Effects of Maintaining Social Distancing on Travel Intentions during Covid-19: Practical Implications to Tanzania's Tourism Sector

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ABSTRACT

Although social distancing rule seem to be the effective measure to reduce the spread of the virus pandemic related diseases, the effectiveness of this rule varied country wise. The main focus of the current study was to analyze studies that have been done addressing relationship between social distancing and visitor's travel intention during COVID-19 and to come up with a practical implication to Tanzania tourism sector. This was a desk review study and only full-length articles published in academic journals, mainly in tourism and hospitality were used. Data for this study was generated from three main tourism database search engines as EBSCOhost, science direct, and Google scholar using keywords such as "social distancing" "tourism" "COVID-19" "intention to travel" "hospitality". The search retrieved a total of 7 articles. It was reported that perceptions of COVID-19 and the use of non-pharmaceutical intervention did not have an impact on behavioral intention. Individual desire was proved to have a positive effect on behavioral intention. Furthermore, the behavioral intention was negatively influenced by the affective risk and peoples' emotions. During virus pandemic related diseases Tanzania need to emphasize on the use of technology and seat blocking strategy in transport sector to make sure that social distancing rule is fully maintained.

Keywords: *Covid-19 pandemic, COVID-19, Social Distancing, Travel Intention, Tourism sector*

INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 is believed to be originated in Wuhan city in China (Yu, Xu & Shang, 2020). The fastest daily spread of the coronavirus became one of the serious public concerns across the globe. On January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced a global public health critical issue to be looked at closely. Furthermore, WHO announced to the world that the epidemic was a serious health emergency (Middleton, Martin-Moreno & Barros, 2020). The seriousness of the epidemic was reflected in the data released by WHO. It was reported that there were 198 million confirmed cases of COVID-19, out of that 4.22 million died (WHO, 2021). This data implied that a good portion of the working population across the globe was wasted because of COVID 19 virus and this affected the performance of most of the economic sectors including tourism.

Initially, the impact of COVID-19 on the tourism industry was underestimated by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) that the pandemic would have led to a 2-3% reduction in international travel. However, in less than a month the estimates were adjusted to a 20-30% reduction (Gössling, Scott, & Hall, 2020). Furthermore, the world experienced a drop in international tourist arrivals to 78% causing a loss of US$ 1.2 trillion in export revenues from the tourism industry. Additionally, 120 million direct jobs in the tourism sector were affected almost seven times the impact of September 11 and the downfall of the biggest commercial twin tower in history (UNWTO, 2020). Travel restrictions made by the governments affected touristic activities significantly. Most of the countries experienced financial loss because of the cancellation of flights and hotel reservations. To control the spread of the virus, governments were forced to impose travel bans to control the spread of the virus (Gössling, Scott, & Hall, 2020). Other localized measures were adopted including airing special programs in media such as; TVs, Radio, and social media teaching citizens how to wash hands and proper masks wearing. Themo-scanners were also used to measure human body temperature to detect whether an individual was experiencing high fever or not. While all of these measures were still used to combat the spread of the virus, medical researchers were still struggling day and night to develop vaccine and drugs to combat the virus (Le, *et al.,* 2020) hence a decision of maintaining reasonable social space was thought to be an important solution to significantly reduce the spread of COVID-19 within the society (Sen-Crowe, McKenney, & Elkbuli, 2020). The decision of maintaining hygiene and social distancing rule was seen as one of the effective localized measures to control the spread of the virus than relying only on travel ban measures

(Chinazzi, *et al.*, 2020). The social distancing rule which was also referred to as "lockdown" or "physical distancing" or "non-pharmaceutical interventions" had been adopted by most governments to limit human interactions at close distances. On 30th January 2020 WHO recommended people to maintain at least 1 meter away from each other to reduce the risk of getting infected or infecting others. This rule somehow proved to be the best technique in reducing the fastest spread of the virus and hence managed to reduce deaths in some countries. Italy and Spain were examples of the countries that managed to control death cases after maintaining social distancing rule (Sen-Crowe, McKenney, & Elkbuli, 2020). Due to the positive impact of this rule, a good number of researchers saw the need to address its importance as one of the measures in limiting the spread of COVID-19 virus. Jarvis, *et al*. (2020) examined the effectiveness of physical distancing on the transmission of COVID-19 in the UK. In Italy, Atangana (2020) used a mathematical model to address the effect of social distancing measures on the spread of the virus. Although different countries adopted social distancing rules, their effectiveness varied among countries. The literature has indicated that it took 1 to 4 weeks for the country to determine the effectiveness of social distancing measures on the recovery of confirmed COVID-19 cases.

The data showed that it took 1.5 weeks for Germany to recover after maintaining social distancing. France took 2 weeks, Spain and China took 2.5 weeks, while Italy took 3.5 weeks. Other countries such as the U.K and the U.S took 4 weeks to recover after maintaining the social distancing rule (Thu, Ngoc, & Hai, 2020). This data implied that although social distancing could be a crucial measure to manage the spread of COVID-19, its effectiveness depended on guiding institutions, policymakers, political leaders, and public health leaders (Lewnard & Lo, 2020). Just like other countries in the world, Tanzania was also hit by COVID-19 in 2020. The impact of the outbreak affected most of the economic sectors in the country. It was predicted that Tanzania experienced a decline of the economy to 2.5% in 2020 from the 6.9% growth in 2019. On the national scale, the pandemic was expected to push 500,000 Tanzanians below the poverty line especially those employed in the informal sector (World Bank, Press release June 8, 2020). The tourism sector was affected as other economic sectors in the country. For example, the number of international visitors' arrivals dropped to 400,000 in 2020 from 1,527,230 received in 2019 (Kingwangala, 2020). Furthermore, it was estimated that the revenues generated from the tourism sector would have gone down by 80% (World Bank, Press release June 8, 2020). Same as in other countries, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism in Tanzania took several measures to control the spread of the virus. Some of the measures which were instituted included the closure of Tanzania borders on

25th March 2020 to limit movements of flights, maintaining hygiene level by installing sanitizer in all of the public areas, educating people to wash their hands and wear masks when they were in public areas, and maintaining social distancing (Masebo, 2020). The Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT) in collaborating with stakeholders developed national standard operating procedures to manage the spread of the virus in the tourism business operations (SOPs) by offering health and safety issues to all tour operators in the country. The Ministry persuaded tourism entities to appoint and train a COVID-19 Liaison Officer to coordinate and create awareness to stakeholders. Furthermore, most of the visited tourist destinations such as; Serengeti, Kilimanjaro, Tarangire National Parks, and Ngorongoro Crater were equipped with emergency health care facilities to assist travelers in case of emergency. Additionally, airport staff working at Abeid Amani Karume Airport (ZIA), Julius Nyerere International Airport (JNIA) as well as Kilimanjaro International Airport (KIA) received training on how to maintain safety measures when offering services to arriving and departing travelers. Furthermore, travelers coming from outside the country were requested to quarantine themselves for 14 days in some of the selected hotels (The Citizen, 2020). Additionally, the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly, and Children requested all the travelers to submit a negative COVID-19 certificate showing they were free from the virus (Kara, 2022).

Travelers were also requested to dispose of their used masks in the dustbins allocated at the airports (Kara, 2022). In June 2020, the former Minister of Natural Resources and Tourism in Tanzania, Dr. Hamisi Kigwangala announced that the country was ready to accommodate tourists from different parts of the world (Mwananchi Digital, 2nd June, 2020). President John Magufuli also added that the country was free from COVID-19 and advised the responsible ministries to allow social and economic activities to resume their normal operations like before the pandemic. Despite the unpleasant atmosphere caused by COVID-19, the tourism sector managed to bounce back. The Tanzanian border was opened to allow flights to land and bring tourists to various attractions as long as the safety measures were kept intact. Tanzania witnessed an increase in the number of international flights landing in the country. For example, Kilimanjaro (KLM) has increased its trips from 3 to 4 trips, 3 to 12 trips were reported by Qatar Airways and 3 to 14 trips were reported by Ethiopian Airlines. Other airlines resumed their business including Emirates Airline, Fly Dubai, Kenya Airways, Rwanda Air, Swiss Air, and Turkish Airline. Among the early tourist sites to receive visitors was Serengeti National park (Mwananchi Digital, 2nd June 2020,). Surprisingly, Tanzania was among the few countries in the world to be awarded a safe travel stamp by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) on 11th

August 2020 (Kingwangala, 2020) while most of the countries in the world were still suffering from COVID-19. The stamp implied that Tanzania was adhering to the international and national standard operating process and other procedures in making sure that tourists were protected against COVID-19. Receiving a safe travel stamp was not the only surprise that Tanzania enjoyed. From June 2020, the country witnessed an overflow of international tourists compared to April and May 2020. Ngorongoro Conservation Area alone received 1,972 tourists (89.8%) increment compared to 202 tourists received in April 2020. Tanzania National Parks hosted 3,666 tourists (85.9%) increment compared to 517 tourists received in April 2020 (Kingwangala, 2020). In 2020, Tanzania hosted more than 800 international tourists who traveled to Zanzibar (KTV Online News, 9 January 2020). Despite, the positive growth in the tourism sector in Tanzania, after the country was declared COVID-19 free, Tanzania was still insisting on maintaining social distancing rules and taking all the necessary precautions to maintain safety guidelines as instructed by WHO. The decision to maintain social distancing seem to be valid because most of the countries including the U.S, India, Brazil, Germany, Iran, Mexico, Argentina, Russia, and others in Africa were still suffering from COVID-19.

In the process of implementing the social distancing rule, Tanzania National Parks Association (TANAPA) and Ngorongoro National Parks requested Tanzania car dealers to renovate some of the travel and tour cars to make sure that the social distance rule is abided among travelers (Kara, 2022). The Tanzania Airport management, on the other hand, requested travelers to maintain social distance while at the lounge, on arrival, or when they leave the airports (Online News, 2021). Travelers were also requested to adopt a social distancing rule all the time when they are in the country to reduce the widespread of the virus (Online News, 2021). While the advantages of the social distancing rule in controlling the spread of COVID-19 were well-acknowledged, the unknown was the implications of the social distancing rule on visitor's travel intention in Tanzania. Studies addressing the implications of social distancing on visitor's travel intention in the context of tourism were limited. The existing studies have either addressed issues related to COVID-19 and intention to travel alone while others have addressed issues of social distancing in service sectors such as; hotel, entertainment, airlines, and restaurants. Evidently, studies which address the implications of social distancing during COVID-19 on intention to travel altogether are lacking. On the other hand, the theory of planned behavior (TPB) advocated by Ajzen in 1991 has been used for understanding the impacts of tourists perceptions during COVID-19 as well as on post-COVID-19 travel behaviors (Li, Nguyen, & Coca-Stefaniak, 2020). However, TPB remains silent on linking social distancing rule on visitors' intention to travel.

The existing studies that have employed TPB in addressing COVID-19 and travel intentions focused on addressing travel intentions of domestic travelers during COVID-19 in India (Das & Tiwari, 2020). Others have gone far and developed a methodology for the early detection of reactivation of tourist markets to control the spread of COVID-19 in Spain (Gallego & Font, 2020) while, Kement, *et al.* (2020) addressed the desires and behavioral intentions of tourists during COVID-19 by linking it with the perception of using non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPI) intention in Turkey. Bae and Chang (2020) examined the effect of COVID-19 risk perception on behavioral intention towards 'untact tourism in South Korea. Studies that address the impact of COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing rule are very few because this was a new area of study (Gunay & Kurtulmus, 2020). Therefore, this study intends to bridge this obvious existing knowledge gap.

Motivation for Conducting this Study

Social distancing measure was reported to have effects on activity participation (De Vos, 2020). A good number of people were facing temporary unemployment because of the directives from their governments to work from home. As a result, most of the leisure activities were canceled and people were forced to stay at home. This means that the tourism industry was affected by this decision. People were afraid to travel around the world for leisure. Surprisingly, Tanzania did not implement total lockdown strategy as was practiced in other African countries such as; Kenya, Uganda and South Africa, and instead, people were told to take precautions such as; maintaining social distancing, body steaming, washing hands, and wear masks whenever they were in public areas (Voa News, 2020). Even though Tanzania was able to host more than 800 international travelers as reported by KTV Online News, 9 January 2020, but most of them were from the United Kingdom, Italy, Germany, China, Australia, South Africa, and India (National Bureau of Statistics, 2018). This implies that the primary source market come from countries which were highly affected by the corona virus. Furthermore, over 85% of all the travelers came for leisure and holidays and they traveled with their friends and families followed by those who traveled with spouse and children.

Therefore, there is a possibility that most of the travelers would want to take part in tourism activities together with their family members. How would the social distancing rule work for travelers who are traveling with their family and friends or those traveling with their spouses and children? It seems that because of these scenarios, there was a possibility of visitors to change travel behavior and in the end, Tanzania's tourism sector would have sufferred. Secondly, no one knows the dynamics of pandemics such as COVID-19.

Therefore, necessary precautions were needed so that the tourism industry could be prepared to develop proper ways to make social distancing rules effective. Travelers need to be educated on the advantages of maintaining social distancing as this measure can protect travelers from getting the virus more easily (WHO, 2020). Third, the findings of this study would help service providers such as travel agents to develop packages that would accommodate few people who can enjoy leisure but still maintain social distance. In the same line, hoteliers can also raise accommodation rates to host few numbers of travelers during pandemic such as COVID-19 and transport officers should also make sure that public transports, as well as tour cars, are designed to allow travelers to sit apart to maintain social distance.

Methodology

The main focus of this study was to review and analyze studies that have been done addressing the effects of social distancing measures on visitor's travel intention during COVID-19. The main aim of the study was to identify the focus of the published academic journal articles that addressed issues related to social distancing and visitors travel intention during COVID-19 and come up with the implications of the study findings to the tourism industry in Tanzania. This implied that literature was reviewed from the author's interpretation than from the concepts point of view. This method was appropriate in the current study because issues regarding social distancing and travel intention during COVID-19 were a new field of study (Gunay & Kurtulmus, 2020). Additionally, this method helps a researcher to draw the intended meaning of the concepts from the researchers' original idea. The researcher reviewed the existing academic published articles in the area of social distancing and travel intentions during COVID-19. This was a desk review literature study. In this study, only full-length articles published in academic journals, mainly in tourism and hospitality were included. Conference articles, book reviews, abstracts, as well as conference proceedings were excluded from the analysis because of their limited if any, contributions to the existing knowledge.

However, information from WHO country reports, reports from international exit survey, news reports (both online and TV), information from books and country statistical data from the national bureau of statistics, Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, budget reports on tourism, and COVID-19 were used to provide information for the study. Three main tourism database search engines such as EBSCOhost, science direct, and Google scholar were used to download the reviewed articles. These databases are the largest and most popular online search engine databases used in tourism and hospitality studies (Buhalis & Law, 2008). In the process of searching for articles, the

researcher used several keywords to search for the articles, words such as "social distancing" "tourism" "COVID-19" "intention to travel" "hospitality" were used separately and at times a combination of words was employed to generate the relevant articles for the study. Additionally, references cited in the published articles were also traced to examine their relevance in the study. The decision to include an article for the analysis was primarily based on its relevance to the theme of the study (i.e., social distancing, COVID-19, and intention to travel in tourism and hospitality). The search retrieved a total of 7 articles. Then, each article was critically reviewed thrice by the researcher to justify its inclusion and to ensure its accuracy and objectivity. These articles were considered relevant for the analysis in the current study (see Appendix 1). The reason why there are few published articles in the area is due to the fact that issue of COVID-19 is new and it has started being addressed recently, this was why there were few articles on the topic under investigation as pointed out by Gunay and Kurtulmus (2020). Content analysis was employed to analyze content and concepts in the studies. The analysis was done manually since the generated articles were too few. This technique is a common data analysis method in the social sciences (Berg, 2009). This method involves a careful, detailed, systematic assessment and interpretation of a particular body of material to identify patterns, themes, biases, and meanings. The advantage of employing this method is that if done properly, it offers replication of outcomes (Duriau, Reger, & Pfarrer, 2007), it is flexible (Duriau, Reger, & Pfarrer, 2007). This technique allows different levels of analyses to be performed by using qualitative or quantitative approaches (Duriau, Reger, & Pfarrer, 2007). Appendix 1 presents the summary of all the relevant reviewed works of literature for this study. In the following section, the key findings of the existing literature were critically analyzed. In the end, the study offers the contributions of the study and provides practical implications to Tanzania's tourism sector.

Literature Review
Social Distancing

This is a reasonable social/physical distance that one individual needs to distance himself/herself from others. The social distancing rule was a measure adopted by different countries to control the spread of the COVID-19 virus. This measure reduces interaction between individuals to slow down the transmission of the virus (De Vos, 2020). For this measure to work individuals need to maintain sufficient distance. WHO (2020) recommended individuals to maintain at least a distance of 3.3 feet away from one another. Social distancing measure covered the closing of public places as well as avoiding of mass gatherings (Nguyen, *et al.,* 2020). In this study, the social distancing rule means travelers need to maintain a physical distance of at

least 3.3 feet (100 cm) away from one another when intending to travel to Tanzania for leisure activities.

Theoretical Literature: Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

This theory originated in the field of social psychology. This theory is based on concepts such as beliefs, attitudes, norms, perceptions, and behavior (Ajzen, 1991). This theory explains the relationship between consumers' beliefs, attitudes, intentions and the actual behaviors. The theory asserts that behavior is categorized into three groups namely; behavioral, normative and control beliefs. Behavioral beliefs involved the consequences of the target behavior as well as evaluations of those beliefs (outcome evaluations). Normative beliefs are the beliefs that originated from the expectations of family or friends while, control beliefs are beliefs that might impede the actual consumer behavior. The theory adds that behavioral beliefs usually determine individual attitudes towards the behavior and normative beliefs have a tendency to include social pressure (subjective norms) and in the end, control beliefs influence the evaluation of the overall perceived behavioral control. In this theory, behavioral intention is seen as an antecedent of the actual behavior. Behavioral intention is explained by attitude, perceived behavioral control and subjective norms.

In TPB, attitude refers to positive or negative evaluation of an individuals' behavior in question. Subjective norms deal with what others think of a given behavior. On the other hand, behavioral control appreciates those individuals' positive attitudes, or intentions which do not necessarily lead to an action. The central theme of TPB relies on intention which deals with all the motivational factors of an individual to perform a certain behaviour. Behavioral intention involves an individual's motivation to perform a certain behavior. This factor is seen as an antecedent to individual's action. The last variable in TPB is called behavior. This variable is usually predicted from the behavioral intention. Although, TPB is one among the basic theories in predicting ones' intention, this theory has been criticized by different researchers because some believe that there may be no perfect link between intention and the actual behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). Furthermore, this theory does not consider the targeted behavior precisely because a visitor may intend to visit a certain activity at a destination rather than the destination itself. Additionally, it is believed that attitude partially determines intention and the latter is the predictor of the actual individual behavior. Also, the causal relations among TPB constructs are yet to be proven (Armitage & Conner, 1998). Despite some criticism raised against TPB, this theory remains to be the foundation for understanding an individual's actual behavior. Although the theory originates from the field of social science, it is

accepted as a valid theory in the testing of individual behavioral intentions. Most of the extensive studies have applied this theory and, in the end,, it was concluded that intention and behavior can be predicted by taking into account one's attitudes, beliefs, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991; Armitage & Conner, 1998). Apart from psychology studies, TPB has extensively been used in different fields of study including tourism.

COVID-19 and Social Distancing in Tourism

The rapid spread of the virus, the increased number of confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths, and the lack of enough vaccine forced most of the governments and health known authorities such as WHO to opt for the strict measure to control the spread of the virus. One of the measures used was maintaining social distancing. Some of the ways to implement social distancing included society lockdown, travel, and movement restrictions, as well as the closure of and cancelation of public events including conferences, education establishments, airports, and other social gatherings (Ebrahim, *et al*., 2020). By the end of March 2020, most of the countries in the world had implemented some kind of travel restrictions ranging from full or partial mandatory quarantines to few-week lockdowns. To control the spread of the virus some of the countries including Tanzania decided to limit people from participating in various activities by maintaining stay-at-home requests, closing businesses, conferences, educational establishments, and canceling social events.

Evidently, the world witnessed cancelations of leisure trips as a result of the pandemic. Evidence from the existing literature reported that 48% of US travelers canceled their trips completely and 43% changed their plans. Furthermore, 66% of them reported that the pandemic made them postpone their trips for six months (Longwoods International, 2020). As if this was not enough, we also witnessed the closure of restaurants, cafés as well as entertainment areas. The closure of some businesses affected the performance of some of the restaurants, hotels, and motels. For example, in the US the hotel industry lost 50 % of revenue because of the lowest recorded occupancy rate (38 %) during COVID-19 (Shin & Kang, 2020). Similar findings were also reported by Goodell and Huynh (2020) that during COVID-19 restaurants, hotels and motels experienced negative abnormal returns, while, medical and pharmaceutical sectors enjoyed positive returns (Goodell & Huynh, 2020). Entertainment and airline industries were also reported to be affected by the pandemic as the returns from these industries fluctuate. The gradual deterioration of the hotel industry seemed to be caused by the social distancing rule (Gunay & Kurtulmus, 2020). On the positive side, the social distancing rule has been able to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 (Yezli & Khan, 2020). For example, it was reported that it takes 1-4 weeks since the

adoption of social distancing measures until the number of cases started to drop (Thu, Ngoc, & Hai, 2020), in some countries such as the US it took 16-20 days for the cases to drop by 9.1% (Courtemanche, *et al*., 2020). Furthermore, the implementation of a moderate social distancing rule in the US was expecting to save about 1.7 Million lives (Greenstone & Nigam, 2020). Gunay and Kurtulmus (2020) also found out that the pandemic not only brought negative consequences to the tourism and hospitality industry but rather were able to create the opportunity for service providers such as restaurants and airlines to make use of the technology in offering services to customers. During this pandemic, technology seems to be the right way to go in offering services to travelers. The hotel industry could make use of the innovation in technology as this can bring back the industry after it has been badly hit by the pandemic (Shin & Kang, 2020). With proper technology in place accommodation establishments will be able to minimize perceived health risk as issues by making sure that bookings can be done online, cleaning facilities are done via technology. Implementing technology can also help to reduce guest-hotel employers' interactions (Kussmann, 2020), and in the end, health risks for hotel customers can be effectively managed. Though it is known that the social distancing rule is one of the ways to control the spread of the virus between infected persons and non-infected persons (Wilder-Smith & Freedman, 2020), its implementation can have negative implications for individuals.

It is reported that social distancing affects social norms, the economy as well as the psychological wellbeing of society (Yezli & Khan, 2020). The situation of physically distancing people from social connections can have negative psychological effects such as depression, anxiety, sleep disturbance, fatigue, confusion, and anger which in the end may lead to frustration, fears as well as stigma (Brooks, et al., 2020). On the other hand, those individuals who are forced to stay away from their loved ones may get bored, frustrated as well as developing mood swings which lead to anxiety and stress (Venkatesh & Edirappuli, 2020). When an individual is confined in a defined space (home), people may experience family conflict and domestic violence (Kanter & Kuczynski, 2020). Furthermore, it is reported that after one month of social distancing, negative moods may start to develop, but after 50 days of practicing social distancing people may start being anxious and if this continues the situation may become worse in long run hence may develop persistent negative moods which may become a health concern issue (Zolnikov & Furio, 2020). Additionally, maintaining social distancing rule affects people who heavily need the support of others during the pandemic.

The effectiveness of the social distancing rule in controlling the spread of the virus differed among countries (Thu, Ngoc, & Hai, 2020). Sometimes, it was more challenging to implement this rule due to the urbanization process and the nature of a destination. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, for instance, tried to adopt social distancing rules but it was challenging to them due to its nature being a religious state and its urbanization. Maintaining social distance was not easy hence the country was forced to temporarily cancel religious gatherings ("Umra"), closing mosques, entertainment as well as educational establishments (Yezli & Khan, 2020). Social distancing literature concluded that all measures ranged from travel bans, social distancing to complete lockdown were effective in maintaining the spread of the virus, however, a combination of physical distancing measures can be effective if implemented early but other measures such as stay at home and full lockdown can be more effective to be adopted when there are uncontrolled outbreaks (Koh, Naing, & Wong, 2020).

Discussion

Despite extensive efforts taken globally to limit the spread of the virus using various containment measures such as stay at home, quarantine, and maintaining social distancing, the incidence of COVID-19 caused deaths over 4.22 million people worldwide as of 2nd August 2020 (Worldometer, 2021). This data may be underestimated since the world was experiencing more waves of COVID-19 viruses. Since the world is still doing researches looking for the effective vaccine or medicine to cure the virus, most of the governments including Tanzania were taking health guidance from WHO to ensure that people were safe. Frequent hand wash, wearing of masks, steaming inhalation using local herbs were among crucial measures done to control the spread of the virus. These measures were done hand in hand with the social distancing rule. In maintaining social distancing rule in the transport sector, the airline industry adopted a middle seat blocking policy to allow passengers to seat away from each other (Salari, *et al*., 2020).

This lesson can also be used by the Tanzania transport providers such as airlines, public transport owners as well as marine transport providers to make sure that the middle blocking seat rule is maintained as this measure could be effective in making sure that the virus infection is contained. Tour operators in Tanzania have started adjusting their tour cars to support social distancing rules, which allowed travelers to sit apart from each other hence, the viral infection could be controlled. However, with the social distancing rule in place, it would be difficult to accommodate a lot of travelers at once. Therefore, tour operators could decide to purchase more cars to accommodate many travelers or might decide to increase the price of car hiring to offset the

revenue that would have been generated before the pandemic. In accommodation establishments, literature has documented that for hotels to work effectively during the pandemic, technology could be used. Cleanliness, hotel booking as well as communication between hotel customers and employees could be done via technology (Shin & Kang, 2020). A similar lesson could be taken to Tanzania accommodation establishments. Technology could be installed in various hotels, motels, and campsites making sure that there was less contact between the customer and the service provider. Though, this process could be challenging since the additional cost could be borne to the service providers in the installation of new technology. Service providers could increase the price of accommodation to compensate for the additional cost for the installation of new technology. This technique could have helped service providers to recover the cost of technology installation but also could be used as a strategy to accommodate fewer travelers in one hotel or motel. It is acknowledged that tourism offer traveler's opportunities to go out and have leisure time with family and friends. However, the social distancing rule demands people to maintain a reasonable social space (approximately 3.3 feet) among people and limit social interactions. This rule is going contrary to what tourism entails. It is reported that social distancing has had an impact on individuals' activity participation in the end it could negatively affect subjective well-being (De Vos, *et al.*, 2013). Due to the social distancing rule, people were no longer having a lot of options when it came to leisure activities. People were deprived of the opportunity to take leisure trips or taking part in leisure activities such as tourism, and this might have impacted their intention to travel to various tourist destinations. It was reported that during COVID-19 fewer people travelled and were forced to take short recreational trips by car (De Vos, 2020). The reduced travel demand by travelers resulted in a decrease in revenue in most of the tourist destinations but might have an impact on individual well-being.

In Tanzania, most international travelers prefer wildlife safari as one of their preferred tourist activities (National Bureau of Statistics, 2018). Therefore, destination managers working in wildlife areas need to make sure that social distancing rule is maintained whenever they host visitors. In other tourist attraction areas such as museums, beach areas, mountains and nature reserved areas social distancing measure needs to be practiced at all time. However, the challenge of implementing that rule in tourist attraction areas is because most of the visitors arrived in Tanzania came with family and friends while others with their spouses and children (National Bureau of Statistics, 2018) hence, there was a possibility that they would want to take part in different activities with their family members or friends. Although it is recognized that

leisure activities play an important role in maintaining individual well-being, the social distancing rule may limit an individual from getting leisure pleasure they deserved with their beloved ones as they would have to maintain social distance (approximately 3.3 feet) when taking part in leisure activities. This may imply visitor's intention to visit tourist destinations in the future. In 2021, Tanzania reported to have 21 death cases as a result of COVID-19 since the eruption of the pandemic (Worldometer, 2021) but the lowest number of deaths doesn't mean nothing should be done to make sure that Tanzania was not isolating herself from developing coping mechanisms to accommodate visitors during pandemic period. Tanzania can take advantage of lower number of death cases and uses such information to promote the country as a safe destination for visitors as this strategy might increase the number of arrivals. The advantage of using such information during the pandemic is because the literature highlights that the number of visits decreased with the increasing number of COVID-19 confirmed cases (Elsayeh, 2020). For the promotional materials to be successfully designed, tourism stakeholders in the country including travel agents, tour operators, hoteliers, restaurant owners, transport officers as well as destination managers need to work together to make sure that marketing activities were designed to position Tanzania as a safe destination for all visitors. In the same line, Tanzania could also take lessons from Korea where 'untact tourism' (consumption of tourism products with minimal face-to-face interactions) could be applied. This would help service providers to offer services with minimal face-to-face contact with customers. Special packages can be developed by the service providers to accommodate few travelers. For instance, hotel owners could promote their establishments based on the capacity to host few travelers enough to maintain social distancing. Transport owners can promote their services by customizing passenger's seat to attract few people. Promotion activities of this caliber may attract a significant number of visitors as people are terrified by the current status of the pandemic.

Conclusion
Most countries including France, Venezuela, Argentina, the Philippines, the United Arab Emirates, Portugal among others implemented travel ban because of COVID-19. Countries such as Tanzania could make use of the social distancing rule in making sure that visitors were not getting infected with virus related diseases. Since some of the visitors were always enthusiastic and optimistic that virus related diseases were temporary and sooner than later travellers would continue to enjoy leisure trips like they used to do before the pandemic (Elsayeh, 2020), this information is very important to tourism service providers in Tanzania. Some travelers were enthusiastic and ready to take flights during the last quarter of 2020 (Gallego

& Font, 2020). Therefore, Tanzania tourism service providers had to take this information seriously because of initial preparation in making sure that the environment was ready to host travelers after virus pandemic. The Government needs to make sure that they reduce tax for the tour operators in order for them to place more cars suitable to accommodate few travelers during this pandemic or in case of another pandemic emergency. Furthermore, hoteliers, restaurants, and historical site managers should invest in technology to allow visitors to have the best quality service with minimal customer-employee physical contacts. Although, the decision to socially distance people leads to a negative impact on individual social norms, the psychological wellbeing of the society (Yezli & Khan, 2020) and ends up causing depression, anxiety, sleep disturbance, fatigue, confusion, anger, and frustration (Brooks, *et al.,* 2020). Tanzania tourism sector can make sure that tour operators/travel agents are developing packages for physical activities. This package might help visitors to improve their physical wellbeing. Tanzania tourism industry via Tanzania Tourist Board together with other stakeholders such as hoteliers, transport owners as well as destination managers could make use of the data that the country has less number of confirmed death cases; on top of that the country has an official stamp that declares that the country is free from COVID-19. This slogan can be used together with Tanzania's unforgettable campaign to market Tanzania as a safe tourist destination to all travelers. Promotional materials need to show that leisure activities could be pursued while visitors are maintaining social distancing.

Limitations and Areas for Further Studies
This was a literature review study hence the analysis was done via critically reviewing the existing literature on the relationship between social distancing on visitor's intention to travel during the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings of this study could not be generalized outside the context of Tanzania. However, other researchers might decide to conduct a qualitative study to extend this study. Data from qualitative study might reveal visitors true emotions on the how their travel intention was affected by maintaining social distancing. Secondly, most of the reviewed literature on this area was focused on able-bodied travelers and not disabled travelers. Disabled travelers were the most vulnerable group and they need the support of others in their entire lifetime.

Therefore, how will the social distancing rule work for wheelchair users, the blind, deaf or senior travelers? To what extent would the disabled traveler be able to maintain social distancing rules? Therefore, future study needs to dwell on people with disabilities and see to what extent the social distancing rule works and to what extent this rule affects their travel intention.

Additionally, this was a cross-sectional study design; therefore it was done at one point in time. Future studies could be done using the longitudinal study as this would help to compare the effects of social distancing on visitor's travel intention during the first and third phases of the COVID-19. This assessment would be able to reveal the change of travel intentions over some time.

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Appendix 1: Related works of literature on Social Distancing and Travel Intention during COVID-19

S/N	Author(s) & Year	Aim of the study	The focus of the study	Main findings
1	Kement, *et al*. (2020)	Addresses the desires and behavioral intentions of tourists and the perception of non-pharmaceutical intervention (NP1) during the COVID-19 era	Turkey	A perception of COVID-19 significantly and positively affects NPI and negatively affects desires. Perception of COVID-19 and NPI did not have an impact on behavioral intention but the desire was proved to have a positive effect on behavioral intention.
2	Bae and Chang (2020)	Effects of COVID-19 risk perception on behavioral intention towards untact tourism	South Korea	Affective risk perception negatively influences behavioral intention. The attitude was found to be an important mediator between affective risk perception and behavioral intention
3	Das and Tiwari (2020)	Examined travel intentions of 484 international and 566 domestic travelers during COVID-19 Pandemic using Bayesian and extended model of goal-directed behavior	India	Attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control have a positive influence on emotions and anticipated emotions have a negative influence on travelers' intention through their desire to travel. Perceived severity of COVID-19 indirectly influenced travel intention through a willingness to adopt NPI.

4	Gunay and Kurtulmus (2020)	Impact of COVID-19, social distancing on USA service sector (hotel, entertainment, and restaurant)	USA	COVID-19 has affected the entertainment and airline industry. The gradual deterioration of the hotel industry was due to social distancing measures.
5	Shin and Kang (2020)	Impact of expected interaction and expected cleanliness on the perceived risk in hotel booking intention	USA	Perceived health risk mediates the relationship between expected interaction and hotel booking intention
6	De Vos (2020)	Impact of implications of social distancing on daily travel patterns	Not mentioned	Social distancing affect well-being negatively
7	Salarie, *et al*. (2020)	Proposed a mixed-integer programming model to assign passengers to seats on an airplane in a manner to allow social distancing among them	European countries	It was recommended that airlines should maintain a middle seat blocking policy to allow the passenger to seat while maintaining social distancing.