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**EFFICIENCY AND PRIORITY AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT
OF STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF THE TOURIST DESTINATION KYIV
IN THE CONDITIONS OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND MARTIAL LAW****ЕФЕКТИВНІСТЬ ТА ПРІОРИТЕТНІ НАПРЯМИ РОЗВИТКУ СТРАТЕГІЧНОГО
УПРАВЛІННЯ ТУРИСТИЧНОЮ ДЕСТИНАЦІЄЮ МІСТОМ КИЄВОМ
В УМОВАХ ПАНДЕМІЇ COVID-19 ТА ВОЄННОГО СТАНУ**

The main purpose of this study is to develop a mechanism for strategic management of the tourist destination of Kyiv in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and martial law. The methodology involves a mixed approach that combines the collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data to assess the impact of these conditions on tourism and develop recommendations for strategic management. The results showed a significant decline in tourism revenues, shifts in the demographic structure of tourists, and changes in travel behavior. Strategic management measures, such as strengthening digital marketing, diversifying tourism products, and strengthening local partnerships, were identified as crucial for the recovery and sustainability of Kyiv's tourism sector. The study offers practical recommendations for improving strategic tourism management, ensuring sustainability and resilience to future challenges.

Keywords: tourist destination, strategic management, digital transformation, stakeholder collaboration, crisis management, sustainable practices, community engagement.

Пандемія COVID-19 та воєнний стан, що триває в Україні, створили безпрецедентні виклики для туристичного сектору, особливо у великих містах, таких як Київ. Ці бурхливі часи зумовили необхідність переоцінки існуючих стратегій управління туристичними дестинаціями, привернувши увагу до важливості стійкості та гнучкості у стратегічному плануванні. Метою цього дослідження була розробка механізму стратегічного управління туристичною дестинацією містом Києвом в умовах пандемії COVID-19 та воєнного стану. Методологія передбачала застосування змішаного підходу, що поєднує збір та аналіз якісних і кількісних даних, з метою оцінки впливу цих умов на туризм та розробки рекомендацій щодо стратегічного управління. Результати показали значне зниження доходів від туризму, зрушення в демографічній структурі туристів і зміни в туристичній поведінці. Стратегічні управлінські заходи, такі як посилення цифрового маркетингу, диверсифікація туристичних продуктів та зміцнення місцевого партнерства, були визначені як вирішальні для відновлення та стійкості туристичного сектору Києва. Дослідження також підкреслило важливість проведення тренінгів із кризового управління та інтеграції протоколів охорони здоров'я і безпеки для відновлення довіри туристів. На додаток до цих висновків, дослідження підкреслило необхідність постійного моніторингу та оцінки туристичних стратегій для адаптації до обставин, що стрімко змінюються. Впровадження інноваційних технологій та віртуального туристичного досвіду було запропоновано як додаткові заходи для залучення туристів за відсутності фізичної подорожі. Крім того, співпраця з міжнародними туристичними організаціями та місцевим бізнесом була визначена важливою для обміну найкращими практиками та ресурсами. Комплексний аналіз, представлений у цьому дослідженні, доповнює існуючу літературу, пропонуючи детальний розгляд багатогранних викликів і можливостей, з якими стикаються міські туристичні дестинації під час кризи. Дослідження пропонує практичні рекомендації для політиків і зацікавлених сторін щодо вдосконалення стратегічного управління туризмом у подібних контекстах, забезпечуючи сталість і стійкість перед майбутніми викликами.

Ключові слова: туристична дестинація, стратегічне управління, цифрова трансформація, співпраця із зацікавленими сторонами, кризовий менеджмент, сталі практики, залучення громади.

Statement of the problem. The COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent declaration of martial law in Ukraine have presented unprecedented challenges to various sectors, particularly the tourism industry. As a major urban tourism destination, Kyiv has faced significant disruptions, leading to a dramatic decline in visitor numbers, financial instability, and operational challenges for tourism businesses [2]. The importance of strategically managing tourism destinations during crises has never been more evident. Effective strategies can not only mitigate the immediate impacts of such crises but also pave the way for sustainable recovery and long-term resilience.

The problem lies in understanding how to adapt and implement strategic management practices that can withstand severe disruptions. The case of Kyiv offers a unique context to study these dynamics due to its recent experiences with both a global health crisis and domestic conflict.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Recent literature has extensively explored various aspects of crisis management in tourism by scientists M. Sigala [18]; S. Zenker & F. Kock [20]; T. Baum & N.T.T. Hai [3]. For example, B.W. Ritchie and Y. Jian [15] investigated the role of crisis and disaster management in tourism, highlighting the need for comprehensive planning and preparedness. Their findings suggest that proactive strategies and stakeholder collaboration are critical for effective crisis response.

The relevance of strategic management in tourism has been increasingly acknowledged in recent years, especially under unprecedented conditions like pandemics and martial law. Recent studies by T. Bausch, W.C. Gartner & F. Ortanderl [4] and M.A. Khan & H. Hashim [11] have provided critical insights into these impacts and strategies to mitigate them. For instance, the analysis of tourism crises has evolved to include not only traditional crises but also global health emergencies. A study of S. Gössling, D. Scott & C.M. Hall [7] on the impacts of COVID-19 on global tourism highlighted the dramatic decline in international travel and the subsequent economic losses for cities dependent on tourism. This research emphasized the urgent need for sustainable tourism practices and adaptive management strategies to navigate through such crises.

Moreover, the integration of technology in tourism management has gained prominence. According to D.A. Savić & V. Ivanović [16], digital transformation and smart tourism strategies have been identified as crucial elements in enhancing the resilience of tourism destinations. These technologies enable real-time data collection and analysis, which are vital for informed decision-making during crises. Additionally, J. Wen, M. Kozak, S. Yang, & F. Liu [19] stated that the adoption of virtual tourism experiences has emerged as a significant trend, providing an alternative means to engage tourists when physical travel is restricted.

Furthermore, the role of local communities in tourism management has been increasingly recognized. Engaging local communities not only helps in sustaining tourism but also in preserving cultural heritage and promoting local economies. Studies by A. Farmaki & D.P. Stergiou [5] have shown that community-based tourism can significantly enhance the resilience and appeal of tourist destinations during crises.

The emphasis on collaborative approaches and partnerships has also been highlighted in recent literature. G. Prayag [13] defines effective collaboration between government bodies, tourism stakeholders, and local communities essential for developing and implementing robust strategic management plans. These partnerships facilitate resource sharing, joint marketing efforts, and coordinated crisis responses, thereby strengthening the overall resilience of tourism destinations. The combination of the COVID-19 pandemic and martial law has posed unprecedented challenges to Kyiv's tourism sector.

The study began with a comprehensive review of secondary data sources, including government reports and industry publications. These sources provided a foundational understanding of the current state of Kyiv's tourism industry and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and martial law. The data collection phase involved gathering information from the Ukrainian State Tourism Development Agency, Kyiv City Administration, and various tourism-related organizations. Notable documents included the "Ukraine Tourism Strategy 2021-2027" by the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine, the "Impact of COVID-19 on Tourism in Ukraine" report by the State Agency for Tourism Development of Ukraine, the "UNWTO Tourism Recovery Tracker", and the "Global Economic Impact & Trends 2021" report by the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC). These documents were critical in identifying the key challenges faced by the tourism sector and the strategies implemented to address them.

Secondary data from global sources such as the "UNWTO Tourism Recovery Tracker" and the "Global Economic Impact & Trends 2021" report by the WTTC were used to provide a broader context and benchmarks for comparing Kyiv's tourism recovery efforts.

Formulation of the research task. The aim of this study was to develop a strategic management mechanism for the tourist destination of Kyiv under the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic and martial law. This involved identifying the challenges faced by the tourism sector, evaluating the effectiveness of current management practices, and proposing strategic interventions to enhance resilience and sustainability. The study also aimed to provide practical recommendations for policymakers and stakeholders to improve the strategic management of urban tourist destinations in similar crisis contexts.

Methodology. To achieve this objective, a mixed-methods approach was employed, combining qualitative and quantitative research techniques. The research was conducted between June 2024 and July 2024, focusing on the tourism sector in Kyiv, Ukraine.

Summary of the main research material. The analysis revealed several key trends and issues that have shaped Kyiv's tourism sector over the past few years:

1. Decline in Tourist Arrivals: The data indicated a significant decline in tourist arrivals to Kyiv following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the onset of martial law. According to the Ukrainian State Tourism Development Agency, international tourist arrivals in Kyiv dropped by approximately 70% in 2020 compared to 2019, with a slight recovery observed in 2021 and 2022 as restrictions eased and vaccination efforts progressed. Domestic tourism also experienced a decline,

though to a lesser extent, with a reduction of around 40% in the same period.

2. **Economic Impact:** The tourism sector's contribution to Kyiv's economy has diminished, with revenue from tourism-related activities decreasing by 60% in 2020 compared to pre-pandemic levels. This decline has had a cascading effect on related industries such as hospitality, transportation, and entertainment. The loss of revenue has led to business closures and layoffs, exacerbating the economic challenges faced by the city.

3. **Shifts in Tourist Preferences:** The data highlighted shifts in tourist preferences, with travelers increasingly seeking outdoor and nature-based experiences, as well as destinations with stringent health and safety measures. This trend has influenced the types of tourism products and services in demand, necessitating adaptations by local businesses and attractions.

4. **Government Response and Policy Measures:** The analysis of government reports revealed that several policy measures were implemented to support the tourism sector during the crises. These measures included financial assistance programs, tax relief, and initiatives to promote domestic tourism. However, the effectiveness of these measures was mixed, with some stakeholders expressing concerns about the adequacy and timeliness of the support provided.

5. **Digital Transformation:** The crisis has accelerated the digital transformation of the tourism industry in Kyiv. Businesses have increasingly adopted digital tools and platforms to reach potential customers, enhance their online presence, and provide virtual experiences. This shift has been crucial for maintaining engagement with tourists and adapting to changing consumer behaviors.

6. **Safety and Health Protocols:** The implementation of safety and health protocols has become a priority for the tourism industry. The analysis of industry publications showed that businesses have invested in measures such as contactless payments, enhanced sanitation practices, and the development of health and safety guidelines to reassure tourists and staff.

Key findings also included:

1. **Challenges in Crisis Management:** Several challenges in managing crises were identified, including the need for effective communication, coordination among stakeholders, and the development of adaptive strategies. The importance of crisis preparedness and the need for contingency plans to address future disruptions should be emphasized.

2. **Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement:** The significance of collaboration among stakeholders should be highlighted. Government agencies, businesses, and local communities should work together to implement strategies aimed at reviving the tourism sector. This collaboration is seen as a vital component of the sector's resilience.

3. **Innovation and Adaptation:** The innovations and adaptation are critical in the context of survival during crises. Businesses introduce new products and services, such as virtual tours and experiences, to engage with tourists who are unable to visit physically. Some attractions adapted their offerings to cater to changing consumer preferences, emphasizing outdoor and nature-based experiences.

4. **Digital Marketing and Online Engagement:** The shift to digital marketing and online engagement is a recurring

theme. Businesses increased their digital presence, utilizing social media, websites, and online booking platforms to reach and engage with potential customers. This digital shift is seen as a necessary adaptation to changing consumer behaviors and travel restrictions.

5. **Sustainable Tourism Practices:** A growing interest in sustainable tourism practices was revealed in the study. A desire to incorporate sustainability into business operations, recognizing its importance in building resilience and attracting conscious travelers is a primordial precondition. Some businesses have begun implementing environmentally friendly practices, such as reducing waste and promoting local products.

6. **Support and Training Needs:** The need for support and training to enhance the crisis management capabilities of the business should be prioritized. The training programs should be focused on digital skills, crisis management, and sustainability practices. Such training would be beneficial for building capacity within the sector.

A detailed analysis of the data provided further insights into the tourism sector's response to the crises and the effectiveness of various strategies. The results revealed that crisis management and adaptive strategies played a crucial role in determining the resilience and recovery of tourism businesses. The study evaluated the effectiveness of government support and policy measures in supporting the tourism sector during the crises. The findings indicated the following key themes emerged:

1. **Financial Assistance and Relief Programs:** While some businesses benefited from financial assistance programs and relief measures, others expressed concerns about the adequacy and accessibility of such support. Challenges in accessing funds, bureaucratic hurdles, and delays in disbursement were noted as barriers to effective support.

2. **Promotion of Domestic Tourism:** Government initiatives to promote domestic tourism were seen as positive steps to stimulate demand. Campaigns encouraging local travel, discounts for domestic tourists, and support for rural tourism destinations were welcomed by the industry. However, stakeholders need sustained efforts to maintain interest in domestic tourism beyond the crises.

3. **Regulatory Flexibility and Policy Adjustments:** Greater regulatory flexibility and policy adjustments should be called for addressing the unique challenges posed by the crises. Recommendations included streamlined licensing processes, flexible zoning regulations, and incentives for sustainable practices. Policymakers need to engage with industry stakeholders to develop responsive and adaptive policies.

4. **Training and Capacity Building:** The need for training and capacity-building programs was emphasized to enhance crisis management capabilities within the tourism sector. The training initiatives should be focused on digital skills, crisis preparedness, and sustainable tourism practices. Such programs are seen as essential for building resilience and competitiveness in the face of future disruptions.

The tourism sector worldwide experienced similar challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, including travel restrictions, reduced demand, and financial losses. The global nature of these challenges highlighted the interconnectedness of the tourism industry and the need for coordinated responses. International studies identified several best practices in crisis management, such as

proactive communication, flexible business models, and stakeholder collaboration. These practices aligned with the strategies employed by Kyiv's tourism sector, reinforcing the importance of adaptability and resilience. The integration of sustainability practices emerged as a key driver of recovery and resilience in global studies. Businesses that prioritized environmental sustainability, community engagement, and responsible tourism were better positioned to navigate the crises and attract conscious travelers. The acceleration of digitalization and innovation was a common theme in global studies. The adoption of digital tools, virtual experiences, and online marketing strategies enabled businesses to maintain engagement with customers and explore new revenue streams.

The findings of this study offer critical insights into the strategic management of Kyiv's tourism sector during unprecedented crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the beginning of the full-scale invasion of Russian Federation to Ukraine in 2022. The study highlights several key areas where the tourism sector has shown resilience and adaptability, but also identifies significant challenges that require attention. The implications of these findings are crucial for policymakers, industry leaders, and researchers looking to understand and improve crisis management in the tourism industry.

One of the most significant results of this research is the identification of digital transformation as a pivotal strategy adopted by the tourism sector in Kyiv. The integration of digital tools and platforms has not only helped businesses survive the immediate impacts of the pandemic but has also positioned them for long-term growth in a more digitally inclined world. The COVID-19 pandemic acted as a catalyst for the digitalization of the tourism industry, a trend observed globally and supported by studies from other regions. For instance, Gössling et al. (2020) emphasized that the tourism industry's shift towards digital solutions during the pandemic was critical for maintaining connections with customers and managing operations remotely [7]. In Kyiv, the adoption of digital technologies such as virtual tours, online booking systems, and digital marketing strategies has enabled businesses to reach a wider audience and maintain engagement even during times of restricted physical travel.

The study revealed that the use of social media platforms and mobile applications became essential tools for communication and customer interaction. Businesses that swiftly adopted these technologies reported higher levels of customer retention and satisfaction. This trend is consistent with the global movement towards a digital-first approach in the tourism industry, as reported by Ashworth and Page (2011), who found that tourism entities leveraging digital platforms experienced faster recovery and were better positioned to meet evolving consumer expectations [2].

Another critical finding is the role of collaboration and partnerships among stakeholders in Kyiv's tourism industry. The study underscores the importance of cooperation between government agencies, private enterprises, and local communities in navigating the complexities of crisis management. Collaborative efforts have been instrumental in formulating effective responses to the challenges posed by both the pandemic and martial law. This finding is supported by the work of Ritchie and Jiang (2019), who highlighted the significance of multi-

stakeholder collaboration in enhancing the resilience of tourism destinations during crises [15]. In Kyiv, such collaborations have led to the development of innovative solutions, such as coordinated marketing campaigns and joint initiatives to support local tourism enterprises.

However, the study also highlights areas where improvement is needed. Despite the strides made in digitalization and collaboration, the tourism sector in Kyiv continues to face challenges related to financial stability and infrastructure development. The findings of the study revealed concerns about insufficient government support and investment in tourism infrastructure, which are crucial for sustaining the sector's growth and competitiveness. This aligns with findings from Goodwin and Santilli (2022), who pointed out that inadequate infrastructure investment is a common barrier to tourism development in many regions. For Kyiv, enhancing infrastructure, particularly in transport and accommodation, is vital for attracting international tourists and boosting the local economy [6].

Furthermore, the research points to the need for more robust crisis management frameworks that can be quickly implemented in the face of future disruptions. The current strategies, while effective to some extent, require enhancement to address the multifaceted challenges that arise during prolonged crises. In Kyiv, stakeholders have recognized the necessity of developing comprehensive crisis management plans and are exploring ways to incorporate them into their strategic planning.

The discussion also brings to light the impact of martial law on Kyiv's tourism industry, a factor that presents unique challenges distinct from those of the pandemic. The imposition of martial law has affected travel patterns, with potential tourists perceiving Kyiv as a high-risk destination. This perception has led to a significant decrease in international tourist arrivals. The situation necessitates targeted marketing efforts to rebuild the destination's image and reassure potential visitors of its safety and attractiveness.

Moreover, the study emphasizes the importance of sustainable tourism practices as a long-term strategy for resilience. The research indicated a growing awareness among stakeholders about the need to incorporate sustainability into their business models. This involves promoting eco-friendly tourism practices, supporting local communities, and preserving cultural heritage. Such initiatives not only enhance the destination's appeal but also contribute to its sustainability and resilience in the face of future challenges. This perspective aligns with the findings of Hall et al. (2021), who advocate for sustainability as a core component of tourism development strategies, particularly in crisis-prone regions [8].

When compared to previous studies, the findings of this research both corroborate and expand upon existing knowledge about tourism management in times of crisis. While many studies have focused on the immediate impacts of crises on tourism, this research provides a comprehensive analysis of the strategies employed by Kyiv's tourism sector and their effectiveness over an extended period. It offers a nuanced understanding of how digital transformation, collaboration, and sustainable practices can be leveraged to enhance resilience. However, it also highlights the persistent challenges that need to be addressed to ensure the sector's long-term viability.

Future research should continue to explore the dynamic nature of crisis management in tourism, with a focus on developing adaptive strategies that can be tailored to different contexts. Given the ongoing uncertainties in the global landscape, there is a need for continuous monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of implemented strategies. Additionally, further studies could investigate the role of technology in facilitating real-time data collection and analysis, providing stakeholders with timely insights to inform decision-making.

In conclusion, the discussion of this study's findings underscores the complexity of managing tourism in Kyiv amidst the dual challenges of a pandemic and martial law. The insights gained from this research contribute to the broader discourse on crisis management in tourism, offering valuable lessons for other destinations facing similar circumstances. By embracing digital transformation, fostering collaboration, and prioritizing sustainability, Kyiv's tourism sector can not only recover from current challenges but also build resilience against future disruptions.

Overall, the study demonstrates that while significant progress has been made, there is still work to be done in strengthening the tourism industry's crisis management capabilities. As Kyiv continues to navigate the uncertainties of its socio-political environment, the findings of this research provide a roadmap for strategic planning and innovation in the tourism sector. The lessons learned here are applicable not only to Kyiv but also to other destinations seeking to enhance their resilience and sustainability in an increasingly volatile world.

Conclusions. This study has provided a comprehensive analysis of the strategic management practices within Kyiv's tourism sector during the dual crises of the COVID-19 pandemic and martial law. By employing a mixed-methods approach, the research has identified key strategies that have contributed to the sector's resilience, as well as areas that require further attention.

The findings reveal that digital transformation played a significant role in the tourism sector's response to these challenges. The adoption of digital tools, such as virtual

tours, online booking systems, and social media marketing, allowed businesses to maintain operations and engage with customers even amid travel restrictions. This digital shift not only addressed immediate needs but also positioned the industry for future growth in a digitally oriented world.

Collaboration among stakeholders emerged as another crucial factor in navigating the crises. The study highlights the importance of partnerships between government agencies, private enterprises, and local communities. These collaborations facilitated the development of coordinated responses and innovative solutions that helped mitigate the impacts of the crises. For instance, joint marketing initiatives and shared resources enabled tourism businesses to maximize their outreach and improve sustainability. This emphasis on stakeholder collaboration aligns with global best practices and provides a model for other regions facing similar challenges.

Despite these advancements, the research also points to several areas where improvements are needed. Financial stability remains a significant concern for many businesses in the tourism sector. The lack of sufficient government support and investment in infrastructure poses barriers to the sector's long-term growth and competitiveness. Addressing these issues will be critical for sustaining the momentum gained through digital transformation and collaboration.

Limitations of this study include the focus on Kyiv, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions. Future research should explore how these strategies can be adapted to different contexts and examine the long-term impacts of the identified practices on the tourism industry's recovery and sustainability.

In conclusion, this research provides valuable insights into the strategic management of tourism in crisis conditions. By leveraging digital transformation, fostering collaboration, and prioritizing sustainability, Kyiv's tourism sector can enhance its resilience and ensure its growth. The lessons learned from this study offer a roadmap for policymakers and industry leaders seeking to navigate similar challenges and build a more robust tourism industry.

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