

## Effects of Covid-19 Process in Marine Business: An Evaluation on Marine Tourism Enterprises

Erdal ARLI  
Istanbul University

**Abstract:** Covid-19, which was detected in a person in Wuhan, China, then spread all over the world and continues to spread, has a fatal effect on human health and continues to cause significant damage to businesses and industries in the economic sense. There have been contractions and bankruptcies in many businesses and sectors in almost every country, and unemployment has reached very high levels. Tourism is one of the leading sectors affected by this process. In this context, the pandemic has not only affected hotel and travel management within tourism, but also cruise, yacht, marina and diving tourism, which are important areas of sea tourism, and continue to affect it. In this process, cruise and yacht businesses that make daily tours have been the most affected by the marine tourism sectors. So much so that cruise companies, which have been operating and have become a brand in the world for many years, had to sell their ships. The number of tours has decreased considerably. In particular, Covid-19 was detected in passengers on a cruise ship, and the ship was quarantined with its crew and passengers for as long as a month. The purpose of this research is to evaluate and reveal the current situation of the Covid-19's effects on marine tourism businesses also to raise awareness in this sense.

**Keywords:** Covid-19's effects, marine, marine tourism enterprises

### Introduction

Marine business is an international profession and includes many sub-fields. These professions are ship owner management, port management, ship chartering and brokering, yacht management, marina management, cruise ship and cruise port management, diving tourism management, marine museum management, ship agency management, shiphandler, forwarder, shipyard management, maritime logistics, marine insurance business can be listed. In addition, it not only earns foreign currency for countries but also contributes significantly to business employment. Today, Turkish personnel can work on foreign flagged ships, and can work in chartering and brokerage, marina, yacht and cruise companies abroad. This sector has turned into international human resources export especially in Far Eastern countries such as Philippines, China and India. There are even International Crew Management companies operating specifically on this subject. All areas of the maritime business sector have undertaken a number of duties in the realization of the short and long term goals of the countries. Countries that know how to take advantage of the seas have made significant contributions to their economies. In addition to industrialization and digitalization; Marine tourism and the economy of maritime transport have played an important role in the development of countries that play an effective and successful role in these areas (Yercan 1996). The most important advantages of maritime business in terms of both transportation and marine tourism can be stated as follows; (Pekdemir, 1991).

4/3 of the world is covered by seas. For this reason, many countries and regions are separated from each other by seas. In this case, transportation between countries can only be provided by sea and air" (Pekdemir, 1991).

Marine tourism holiday continues to be one of the most preferred holiday types. However, apart from sea holidays, which are perceived only as sea-sand-sun: diving, water sports, yacht charter, yacht purchasing, weekly and daily yacht trips, amateur marine and cruise ship holidays are among the most popular holiday types in marine tourism.

---

- This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 4.0 Unported License, permitting all non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

- Selection and peer-review under responsibility of the Organizing Committee of the Conference

Sea transportation is a suitable type of transportation for large volume transportation due to its low cost (Pekdemir, 1991).

In this context, marine business has always been and continues to be one of the most popular types of business in international freight transport for many years. Passenger transportation, which was the most popular before the second world war, left its place to private and touristic cruise ships and yacht businesses with the development of airlines and the decrease in prices. However, economic crises brought the marine business to a halt from time to time, many shipowners could not find cargo and passengers for their ships and even had to sell their ships, shipyards could not find a market to build new ships. One of these crises has reappeared with the Covid-19 pandemic, and one of the most hurt areas of marine business has been marine tourism. Diving tourism, water sports, yacht and marine businesses, as well as cruise lines operating in the Mediterranean basin, were particularly affected by this situation.

### **Marine Tourism**

Local and foreign tourists the fact that sea lovers who buy yachts instead of houses desire to spend time in areas such as the sea, rivers and lakes. They prefer to spend their lives in marinas, bays and seas as a lifestyle have enabled marine tourism to be more demanded among other tourism types and expand its framework. In this context, the increase in interest in amateur maritime, daily and weekly commercial yacht tours and cruise ship holidays, which are included in coastal and sea-based facilities and activities, made marine tourism the main element of mass tourism movements (Orams, 1999; Jennings, 2003; Klarić, Rakitavac, & Lesić 2015; Pirnar & Özer, 2017; Sevinç, F. & Duran, E.,2018)

Marine tourism, with its many types and expanding structure, is one of the branches of tourism with the highest demand (<https://www.denizticaretodasi.org.tr>, İMEAK DTO August-2019 Issue Deniz Turizmi Supplement). So much so that, there is a great increase in holidaymakers who want to spend the weekly yacht tour with their family in beautiful and quiet bays. The demand of tourists who come to the hotel holiday to spend at least 2-3 days on the boat in the holiday package is increasing every year.

In summary, Marine Tourism consists of the following two components (<https://www.denizticaretodasi.org.tr>, İMEAK DTO August-2019- Issue Deniz Turizmi Supplement);

#### 1-Marine tourism facilities

- Cruise Port Operations  
(A and B Type)
- Marina Operations  
(3, 4 and 5 Anchors)
- Other Facility Operations  
(Dock, Pier and Boatyard)

#### 2-Marina tourism vehicles

- Cruise Ship Operations
- Yacht Investments and Businesses
- Bare-boat Enterprises
- Commercial Yacht Managements  
(Crewed-Without Crew)
- Daily Boat Excursion Operations
- Blue Cruise Boat Voyages (Weekly Boat Tours) (Charter)
- Diving Tourism Businesses
- Above Water Activities Facilities

The marine tourism sector, with the above-mentioned types, has earned significant foreign currency for business and country economies for many years and played a major role in development. Economic crises, wars and terrorist movements from time to time affected these businesses regionally, but the Covid-19 pandemic affected almost all countries and businesses operating in the field of marine tourism at the world level. COVID-19, also known as corona virus disease, was first detected in a person in Wuhan, China in 2019, and it spread very rapidly and was declared as a worldwide pandemic.

*“As of Tuesday, November 3, 2020, the number of coronavirus cases (the number of patients) worldwide has increased to 47,558,575 (47 million 558 thousand 575) people. The number of people who died due to the coronavirus increased to 1 million 214 thousand 640 worldwide and the total number of people detected with the virus to 47.558.575. The number of people recovered from Covid-19 reached 34 million 170 thousand 854 around the world. Corona virus disease has spread to more than 140 countries. USA has the highest number of cases worldwide. According to the latest shared data; there are 9 million 487 thousand 88 cases in USA. Furthermore; as the latest shared data in Brazil; there are 5 million 545 thousand 705 cases which is the third country with the highest number of cases around the world” (<https://www.haberler.com/dunya-koronavirus-tablosu-3-kasim-sali-dunyada-13711722-haberi/03.11.2020-19:40-Last Update: 03.11.2020-20:38>)*

### **Effects of Covid-19 Pandemic on Marine Tourism**

Covid-19, which is detected in a person in Wuhan, China and then spread to the whole world and affects the health, daily life and social lives of people of all ages, continues to cause serious damage to businesses and industries economically. It seriously affected the economies, business sectors and businesses of all countries from America to Europe, Far East, Asia and Africa, downsizing and bankruptcies occurred, unemployment reached very high levels. Marine tourism, where social life, one-to-one relationships, cultural and recreational activities are important, is one of the leading sectors affected by this process. In this context, the pandemic has affected the sea-sand-sun holiday concept as well as underwater and surface sports, cruise, daily yacht tours and marina management, which are important areas of marine tourism.

The tourism sector affects 54 sectors directly and 185 sectors indirectly. With the pandemic, it is clear that there is a sharp decline in tourism-related consumption expenditures (Bahar and İlal, 2020).

Considering the current impact of the pandemic process on travel demand, the most important element of the sea-sand-sun concept is the hotel. business loses 1.4 billion dollars in income every week (Bahar and İlal, 2020). For this reason, the influence of the tourism sector affects the tourism economy in many ways, as well as the socio-cultural life of people, the work stress of the winter months and the emergence of psychological problems.

In this sense; *“Commercial yachts and primitive wooden ships, whose activities were suspended due to the epidemic that broke out in March 2020, were decided to resume their activities as of June 1, 2020, provided that they comply with the measures taken by the Ministries”* (<https://www.turizmgunlugu.com/2020/05/28/yacht-tourism-corona-measures-starting-1-June-/> Author Tourism Diary -28 May 2020). Bakar and Rosbi (2020), in their study on the impact of COVID-19 on tourism management, stated that according to the market balance of the supply-demand theory, the price of the tourism sector will continue to decrease in parallel with the decrease in demand.

Therefore, at the end of the 3-month recession, the reservation cancellations of domestic and foreign tourists who bought package tours, including daily yacht tours, caused businesses that organize daily yacht tours to face a significant crisis and have difficulties in paying marina rents and bank loans. 50-100-120 persons capacity yacht enterprises have reduced their capacities by half, tour prices have remained stable compared to last year, or prices had to be lowered as the bargaining power towards the customer was lost. Purpose for daily tour boats; covering the cost and not losing existing customers.

The Covid-19 process has negatively affected many areas of the tourism sector, as well as businesses that turn the threat into an opportunity with the right marketing strategies.

Chang, McAleer and Ramos (2020) emphasized (in their study on sustainable tourism after Covid-19) the importance of social distance from departure to exit points of destinations and during food service and social activities, using personal protection equipment while travelling and holidays.

Gössling, Scott, and Hall (2020) emphasized that Covid-19's work on tourism and global change must be learned to challenge this global tragedy in order to accelerate the transformation of sustainable tourism.

In this respect, most companies try to find the convenient ways in order to survive and keep their businesses with the least damage from this global tragedy with the measures taken and different applied marketing strategies. Especially the blue cruise businesses found different marketing concepts. These are;

"in a hygienic and isolated environment far from crowded cities and land with only your family, in addition corona is not transmitted in the sea ". In this way they managed to turn the pandemic threat into an opportunity, moreover attract existing and potential customers to the blue cruise voyages.

Istanbul and Marmara, Aegean, Mediterranean, Black Sea Regions (IMEAK) Chamber of Shipping Izmir Branch Chairman of the Board of Directors Yusuf Öztürk was the guest of Maritime Talks organized by Dokuz Eylül University (DEU) Maritime Faculty Alumni Association via video conference. He believes that "mass tourism will lose its popularity in the new period". Also he explained that "the demand for yacht tourism has increased after the new type of coronavirus pandemic. We observe a serious increase in people's demands for boutique hotels, yacht tourism and blue voyage. We can turn this into an important revenue stream" (Efsun Erbalaban Yılmaz, <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/ekonomi/kovid-19-yat-turizmine-talebi-artirdi-/1836415> 11.05.2020).

Later, the demand of crowded hotel holidays decreased significantly. But "the tourists' demand to blue cruise voyages have increased during Covid-19 pandemic because blue cruise companies offer the holiday away from the land, in an isolated and hygienic environment by boat or cabin rental. Before the voyage the yachts are cleaned and disinfected in details also technical personnel are regularly tested for Covid-19. At the same time, the temperature of the guests who will go on a yacht tour are measured before getting on the boat and they are frequently warned to wear masks on board also at least two meters social distance even during sunbathing" (<https://gercekfethiye.com/pandemi-doneminde-tekne-turlarina-talep-artiyor/28386/> 22.06.2020 14:53 Update: 22.06.2020 14:53 913-Gerçek Fethiye)

"Turkey's online service that one boat rental platform and in 40 countries serving viravira.co founder and CEO Baran Yıldırım, AA correspondent," He stated that the blue cruise and yacht tourism market are less affected by the pandemic compared to other types of tourism. He also noted that "local tourists tend to yacht tourism and blue voyage to be together with family and known friends in a sheltered environment and gain new tourists. He said that "the interest in the blue cruise market has increased also blue tour has stated that the symbol of safe yachting holiday in Turkey. According to the data as a result of this trend, the market size of blue tour stated that reached \$ 300 million" (Yasemin Kalyoncuoğlu-<https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/ekonomi/turkiyede-mavi-tur-pazarinin-buyuklugu-300-milyon-dolara-ulasti/2016676>, 23.10.2020).

## **Conclusion**

The marine tourism industry is sometimes faced with economic crises in some countries due to wars, natural disasters, terrorist attacks and financial problems. It loses its customers. Demand is decreasing. The economies of businesses operating in this field are seriously affected. However, the Covid-19 virus has deeply affected not only some countries, but almost every country in the world. All areas of tourism have been negatively affected by this. Cruise tourism has come to a halt, and large businesses that play an active role in the market have decided to sell their ships. Reservations and cruises have been canceled. The vast majority of cruise businesses have postponed their plans to 2021. Daily boat tours have also been adversely affected by the pandemic. For example, the boat with a capacity of 100 tourists has halved its capacity, but the price has not been competitive. One of the businesses most affected by the pandemic has been underwater and surface sports businesses, where the majority of their customers are hotel tourists. However, despite all these, blue cruise (blue voyage businesses), which developed marketing strategies with the concept of not transmitting corona at sea, isolated from land and crowd, just choose us for a holiday with your family, has been one of the least affected sectors. The blue voyage has provided a safe holiday opportunity for family members or friends and relatives. Accordingly, the demand for blue cruise businesses that take Covid-19 measures has increased day by day. The trip has been blue cruise voyage as well as the address of the safe marine vacation in Turkey.

## **References**

- Bahar, O. and Çelik İlal, N. (2020). The economic effects of Coronavirus (COVID-19) in the tourism industry. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Education Research*, 6(1), 125-139.
- Bakar, N. A. and Rosbi, S. (2020). Effect of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) to tourism industry. *International Journal of Advanced Engineering Research and Science*, 7(4), 189-193.
- Chang, C.L., McAleer, M. and Ramos, V. (2020). A Charter for sustainable tourism after COVID-19. *Sustainability* 12(9), 3671.

- Gössling, S., Scott, D. and Hall, C. M. (2020). Pandemics, tourism and global change: A rapid assessment of COVID-19. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 1-20.
- [https:// www. denizticaretodasi.org.tr / Media / SharedDocuments /Deniz Ticareti Dergisi /agustos\\_ek\\_2019.pdf](https://www.denizticaretodasi.org.tr / Media / SharedDocuments /Deniz Ticareti Dergisi /agustos_ek_2019.pdf). İMEAK Chamber of Shipping, İMEAK DTO August-2019 Issue Deniz Turizmi Supplement, Access Date: 03.11.2020
- <https://www.haberler.com/dunya-koronavirus-tablosu-3-kasim-sali-dunyada-13711722-haberi/03.11.2020-19:40-LastUpdate: 03.11.2020-20:38; Access Date: 05.11.2020>
- <https://gercekfethiye.com/pandemi-doneminde-tekne-turlarina-talep-artiyor/28386/> 22.06.2020 14:53 Update: 22.06. 2020 14:53 913-Gerçek Fethiye, Access Date: 03.11.2020
- <https://www.turizmgunlugu.com/2020/05/28/yacht-tourism-corona-measures-starting-1-June-/> Author Tourism Diary -28 May 2020, Access Date: 03.11.2020
- Jennings, G. (2003). Marine Tourism in Hudson Simon (Ed.) *Sport and Adventure Tourism*, Haworth Hospitality Press, New York
- Kalyoncuoğlu, Y. (2020). <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr /ekonomi/turkiyede-mavi-tur-pazarinin-buyuklugu-300-milyon-dolara-ulasti/2016676, 23.10.2020, Access Date: 05.11.2020>
- Klarić Sara, Rakitovac Kristina Afrić and Lesić Klara Trošt (2015). Corporate social responsibility of Croatian Marinas. *Ekonomika Misao i Praksa, No.1*, 81-101
- Orams, Mark (1999). *Marine Tourism: Development, Impacts and Management*. UK: Routledge
- Pınar İge, and Özer Sarı Ferika (2017). Ege Bölgesi'nde sürdürülebilir deniz turizmine yönelik nitel bir araştırma ve GZFT Analizi. *Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi Denizcilik Fakültesi Dergisi*, 9(1), 55-72
- Pekdemir I. Mendeş (1991). *Deniz Yolu Yük Taşımacılığı; Yönetim ve Organizasyonu*, Beta Basın Yayım Dağıtım A.Ş., İstanbul
- Sevinç, F. and Duran, E. (2018). Sürdürülebilir deniz turizmi ve tüketim paradoksu: tüketirken tükenmek. *Tüketici ve Tüketim Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 10(2), 173-196
- Yercan H. F. (1996). *Liman İşletmeciliği ve Yönetimi*, Mersin Deniz Ticaret Odası Yayını, 1., Mersin
- Yılmaz, E.E. (2020)-<https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/ekonomi/kovid-19-yat-turizmine-talebi-artirdi-/1836415-11.05.2020, Access Date: 04.11.2020>

---

### Author Information

---

**Erdal ARLI**

Istanbul University,  
Marine Sciences and Business Institute, Marine Business  
Department, Turkey  
Contact e-mail: erdal.arli@istanbul.edu.tr

---