

## The Global Community's Perception on the Spread of Covid-19 in Indonesia and the Decision Making Process for Duty Travels to Indonesia

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**Abstract:** *The global health issue about Covid-19 has turned into a global economic issue. One of the sectors affected is the flow of goods and people. Travel restrictions and limitations have reduced the movements of people among countries and regions to a minimum level, suffocating both domestic and international air travel industries. Besides travel limitations, travel restrictions have also the potential to disrupt businesses, researches and other duty travels that need physical attendance. This would in turn affect the economy. Besides, travels and visits would also require accommodations and food consumption. It is also often the case that duty travel have a side aim to taste the culinary. The purpose of this study is thus to analyze the perception of foreigners living abroad concerning the spread of Covid-19 in Indonesia and relating it to their decision to visit Indonesia during this time of pandemic. By applying a qualitative approach, this study targeted to receive responses from different countries using an online questionnaire facility, Google Forms®. Most of the questions in the questionnaire were made by using closed-end questions. However, several questions are designed as semi-closed-end questions to facilitate the respondents' individual perspective. Our result shows that only 9% of the respondents thought the situation of Covid-19 in Indonesia was very bad. However, 45% think the condition was bad, with only 6% of them perceived the contrary, and 39% of the respondents think that the condition was moderate. Based on their reasons to continue or to abort the plan to visit for business, research, and other non-leisure purposes, we could see that decision was made according to some sort of personal loss and benefit analysis. Those who decided to continue their plan reasoned that it would affect their future carrier, it would affect their personal benefit, or that if they strictly followed the health protocol they would be safe. Those who decided to cancel the plan reasoned that it would be too dangerous, risky, and cause too much hassle.*

**Keywords:** *Duty travel decision making, Global community's perception, the spread of Covid-19 in Indonesia*

### Introduction

The novel corona virus that was later commonly known as the Covid-19 was first identified in Wuhan, China in late 2019. In just several months, it spread across the globe and declared as a pandemic by the WHO in early March (Chinazzi, 2020; Nachegea, 2020; WHO Europe, 2020). Besides the nature of the virus as being highly contagious, the speed of the spread is accelerated by the extensive travel across countries and continents. Realizing this, to reduce

imported infections, many countries closed their borders from incoming visitors and prevent their residents to go abroad. This has massively reduced air traffic and affected also the flow of goods, which eventually impacted the flow of money. Export-import, tourism, and the airline industry were hit hard (Nicola, 2020).

Besides formal restrictions from the government or perhaps the company people work at, perception on the condition and the image of the destination plays an important role in the decision making of doing travel (Adam, 2015; Chen, 2020). Duty travel in particular, however, is thus not just any travel. It is the kind of travels assigned by the superior or for a personal issues not related to leisure or friendly visit with the potential of personal financial or career gain.

With the advancement of social media, it plays more and more role in spreading information throughout the globe. The world becomes borderless. Everyone can easily find out what is currently happening at the other part of the world. This ease the spread of information, which in turn also affects the formation of perception and image of a particular region/country (Kim, 2017).

Since travel, including duty travel, could help drive the economy, it is important to understand how people decided to perform one concerning the Covid-19 pandemic. Because perception is crucial in the decision making process for traveling, and that the ease of information contributed to the formation of perception and image of a country, therefore we aim to explore and seek to understand how the global community decided to perform a planned visit amidst their perception on the condition of Covid-19 in Indonesia.

## **Methodology**

We use an online questionnaire to reach as wide as respondents possible. The target respondents are non-Indonesians living abroad. To ease the filling out process, we design most of the questions in the questionnaire as closed-ended questions. However, we provide semi-closed-ended questions in several points to facilitate respondents' individual perspectives. The questionnaire is then passed on through social media and personal contacts to escalate the reach.

## **Findings & Discussion**

After releasing the questionnaire on our social media and asking for the help of many personal contacts to assist in spreading the questionnaire, we received a total of 43 responses. However, we unfortunately have to remove several responses for not meeting our requirements. Therefore we removed 5 responses from Indonesians living in Indonesia, 3 Indonesians living in Austria, the USA, and UK respectively, and 2 responses from Austria stating that they do not have any intentions to visit Indonesia. The analyzed responses are thus 33 responses from 10 countries in 4 continents. The detailed origin of the respondents is presented in Table 1. From Figure 1 we can see that the respondents are distributed throughout the globe, although most come from Europe.

**Table 1.**  
*The origin of the respondents*

Continent	Country	Number of Respondents
<u>America</u>	USA	1
	Brazil	1
<u>Europe</u>	Germany	14
	Austria	1
	Switzerland	4
	Netherlands	1
	Hungary	2
<u>Asia</u>	Malaysia	5
	Nepal	2
<u>Australia</u>	New Zealand	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>

**Figure 1.**  
*The spatial distribution of respondents*



Map Image Source: [www.pngio.com](http://www.pngio.com)

The result shows that 39,4% of the respondent obtain their information concerning the condition, spread, and handling of Covid-19 in Indonesia solely from social media, while the other 27,3% use social media as one of the sources of information. The rest of the respondents (33,3%) use other sources of information, such as Indonesian colleagues, major newspapers, or the embassy.

Concerning the perception formed by the obtained information, our result shows that only 9% of the respondents thought the situation of Covid-19 in Indonesia was very bad. However, 45% think that the condition was bad, with only 6% of them perceived the contrary. The other 39% of respondents think that the condition was moderate.

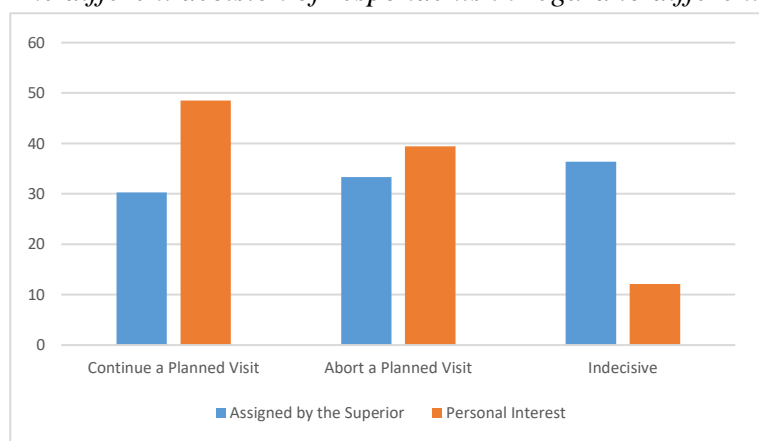
Based on their perception, the respondents were asked to decide whether to continue or abort a planned visit if they have a prior plan or were assigned by their superior. Our result shows that when they were assigned by their superior, 33,3% said that they will abort the plan, 30,3% said that they will continue the planned visit, and the rest (36,4%) were indecisive. The reasons for the decisions are the confidence that they would be fine if they strictly follow the health protocol (39,4%), while the other 24,2% think that the condition is still acceptable. However, 30,3% think the visit would be too dangerous and 21,2% think it would cause too much hassle. Only 6,1% considered the risk of personal career and the other

6,1% thinking of the risk that outweighed the benefit, while another 33,3% take formal restriction (from the country of residence or the company) into account.

The figures changed when asked concerning duty travels for their personal interest. 48,5% said they would continue the planned visit, 39,4% said they would abort, and only 12,1% were indecisive (see Figure 2). Concerning the reasons for the decision, the risk of personal career rose to 24,2%, while the ones that think that the visit is too dangerous and that considered formal restriction sank to 21,2% and 6,1% respectively (see Figure 3).

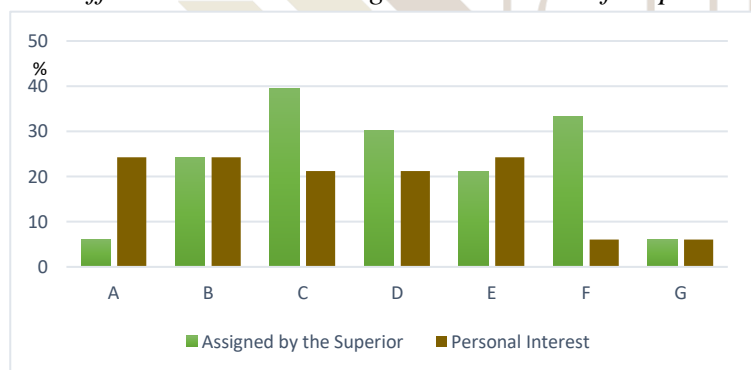
**Figure 2.**

*The different decision of respondents in regard to different interest*



**Figure 3.**

*The different reasons leading to the decision of respondents in regard to different interest*



- A It would affect my future careers/must be done
- B I think the condition is still acceptable
- C I would strictly follow the health protocol, thus I would be safe
- D It is too dangerous
- E The visit would cause me too much hassle
- F My country of residence would not allow the visit
- G the risks outweigh the benefits

From the results, we can see that personal interest gave more motivation to continue a planned visit in the midst of the currently ongoing pandemic situation. There are still 54% of the respondents that think the condition of Covid-19 in Indonesia is bad to very bad. Therefore

Indonesia must put a better effort in handling the pandemic and putting positive materials on social media.

## Conclusions

More people are accessing information from social media and it formed their perception of an ongoing issue in a country. Most people think that the condition of Covid-19 in Indonesia is bad. Therefore, Indonesia needs to show more what has been done. From the current perceived condition, more people can decide concrete action as well as are willing to travel when it concerns their personal interests rather than being assigned by the superior. This shows that personal benefit is deemed more valuable than institutions’.

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