 have experienced difficulties when meeting the needs of the populations on vacation and tourism at this time of the year, and the tourism sector was completely at a standstill in many countries around the world. About 1.5 billion tourists travel internationally each year and this can be an effective means of spreading a virus. As a result of this situation, tourists found it difficult to travel and to benefit from their travel rights and the services of hotel and tourist operators. As part of this, estimates from the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in May 2020 said that international tourist arrivals were expected to drop by 78%, thus causing a loss of US \$1.2 trillion in revenue and 120 million cutbacks in direct jobs in tourism. However, data from the (UNWTO) Barometer for July 2020 indicated a sharp drop, since the impact of the confinement imposed following the pandemic led to a 98% drop in the number of international tourists in May 2020 compared to 2019. According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), international tourism in 2020 would see a decline of 60%. It could reach 80% if the recovery does not take place until December. The resumption of activity in the tourism sector requires the monitoring of prevention protocols specific to each country. This pandemic, which has caused a significant drop in tourist arrivals from different countries to the United Arab Emirates, has shown that it will take nearly a year and six months for arrivals to return respectively to their previous trend values, which could have devastating effects on the tourism industry.

This shows with U.A.E easing its restrictions and opening up borders doesn't mean the opposite country or region will do the same so which makes the economy and the

industry search for other options such as domestic tourism through which this research was conducted so this paper was conducted to know what the potential consumer's perspectives on domestic tourism with the Coronavirus around. This study was conducted with the help of both primary and secondary mode of data collection with a quantitative approach. The secondary data was collected from 4 articles and journals and for primary data was collected with the help of survey conducted among 70 residents of the United Arab Emirates. The survey was conducted through the mode of Google Forms and data is analyzed and interpreted with the help of graphs and simple percentage.

### 3. Research Methodology

This paper being explanatory in nature draws data from different sources, which includes literature and enthusiasts. The approach followed to get details is not only methodical but also logical. The first large number of journals dealing with Travel and Tourism Industries and COVID 2019 were collated studied and selected papers specifically dealing subject matter were identify. In total ten papers were downloaded from the top class category of journals and only five of these were retained to get relevant input. The third source, which made huge difference was personal interviews with travellers and Travel and Tourism Industry persons. These one to one interviews provide not only true insight but also showed personal feelings/sentiments of travellers and Industry persons.

Impact of Covid-19 on Domestic Travel:

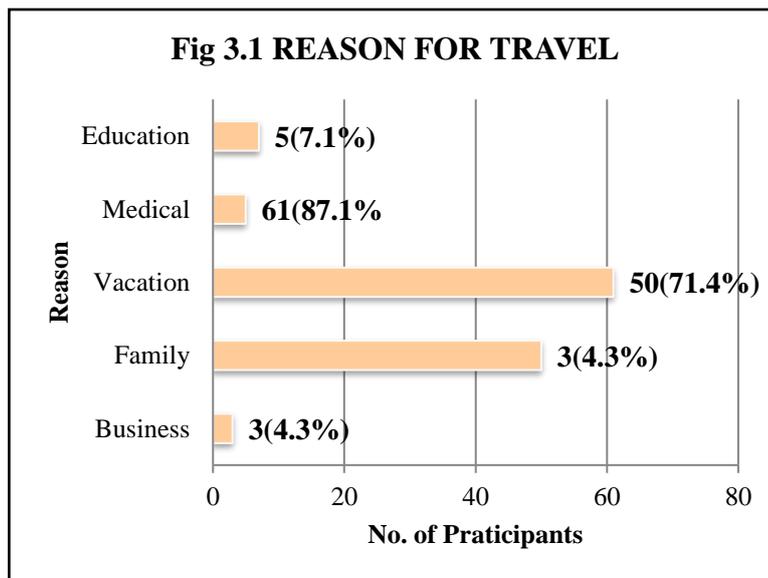


Fig. No. 3.1. 50 out of 70 participants which is majority of the participants stated their reason of travel was mostly related to having a vacation from which 60% are occasional travelers whereas only 3 of the participants travel for business reasons from which the majority, 2 are employees in private sector.

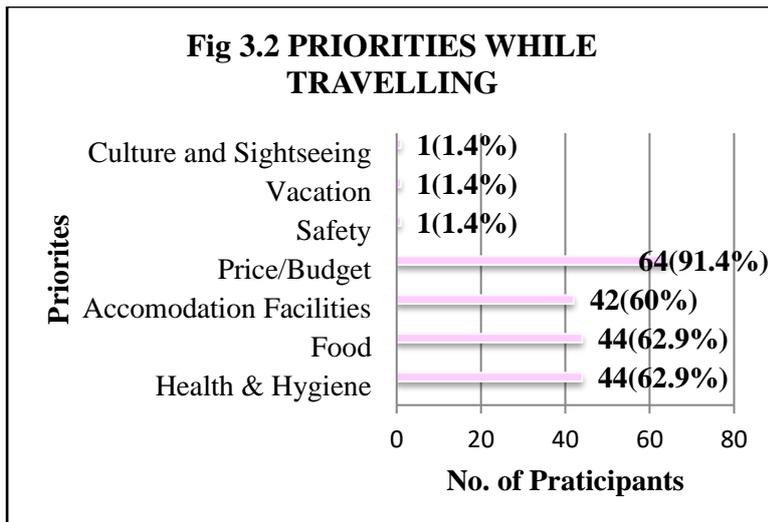


Fig. No. 3.2. 91.4% of the participants prioritize price/ budget and with awareness of Covid-19 among the respondents we could see that Health & Hygiene hold a lot of importance with hold of 62.9% when it comes to travelling.

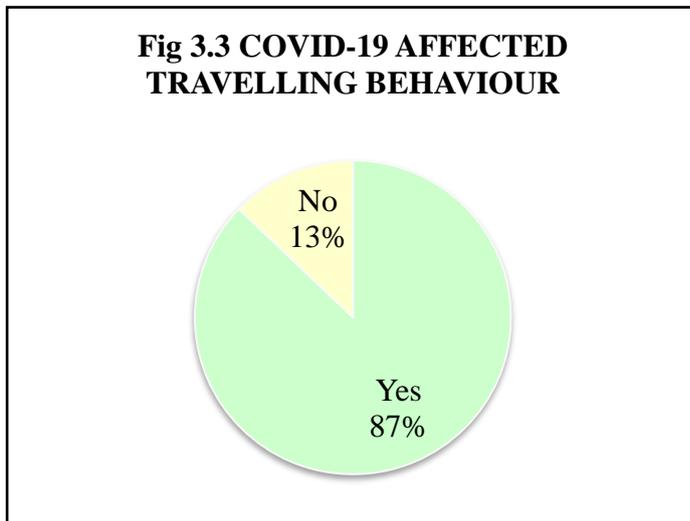


Fig. No. 3. 3. Majority of the respondents agree with the statement that they see a change in their behaviors towards travelling because of the Coronavirus which as only 13% disagree from which it was observed that 50% belong to the category of students who are regularly not much into the process of travelling in their regular routine lives.

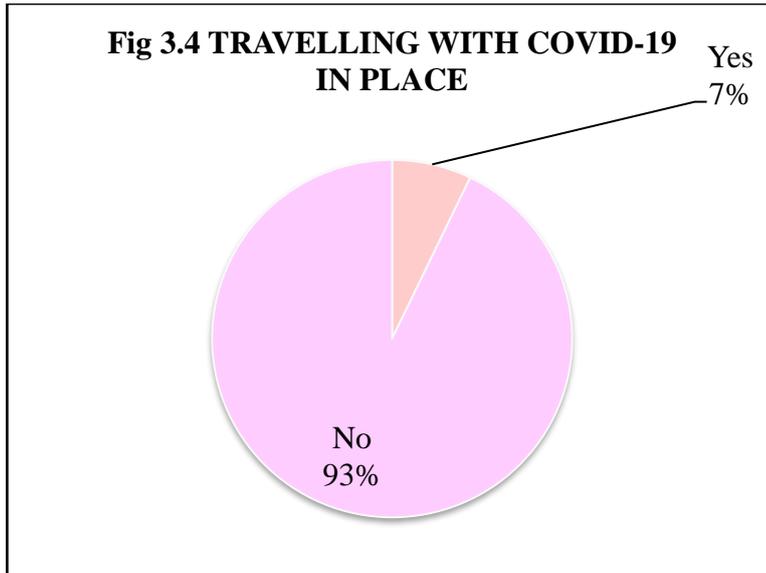


Fig. No. 3. 4. 7% of the respondents said to be still travelling with coronavirus in place from which 60% are females and the common reason they share for travelling is for the purpose of education.

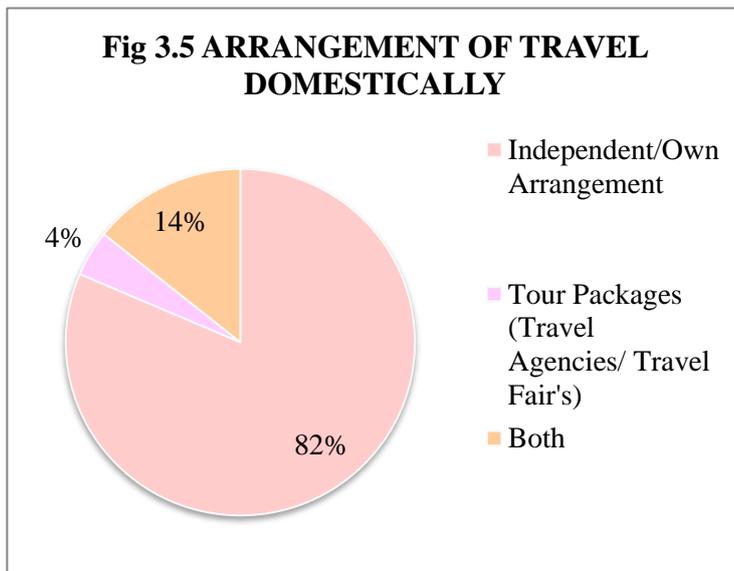


Fig. No. 3. 5. Only 4% of the respondents opt solely for tour Packages even travelling domestically. It was observed the entire fell into the age group of 21-30 and only travel for the purpose of vacation, they travel for relaxation which makes why don't want to take the burden was planning out travel and instead dependent on tour packages.

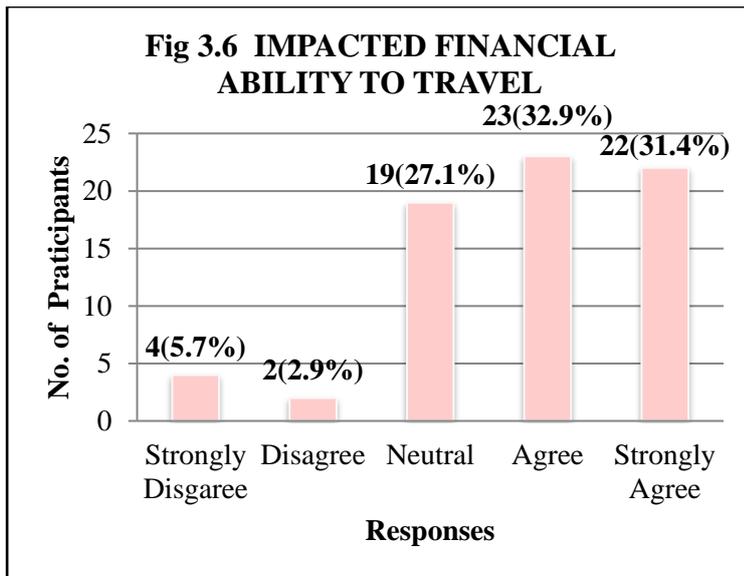


Fig. No. 3. 6. With 64.3 % agreeing that Covid-19 has impacted their financial ability to travel with there is also a minority of 8.6 % who don't sense same as the 64.3% of the participants and it was observed that the 8.6% who disagree are students falling into the age group of 10-20 who depend on their parents or guardians for the source of income.

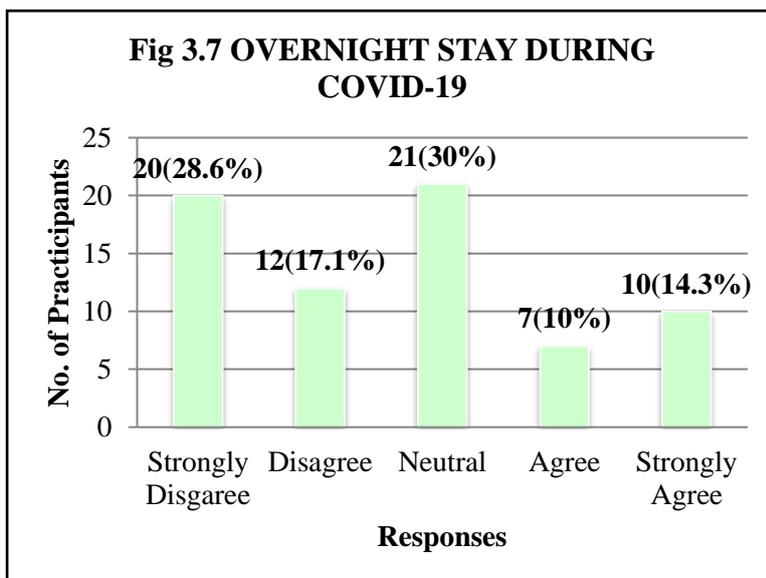


Fig. No. 3. 7. 30% were not clear if given the chance if they would opt for staying overnight somewhere else and not at their houses where as 28.6 had a clear stance that they are not comfortable having an overnight stay elsewhere with coronavirus still in place and from which 75% prioritize health & hygiene at the top with it comes to travelling.

The average response recorded is 2.59 implying that the respondents hold a disagreeable stance in this statement. The middle-most value of the responses recorded to be 3. The average deviation of the values from the mean is 1.36.

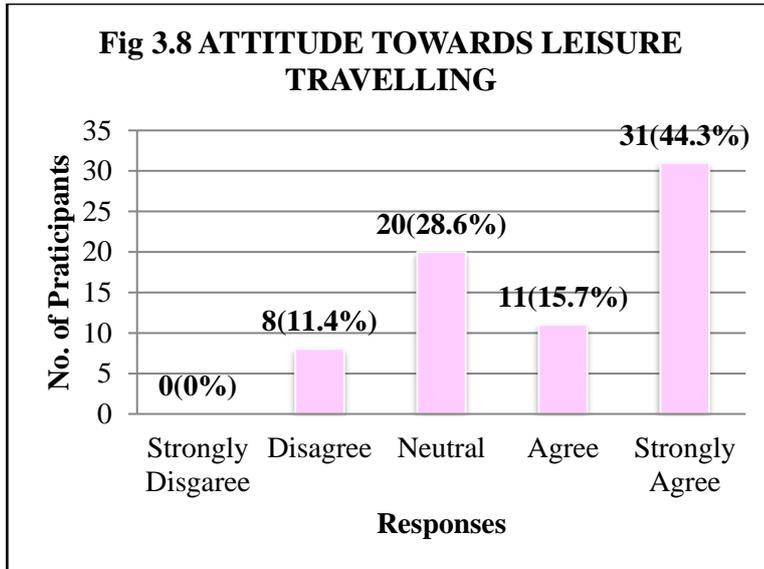


Fig. No. 3. 8. 44.3% strongly agree that their attitude towards leisure travelling has definitely changed after seeing in the changes the coronavirus has bought. Among the 31 respondents there is 37.5% of the frequent traveller pollution who have seen this change in them.

From the sample population, the average response achieved is 3.93 implying that the respondents hold an agreeable stance in this statement. The middle-most value of the responses has emerged to be 4. The average deviation of the values from the mean is 1.094.

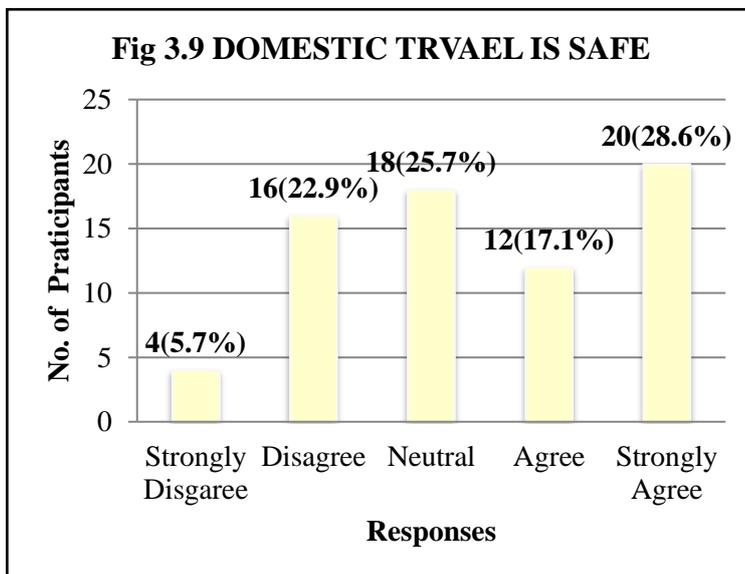


Fig. No. 3. 9. With all the rules & regulations and laws placed in U.A.E with social distancing in total of 45.8% of the participants take an agreeable stance for domestic travel being safe from which 28.6% who strongly agree with the statement, all travel for the reason of family and with family so which indicates not only them as an individual but they even find the environment safe for their loved ones also.

The mean is recorded to be 3.4 which gain takes an agreeable stance. Standard deviation being recorded 1.28 and the median being 4.

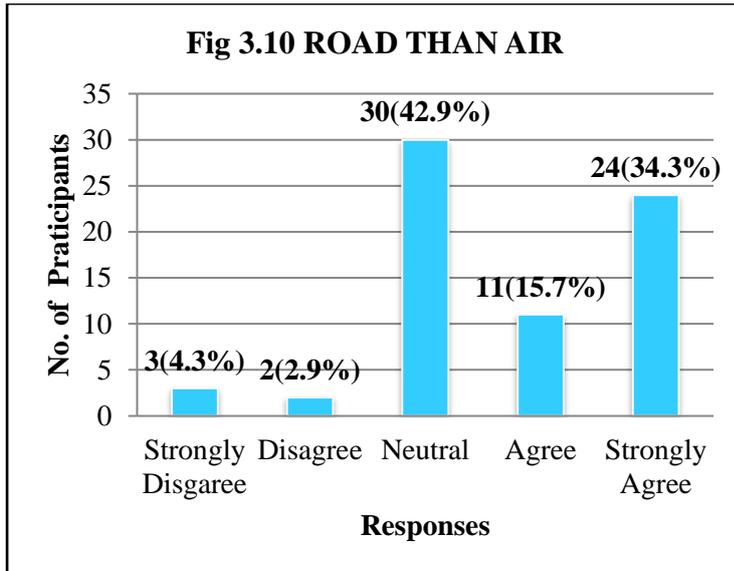


Fig. No. 3. 10. The average being 3.73 indicates that majority if the respondents take an agreeable stance with it comes to travelling by road than by air after the awareness of the coronavirus as they find it convenient with all the travel restrictions and safer by just being own their own than sharing the same transport facility with any other strangers.

The middle-most value of the responses has emerged to be 3.5. The average deviation of the values from the mean is 1.1.

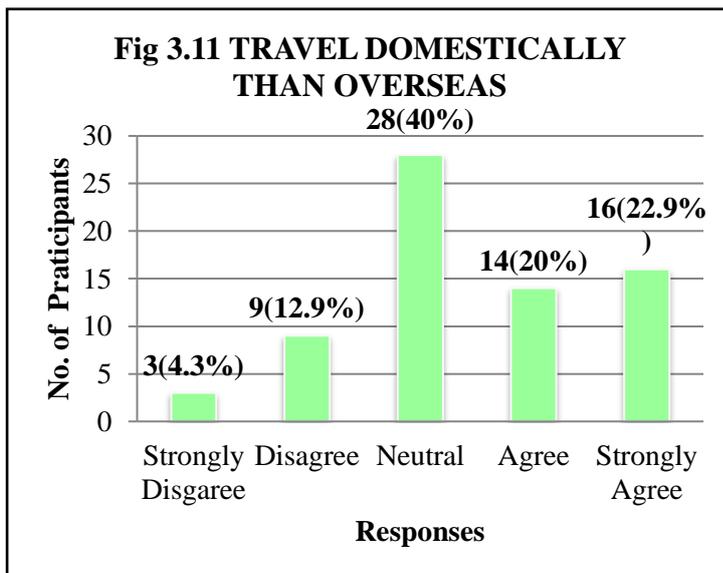


Fig. No. 3. 11. Even after Covid-19 the participants who prefer travelling domestically than overseas as recorded the average of the response being 3.44 which clearly states that the participants are on the agreeable stance for the statement with all (100%) frequent travelers following into the category.

Standard deviation being recorded to be 1.11 and the median being recorded as 3.

#### 4. MAIN ANALYSIS

The present research was conducted on the effect of coronavirus pandemic on the traveling behaviour for the age group 21-40 in UAE. The random data of sample size 71 was collected and using a chi-square test analysed the relation between the categorical data was analysed.. The data was analysed at 5% significant level analyses was using R-

programming language. To find the relation between the effect of travelling during this pandemic is analysed by formulating the below hypothesis.

H0 : There is no impact of covid-19 on the various travelling behaviours among the travellers

H1: There is an impact of covid-19 on the various travelling behaviours among the travellers

Table I PLANNING FOR OVERNIGHT STAY DURING PANDEMIC

Travelling during Pandemic	Preferring an overnight stay during pandemic					Total	$\chi^2$	p-Value	Remarks
	1	2	3	4	5				
No	20	11	21	7	6	65	11.667 df=4	0.02	Significant
Yes	1	1	0	0	3	5			

For the above analyses the preference of overnight stay is explained with 1 as strongly disagree and 5 strong agree. 44% travellers will not prefer to stay overnight during this pandemic. The results obtained by chi-square test also supports this claim with chi-square value at 11.667 at DF 4, we get p-value only 0.02. Hence we reject our null hypothesis and conclude that Covid- 19 has impacted the travellers on planning for an overnight stay.

Table II IMPACT OF TRAVELLING DOMESTICLY WITH SOCIAL DISTANCE NORMS

Travelling during Pandemic	Travelling Domestically with social-distancing norms					Total	$\chi^2$	p-Value	Remarks
	1	2	3	4	5				
No	4	16	18	11	1	65	7.9333 df=4	0.094	Non-Significant
Yes	0	0	0	1	4	5			

Table -II explains the preference of travellers with observing the social distancing norms on the scale 1-5 (1 strongly disagree and 5 strongly agree). We see that with chi-square value at 7.933 at DF 4 and p-value>0.05 we accept the null hypothesis and conclude that with social distancing norms, travelling domestically has not impacted.

Table III PREFERENCE OF TRAVELLING DOMESTICALLY THAN OVERSEA OVER THIS PANDEMIC

Travelling during Pandemic	Preference of Travelling Domestically than overseas					Total	$\chi^2$	p-Value	Remarks
	1	2	3	4	5				
No	3	8	27	14	13	65	5.3098 df=4	0.257	Non-Significant
Yes	0	0	0	1	4	5			

For the above analysis we formulate the null hypothesis as there is no impact of covid 19 for travellers who prefer travelling domestically than overseas. With 1 as strongly disagree and 5 with strongly agree we observe from above table that more travellers

prefer to travel domestically than overseas. This can be supported with the results of chi-square test that gives p-value  $>0.05$  and hence we accept the null hypothesis and conclude that domestic travelling is preferred than overseas during this pandemic.

Table IV PREFERENCE OF TRAVELLING BY ROAD THAN AIR DURING THIS PANDAMIC

Travelling during Pandemic	Preference of Travelling by Road than Air					Total	$\chi^2$	p-Value	Remarks
	1	2	3	4	5				
No	3	2	29	11	20	65	5.1692 df=4	0.2704	Non-Significant
Yes	0	0	0	1	4	5			

The analysis on the preference of travellers to travel by road compared with the air shows that people prefer to travel by road during this pandemic with 48% supporting to it. Table IV giving chi-square value of 5.1692 indicates to accept the null hypothesis of travellers preferring to travel by road than air during this pandemic.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The participants of the survey were also asked about in how long that being said the time duration with after the restrictions being lifted up regarding Covid-19 they see themselves travelling internationally that is overseas than domestically and it was concluded that 66% of the participants don't see themselves travelling overseas within 1 year even after the restrictions are lifted and from which 29% don't see themselves travelling even in 2 years and they say the chances of travelling after 2 years is more.

This clearly indicates that the coronavirus has created a negative impact on the international travel whereas which can be an opportunity for the domestic tourism and can even see a positive impact on it because of the coronavirus.

Finally we may conclude that:

- A. Covid- 19 has impacted the travelers on planning for an overnight stay
- B. Social distancing norms, travelling domestically has not been impacted
- C. Domestic travelling is preferred than overseas during this pandemic
- D. Travelers preferring to travel by road than air during this pandemic

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