

บทวิเคราะห์ผลกระทบของการระบาดของไวรัสโควิด-19 ที่มีต่อธุรกิจสายการบิน
และแนวโน้มธุรกิจสายการบินในอนาคตหลังการระบาด

ANALYSIS OF IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON AIRLINES BUSINESS AND
FUTURE TREND OF AIRLINES BUSINESS IN THE POST PANDEMIC PERIOD

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Received : October 22, 2021

Revised : March 15, 2022

Accepted : June 30, 2022

บทคัดย่อ

การแพร่ระบาดมีส่งผลกระทบต่อทุกอุตสาหกรรม ธุรกิจสายการบินเป็นหนึ่งในธุรกิจแรก ๆ ที่ได้รับผลกระทบอย่างหนัก ซึ่งเกิดจากข้อจำกัดการเดินทางและนโยบายการปิดพรมแดนในแต่ละประเทศ เนื่องด้วยสถานการณ์การแพร่ระบาดของ COVID-19 หน่วยงานที่เกี่ยวข้องได้ออกมาตรการระยะสั้นและระยะยาวเพื่อจำกัดและป้องกันการแพร่กระจายของการติดเชื้อดังกล่าว บทความนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อวิเคราะห์วิกฤตการณ์ที่เกิดขึ้นในอดีตและผลกระทบต่ออุตสาหกรรมการบิน ผลกระทบของ COVID-19 ต่อธุรกิจสายการบิน แนวโน้มธุรกิจสายการบินหลังการระบาดใหญ่ และมาตรการระยะสั้นและระยะยาวอันเนื่องมาจากการแพร่ระบาดของเชื้อไวรัสดังกล่าว ดังที่ได้กล่าวมาแล้ว ผลกระทบของสถานการณ์การระบาดของ COVID-19 แบ่งเป็น 2 ประเภท คือ รายได้ อุตสาหกรรมการบิน และการบริหารสายการบิน การเปลี่ยนแปลงที่เกิดขึ้นมีหลายมิติดังนี้ 1. ดำเนินการตามนโยบายการให้บริการผู้โดยสารที่สนามบิน 2. เพื่อให้บริการเทคโนโลยีแก่ผู้โดยสาร 3. ดำเนินนโยบายสนับสนุนความปลอดภัยด้านสุขภาพ

คำสำคัญ

โควิด-19 ธุรกิจสายการบิน ผลกระทบของการระบาดใหญ่ของโควิด-19

ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 outbreak affects all industries. The airline business is one of the first businesses which has heavily been affected because of the traveling limitations and border closing policies in various countries. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, relevant departments have issued both short-term and long-term measures to limit and prevent the spread of the infection. The purpose of the current academic paper is to analyze crises that occurred in the past and their effects on the aviation industry, including the impacts of COVID-19 on airlines businesses, the trend of airlines businesses after the COVID-19 pandemic and the short-term and long-term measures owing to the outbreak of COVID-19. As mentioned, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic towards the airline businesses can be divided into 2 categories: The first category relates to the revenues of the aviation industry and the second one relates to the airline management. Those two categories of the airline business effects have brought the major changes to the industries in the following dimensions: First, there has been a policy to control the airline passengers at the airport; second, the modern technology has been proposed and used in the airline businesses for safety. Third, the policy for health safety has been promoted and strictly operated.

KEYWORDS

COVID-19; Airlines Businesses; Impact of covid-19 pandemic

Introduction

There was the first coronavirus epidemic in late December 2019 that first originated in the People's Republic of China's Hubei Province Coronavirus: (2019 nCoV). COVID-19, namely Coronavirus disease, is a type of virus that causes various symptoms ranging from the common cold to serious illnesses including Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV). After the 2003 SARS and 2012 MERS outbreaks, COVID-19, one of the Coronavirus disease's nodes, has been the third enormous outbreak that occurred in the first two decades of the 21st century. The outbreak of COVID-19 has significantly affected the travel of the global population. This is because to limit travel can help reduce disease transmission. It was defined as the primary measure for controlling disease transmission. The epidemic of COVID-19 can be limited or halted from person to person if the learning processes protecting from and curing the disease include how to adapt oneself during the outbreak and these will be proposed to the public. In addition, searching for update information can help analyze the crisis of COVID-19 epidemic, properly respond to it, predict what will happen and solve the problems caused by COVID-19 quickly. In the 21st century, the aviation industry has experienced various major crises such as the 9/11 attacks in 2001 which forced the United States to restrict its airspace. Such a restriction was like the current situation of COVID-19. Additionally, in 2003, there was the epidemic of the SARS virus which caused 8,000 infected patients and almost 800 people killed in the United States. According to the World Tourism Organization, (UNWTO)

it was claimed that, besides affecting travel limits around the world, disease epidemics impacted the global financial crisis in 2008 and the global stock market crisis in 2016. This impacted the price of gold and world fuel. It was also revealed that the recovery from SARS took five months and that of 9/11 took six months including that of the global economic crisis 10 months. However, those crises took shorter recovery time than the COVID-19 epidemic, which has affected the world for more than two years.

The impact of COVID-19 on the airline business

Although the aviation industry has been through many major crises, the outbreak of COVID-19 is more severe than any previous crises because of its global nature and how it directly and indirectly is affecting all kinds of industries. It is because COVID-19 is directly related to the world economy. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the Association of Airports International (ACI), and UNWTO cooperated to produce business operations Reports, which examine the impact of COVID-19 on business operations (UNWTO). The World Trade Organization (WTO), an international trade organization, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) found that if the COVID-19 epidemic situation had been controlled, the expenditure of people would have increased in 2019-2020. If this had been possible, there would be an 80% increase in the international passenger aviation traffic. However, the COVID-19 epidemic could not be controlled, so the revenues from airports were reduced by 45 percent, and those from the global airline business declined around 76 billion dollars. The frequency of domestic and international passenger traffic (RPK) was decreased by 48%. According to the frequency, the tourism industry had got \$450-billion income. The international trade volumes decreased by 32%, while global gross domestic product (GDP) was decreased by 3%. According to the assumptions, the COVID-19 epidemic has had a substantial impact on the economy, trade, travel, and tourism. According to the research report by UNWTO released on April 28, 2020, it was revealed that 100% of the world's countries have had international travel restrictions, and 72% have closed borders for international travel. To close the borders and restrict the global travel, based on the nation's law, they have directly affected the tourism industry. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, not only the airline businesses were affected hard, but the aircraft manufacturers were also directly affected. Airbus and Boeing have had to decrease their production of the aircraft models because of the travelling limit and fewer aircraft orders. Even though the COVID-19 crisis has recovered, there has been the layoff among the crews.

Besides the epidemic of COVID-19 affecting the global economy, it may take quite a long time to recover the aviation industry and air traffic businesses from the crisis. However, it is still expected that the domestic flights may probably be recovered faster than the international routes. During the COVID-19 crisis, almost all countries closed their borders. If anyone would like to enter the country, state quarantine has been required based on the measures of the countries. Due to the state quarantine, both domestic and international tourists have been delayed by the quarantine period. In addition, those who have worked for the positions related to aviation industries, for instances; passenger or customer service officers have been laid off or offered

unpaid leave. Such a layoff has particularly affected the low-skilled employees. Even though the epidemic of COVID-19 has abated and travelling restrictions have been rescinded, the aviation industry workforce has still been impacted.

The aviation industry's growth and situation after the COVID-19 epidemic

The air transportation is claimed to be the safest mode of transportation. Even though there has been the epidemic of COVID-19, the air transportation is claimed to be safer than other types of public transportation and is the preferable transportation for passengers. According to The International Air Transport Association (IATA) analysis, although COVID-19 can be spread for many reasons, it was claimed that the COVID-19 spread in the cabin of aircraft is better prevented than in other types of transportation. This is because the passengers are separately seated facing straight in rows (which is not convenient enough to communicate face-to-face). In addition, the spread of viruses is delayed by airflow from the ceiling to the floor. In comparison to other enclosed environments, the airflow rate is high. The efficiency of in-flight air filters is very high.

According to the improvement of the air quality in the cabin, there is a lot of fresh air circulation. As a result, the infection from the interior of an airplane is much more likely to spread by contact or pre-flight contact than infection from the seats on an aircraft. The circulation in the cabin is like the partitions between the rows. Since safety comes first in air transport, it will be neatly and carefully operated further. To ensure the safe flight, aviation will implement both short- and long-term measures. The short-term solutions are most likely to be employed early on. It is social distancing, with the idea that airlines will leave seats in the middle row on planes to reduce the spread of germs. Many concepts, on the other hand, are objected to the middle seat being empty. However, according to the IATA research, to empty the middle seat, such as in "Social Distancing," may cause substantial economic damage for the airline. Due to emptying the middle seat, many airlines can't make it because they may be unable to recover the cost of such measures. Moreover, the price of airline tickets may be increased. If social distancing is employed in air travel, many passengers may not be able to travel by plane because of the cost being higher. Emptying the middle seat on planes, flights are estimated to increase in cost by 43 percent to 54 percent in 2020 compared to 2019, depending on the location.

Although the COVID-19 epidemic has abated, passengers and crew members must wear masks or other face-covering equipment for the entire visit. This will reduce the risk of illness. During the early phases of the epidemic's resumption of air travel, such measures will be widely employed. Other measures that will be implemented temporarily include temperature monitoring of passengers and airport operators, keeping distance between passengers and operators at every step of check-in to boarding. If there is a vaccine against such a disease, the COVID-19 Immunity. Data Identification Measure may be inserted into the passport for use in screening before entering and leaving countries. Vaccinations should be checked before entering or departing any country, especially after an outbreak since it helps reduce the risk of becoming infected or dying. Pre-flight and post-embarkation safety checks, on the other hand, are a requirement for all countries. According to Annex 9 clause 2.1, "Countries/states must adjust replace self-optimal measures pre-launch safety checks on both inbound and outbound flights.". However, during a health-related

emergency, each country is required to implement additional WHO proposals as outlined in Annex 9, Article 2.5, which states: “If, in the event of a need to address a health risk or emergency, countries/states must consider additional health measures form” (ICAO, 2018). They must comply by the International Health Regulations of 2005, including Article 43, which specifies that when deciding to take additional measures, the reasons must be considered, a) scientific principles, b) scientific evidence of human health issues, as indicated by documentation or information from WHO or international organizations, c) specific WHO advice (ICAO, 2018).

During the COVID-19 epidemic, WHO informed that body temperature testing before entering or departing airports was insufficient to stop spreading the disease. This is because the virus result or a high fever may not show on the indicator. While traveling or while infected, a person's fever may go unnoticed. Checking everyone's temperature as they enter and depart airports is also a high-value commitment. To follow the operation effectively, all passengers should show their health certification including individual contact information for both arrival and departure. According to the WHO's claim, the risk analysis and/or the additional evaluation for passengers is required. The long-term solutions must be considered, not just for the protection of public health, but also for all countries. However, to follow the solution spends a high amount of the budget and slows the speed of service at each location. As a result, government and organization cooperation is essential to achieve maximum efficiency in resolving the epidemic and preventing future epidemics. At the international level, it is essential to join hands for developing a proper strategy (Tew et al., 2008). The pandemics situations can affect in a single country, but the disease has already spread across borders. Consequently, a coordinated regional and international response is likely to be required. It is beneficial in reducing the impact of future public health and improving governments' ability to respond correctly to situations.

Conclusion

According to the history of aviation, it was found that the aviation industry can always be recovered. There have been major crises in the 21st century, such as the 9/11, the infected disease outbreak, and the global economic crisis. The major outbreak that has an immediate impact on the aviation sector has been the COVID-19 pandemic. It has differed from previous crisis in term of stopping the travelling around the world. Due to the safety policy about closing the borders of each country, it has badly affected the economy in many countries. The airline industry was the first to be hit hard, with some carriers being bankrupt or facing substantial financial difficulties. Although there has been such a crisis, the tendency of the low-cost airlines can probably survive better than the normal airline businesses. The crisis about the COVID-19 epidemic has made various airline businesses limit the travelling although the risk of disease infection in the aircraft cabin was confirmed to be lower risk than other kinds of transport. To always wear a medical mask in public, on the other hand, is being employed to further reduce the risk of infection. Even though the flight distancing measures have been operated to help to prevent the spread of infection least, they much affect the benefits and costs of the airlines leading to huge business loss. Measures such as those should be employed in the shortest period to reduce the burden of higher costs. Various airlines have also experienced difficulties about securing passengers and providing a comfortable flight experience. As a result, they must

emphasize both the qualified services and public health. The airlines should train their crews to be accustomed to the new normal to help reduce the interpersonal contact during the time of being onboard. Cleanliness, social distancing, as well as more modern technology have been introduced for the check-in or boarding processes. There is also other safety policies to help decrease the virus spread, for instances; reducing the food and beverage services onboard, and providing free-of-charge medical masks and hand sanitizer to the passengers. In addition, they must be able to show a health document when traveling. These measures can probably enable good flying for passengers. As mentioned, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic towards the airline businesses can be divided into 2 categories: The first category relates to the revenues of the aviation industry, and the second one relates to the airline management. Those two categories of the airline business effect have brought the major changes to the industries in the dimensions of:

1. There has been a policy to control the airline passengers at the airport. They are informed and reminded to follow the travelling guidelines of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as well as the local and the state advisories regarding COVID-19. Such a policy was started on February 2, 2021. In addition, all airline passengers must be informed to always wear a face mask when being onboard and are asked to show a medical ID verification. They must walk past the thermometer for security screen of the fever. Moreover, they are also encouraged to: maintain the social distance of six feet while being at the checkpoint, remove belts and all personal items from your pockets such as wallets, keys or phones before you enter the checkpoint and place them in the carry-on bags (but this does not apply to TSA PreCheck® members), always keep good hygiene, such as cleaning hands regularly, and arrive at the airport early to allow adequate time for checking bags, completing security screening and getting to the departure gate. COVID-19 has affected almost operations across the airport environment so the passengers may spend more time during preflight processes. In case the airline crews or the passengers probably contact with the COVID infected persons, they must be tested for COVID-19, then follow the guidelines based on the healthcare provider or the local health department (United State Government, 2022).

2. The modern technology has been proposed and used in the airline businesses for the safety. Besides the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) as the security transportation systems, there are also other examples of technologies being used that brings changes in the airline businesses as follows: 1) The Computed Tomography (CT) produces high-quality, 3-D images for a more thorough visual analysis of a bag's contents. 2) The Enhanced Advanced Imaging Technology (eAIT) provides the safety screens passengers without physical contact. The technology helps display things such as weapons and explosives, which may be hidden under a passenger's clothing. 3) The Credential Authentication Technology (CAT) machines automatically verify identification documents presented by passengers during the security screening processes (United State Government, 2022).

3. The policy for health safety has been promoted and strictly operated. Besides the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) serving as the security transportation systems for airlines crews and passengers, TSA also closely contacts with the medical professions. In addition, the airline businesses follow the travelling guidelines of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as well as various government agencies (United State Government, 2022).

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