

Turning crisis into chances: Tourism entrepreneurs' timing strategies amidst emergencies

Katarzyna Czernek-Marszałek¹ , Dagmara Wójcik² , Patrycja Juszczak³ ,
Paweł Piotrowski⁴ , Brendan Richard⁵ 

Abstract

PURPOSE: Nowadays enterprises operate in a very turbulent environment characterized by frequent, significant, and often unpredictable changes. Such conditions, including crises, force enterprises to take quick actions to adapt to changing conditions. The aim of the paper is to identify chances and timing strategies used by tourism entrepreneurs in conditions of large-scale emergencies (such as COVID-19) and show how they can serve organizational resilience. **METHODOLOGY:** Qualitative research was conducted in the form of 12 individual in-depth interviews and 4 focus group interviews with 22 representatives of selected industries in the tourism sector. The concept of chance management and timing strategies is used to present how, according to our interviewees, changes in the environment caused by the pandemic contributed to the survival and development of their entities in the tourism market. **FINDINGS:** The research findings showed that changes caused by the pandemic allowed entities to identify several chances. These chances mainly concerned the introduction of changes to the offer (accelerating previously planned changes and enabling the introduction of unplanned changes). Moreover, they provided the chances to use held digital competences and time to think about the company's development strategy, as well as establishing and developing relationships with stakeholders. Additionally, our research identified four timing strategies used by tourism entrepreneurs in the time of crisis, i.e. chance-grasping strategy, chance-entraining strategy, chance-riding strategy, and chance-creating strategy. **IMPLICATIONS:** Tourism enterprises are highly exposed to operating in crisis conditions. Therefore, chance management can be very useful in their activity and our research findings can be also useful regarding its theoretical and practical implications. From the theoretical point of view, we show how the concept of chance management (in particular timing strategies) can be useful for analyzing the reactions of tourism entrepreneurs to changes in times of crisis and taking advantage of opportunities arising from crisis situations. From a practical point of view, we show what strategies, depending on entrepreneurs' subjective assessment of the current and future conditions for implementing changes, can serve organizational resilience in times of crisis. **ORIGINALITY AND VALUE:** This paper fills a research gap related to the use of the concepts of chance management and timing strategies from the perspective of tourist enterprises resilience, previously not used in this context and to a limited extent used in the general management literature so far. **Keywords:** chance management, tourism, timing strategies, opportunities, large scale emergency, COVID-19 pandemic

1 Katarzyna Czernek-Marszałek, Associate Professor, Faculty of Management, Management Theory Department University of Economics in Katowice, ul. 1 Maja 50, 40-287 Katowice, Poland, e-mail: katarzyna.czernek-marszalek@uekat.pl (ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9889-9821>).

2 Dagmara Wójcik, Ph.D., Faculty of Management, Management Theory Department, University of Economics in Katowice, ul. 1 Maja 50, 40-287 Katowice, Poland, e-mail: dagmara.wojcik@uekat.pl (ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9082-8471>).

3 Patrycja Juszczak, Ph.D., Faculty of Management, Management Theory Department, University of Economics in Katowice, ul. 1 Maja 50, 40-287 Katowice, Poland, e-mail: patrycja.juszczak@uekat.pl (ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2231-5719>).

4 Paweł Piotrowski, Ph.D., Faculty of Management, Management Theory Department, University of Economics in Katowice, ul. 1 Maja 50, 40-287 Katowice, Poland, e-mail: pawel.piotrowski@uekat.pl (ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6579-066X>).

5 Brendan Richard, Ph.D., Vice President, Marketing Analytics, Delaware North, Las Vegas, NV, United States, e-mail: brendan.richard@gmail.com (ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7932-4635>).

INTRODUCTION

Modern enterprises operate in a turbulent environment characterized by frequent, significant, and often unpredictable changes. Such conditions lead to uncertainty related to running a business, which in turn forces enterprises to take actions to adapt to changing conditions. This uncertainty and the need for change were further intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic, which, due to the rapid spread of the virus around the world, changed the functioning of enterprises in many sectors, especially tourism (UNWTO, 2020a). Restricting and at times, even completely preventing travel caused many companies to go bankrupt, take on significant debt (Flight Global, 2022; Trade Winds, 2023), or significantly reduce their operations. This had far-reaching consequences, for example for employment, as tourism is based on services and is a labor-intensive industry (UNWTO, 2020b).

In such turbulent conditions, tourism enterprises take numerous actions to enable them to survive. These actions are reflected in a unique set of resilience-building strategies, proposed as an answer to the global tourism crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., Corbisiero & Monaco, 2021; Ćorak, Boranić Živoder & Marušić, 2020; Price, Wilkinson & Coles, 2022; Fontanari & Traskevich, 2023; King, Iba & Clifton, 2021; Islam, Kabir & Hassan, 2023). The literature has so far indicated various possible activities under the resilience strategies in the tourism industry, for example, greater use of digital technologies (Fontanari & Traskevich, 2023), increased government assistance (Islam, Kabir & Hassan, 2023), as well as cooperation between tour operators, government agencies and other relevant stakeholders (Islam, Kabir & Hassan, 2023).

As stressed in the literature, the resilience concept refers not only to survival in the market by maintaining stability, but also to development by taking new actions, firstly, recognition and usage of opportunities/chances, and secondly – timely reaction (Alves et al., 2020). Regarding the first element, although these opportunities or chances (in this text treated as synonyms) were mentioned in the literature in the context of resilience (also to the COVID-19 pandemic), they most often referred not to individual organizations, but to the entire tourism sector (e.g., Traskevich & Fontanari, 2023; Sharma et al., 2021; Ćorak et al., 2020), usually relating to tourism sustainability (Ioannides & Gyimóthy, 2020; Romagosa, 2020; Stankov, Filimonau & Vujičić, 2020). As Price et al. (2022: 1090) claim, “COVID-19 is represented as an ‘opportunity to reshape tourism into a model that is more sustainable, inclusive and caring’ (Cheer, 2020, p. 514) rather than a situation in which opportunities may or may not appear depending on the conditions people find themselves in and their own dispositions”.

Regarding the second element important for organizational resilience, i.e. timely reaction, the literature often stresses fast adaptation to changes. For example, Supadi and Hadi (2020) identified “adapting,” next to “changing” and “sustaining” as the main attributes of business resilience when reacting to a crisis time when it occurs. Moreover, the same authors claim that “the more agile, innovative, and flexible the organization in adapting to the external environment, the more able SMEs to quickly adjust its business processes, strategies, which can build resilient responses to turbulence that falls the organization” (Supadi & Hadi, 2020: 1271). Bhaskara and Filimonau (2021), who analyzed research on disaster management and tourism, indicated that adaptability, next to cooperation, innovation, and human resources, is a key attribute of building organizational resilience among tourism companies.

These two issues, i.e. the need to recognize the chance and the timely reaction of a company in the context of organizational resilience directed the attention of the authors of the paper to the chance management and timing strategies concept (Jing & Van de Ven, 2018). As market uncertainty increased, researchers became interested in studying timing effects in organizational contexts. Over time, this has been reflected, in particular, through the subjective – rather than objective, as previously mentioned in the literature – perception of time. It is expressed in research on timing strategies, which emphasize the temporal perspectives of strategic orientation (Mosakowski & Earley, 2000), taking into account the dynamics of the environment (Lynch, 2000; Durand et al., 2017). Timing strategies show how business entities perceive and adopt strategic timing as a way to improve their performance. Such a subjective perception of time leading to the selection of a specific timing strategy enables chance management, i.e. to seize or create a chance in an appropriate and favorable situational momentum (Jing & Van de Ven, 2018). The chance management concept has not been widely discussed and applied in the literature on management, including strategic management, and has not been used at all in the literature on tourism, including the COVID-19 context. Meanwhile, tourism entrepreneurs, considering the turbulent environment and uncertainty in which they operate, as well as the potentially significant negative impact of these conditions on various spheres of their activity (as shown by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic), should demonstrate a strong orientation towards chance as well as a timely reaction to crisis.

At this point, it must be mentioned that other theories or concepts have also addressed the topic of opportunities or timely reactions to changes in the market, for example: entrepreneurial opportunities, effectuation, or dynamic capabilities

theory. However, they rarely emphasize the aspect of time, i.e. when to look for or create a chance, because as Jing and Van de Ven (2018) – the authors of the chance management concept – point out: “different time points of change are associated with different degrees of chance favorability” (p. 161). The theories mentioned focus on different aspects related to the topic. For example, the literature on entrepreneurial opportunities provides insight into why some entrepreneurs recognize opportunities and others do not (Mary George et al., 2016). Moreover, opportunities in this research stream were most often treated either as objectively existing or as subjective, although with time, both opportunities discovering and creating started to be conceptualized – as in the case of chance management concept – as overlapping phenomena (e.g., Alvarez & Barney, 2007; Renko, Shrader & Simon, 2012; Sarasvathy et al., 2003; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). In dynamic capabilities theory, the primary focus is on leveraging organizational capabilities, skills, and competences to capitalize on opportunities resulting from evolving trends, technological advancements, or changing market conditions (Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 1997). As Teece (2007) argues, dynamic capabilities enable a firm to identify, integrate, and adapt resources in response to market changes. Although this leads to the selection of a specific strategy, as in chance management, it is not the time of change but the entrepreneurs’ dynamic capabilities that are the main subject of considerations. In the effectuation research stream, causation and effectuation are two dominant types of entrepreneurial decision-making logic. Although they are used to develop strategies to cope with uncertainty, similar to chance management, they focus on entrepreneurial decision-making logic in the context of possessed resources and assumed or unassumed (but possible in a particular situation) organizational goals, as well as on the interplay and combination between causation and effectuation, especially on new venture creation (Khurana, Dutta & Ghura, 2022). Thus, the time of making decisions and the moment of recognizing and using the opportunity – in the context of perceiving current and future momentum as favorable or hostile – being crucial in chance management, is not the main element of considerations in the above-mentioned, relatively well-established theories in the literature. It is the chance management view that allows us to consider whether and which of the timing strategies, i.e. chance-grasping strategy, chance-entraining strategy, chance-riding strategy and chance-creating strategy, are used (and how) in crisis conditions by tourism enterprises for the purpose of organizational resilience.

Hence, we believe that the use of chance management, including timing strategies, allows us to fill the important and, at the same time interesting research gap. This allows us to look at the topic of opportunities/chances and timely reactions to changes from a different and new perspective. At the same time, it is a perspective that can complement what we know so far regarding this issue when it was examined through the lens of other theories. Moreover, our research fills another gap related to the lack of tourism resilience studies conducted from the perspective of individual enterprises instead of the entire tourism sector, as is usually the case in the literature.

Thus, the paper’s aim is to identify chances and timing strategies used by tourism entrepreneurs in conditions of large-scale emergencies (COVID-19) and show how they can serve organizational resilience. We formulate two research questions (RQ):

- RQ1: What chances are recognized and used by tourism entrepreneurs in crisis conditions for organizational resilience?
RQ2: How and when do tourism entrepreneurs use chances in crisis conditions for organizational resilience, i.e. what timing strategies did they use?

Identification and presentation of chances recognized by tourism enterprises during the crisis (answer to RQ1) is necessary to understand what timing strategies and how they were used by these enterprises (RQ2). To answer those questions, we present findings of qualitative research conducted from May 2021 to January 2022 in the form of 12 individual in-depth interviews (IDIs) and four focus group interviews (FGIs) with representatives of four selected industries in the tourism sector in Poland: 1) accommodation facilities, 2) tourist attractions, 3) travel agencies, and 4) the MICE industry (altogether 22 participants).

From the theoretical point of view, our paper allows us to demonstrate the use of the concept of chance management and timing strategies from the perspective of tourist entrepreneurs’ resilience, previously not used in this context and to a limited extent used in the general management literature so far. The findings of our research show that the COVID-19 pandemic has created difficult operating conditions, but they have enabled the use of various types of chances, e.g. significant changes to the offerings provided or the implementation of digitalization solutions that have enabled companies not only to survive but even to develop. Moreover, four types of timing strategies i.e. chance-grasping strategy, chance-entraining strategy, chance-riding strategy, and chance-creating strategy (Jing & Van de Ven, 2018; Wójcik & Juszczyk, 2023), were identified based on our research as taken by tourism entrepreneurs to overcome the negative effects

of the COVID-19 pandemic. Tourism enterprises are highly exposed to operating in crisis conditions. Therefore, chance management can be very useful in their activity and our research findings, in addition to contributing to theory, can be also used in economic practice.

The paper consists of five parts, the first of which is the introduction. The next part, which constitutes the theoretical basis for the research, presents the way of understanding the words “chance” and “opportunity”, as well as the concepts of chance management and timing strategies. This part also presents the premises of tourism enterprises' orientation towards chance and short-term strategy in search of organizational resilience. The third part of the paper is the research methodology preceding the research findings. The fifth part is a discussion of the findings obtained with the existing knowledge from the literature, as well as a conclusion, including research limitations, directions for future research, and managerial implications.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Understanding of opportunities and chances in the literature

Both words, i.e. opportunity and chance, often appear in management literature. Both of them mean a situation or event where doing something brings benefits. An opportunity relates to a situation or event in which it is possible to do something we would like to do. It implies good odds for something beneficial for an organization (Juszczuk & Wójcik, 2023). Opportunities are usually planned or known. In turn, a chance is defined as an occasion that allows something to be done. The term is used to talk about destiny, fate, something unpredictable, or something that unpredictably falls upon someone. Chance is usually unplanned or random. It is mostly connected with risk, a piece of luck, a turn of good fortune. An opportunity refers to a favorable option, a good way, a moment, or a specific point in time (Sandström, 2005). In the case of chance, the literature highlights the probability of success with assessment and evaluation of its level (Hilbert, 2012; Levy, 2003). Concerning an opportunity, attention is concentrated on the events conducive to success, usually without gradation of the potential benefit. Thus, taking a chance implies being prepared for both positive and negative effects (Jarunwaraphan & Mallikamas, 2020), while taking an opportunity has only positive connotations (Sebt et al., 2009). To conclude, chance has a broader range of meanings than opportunity (Juszczuk & Wójcik, 2023). However, the difference, as Jing and Van de Ven (2018) – the authors of chance management concept themselves – claim – is small. Thus, they use both terms, chance and opportunity, interchangeably, treating them as synonyms.

Jing and Van de Ven (2018) define the chance to change as “a favorable moment for change agents to enact organizational change events” (p. 165). They follow a relational view of chance management, according to which the change agents can assess the favorability of current and future momentum and how they can benefit from introducing different timing strategies in order to use a perceived chance. In this paper, we follow this view too. Moreover, we adopt the same position regarding both terms, i.e. chance and opportunity. We treat them interchangeably despite the awareness of a slight difference between them. However, we claim that treating them as synonyms does not hamper the understanding of the issues discussed. At the same time, distinguishing both terms may, in some cases, be so difficult or risky that it would not serve to maintain the clarity of considerations.

Chance management and timing strategies concept

The growing uncertainty and turbulence of the environment make it impossible to build reliable forecasts, thus significantly shortening the planning and strategic action horizon of many organizations. Therefore, long-term plans and strategies lose importance and the actions taken are a combination of rational intentions and accidental factors, such as, for example, chances. Thus, entities increasingly focus on taking and creating chances (Brown & Eisenhardt, 1997), and this can be done alone or in beneficial relationships with partners (Mischkowski & Glöckner, 2016). As a consequence, emerging strategies and incremental relationships are becoming increasingly important (Kohtamäki et al., 2022; Monticelli et al., 2023).

According to Mintzberg (1978, 1979: 25), strategy is “a way of shaping the relationship between an organization and its environment.” If the actions undertaken by organizations are emerging, then only in retrospect will they develop into some pattern or consistency, which will provide the basis for including them in the term “strategy” (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985; Tidström, 2008; Tsoukas, 2010; Dahl et al., 2016). Stańczyk-Hugiet (2004) points out that the temporality of strategies implemented by entities in a sudden and unplanned manner as an answer to changes appearing in the environment is

an element of the strategy that appears in a given place and time. It is so even though such a strategy is not created according to formalized procedures and is based on previously determined strategic goals. Strategy understood in this way is revealed in streams of organizational activities, constituting a sequence of decisions determining the organization's operation "over a certain period of time" (Simon, 1976, p. 163).

As the literature shows (Orlikowski & Yates, 2002), prior studies have taken an objective perspective toward time, assuming time to be uninfluenced by human actions. However, with time, research has shown a shift towards a more subjective perspective of timing (Pérez-Nordtvedt et al., 2008), where "time is experienced through the interpretive processes of people who create meaningful temporal notions such as events, cycles, routines, and rites of passage" (Orlikowski & Yates, 2002, p. 689). Considering the subjective perspective of time, research on the so-called "timing strategy" stresses that managers adopt and perceive strategic timing as a way to ameliorate their efficiency and output. In the field of management, timing strategies can be understood as "reactions tailored to current situations and a specific, favorable moment in time" (Wójcik & Juszczak, 2023). Thus, timing strategies emphasize the temporal perspectives of strategic orientation (Mosakowski & Earley, 2000), taking into account the dynamics of the environment (often the industry itself – Porter (1990)) and social dynamics, as well as the temporal nature of the elements occurring in these environments (Lynch, 2000; Durand et al., 2017). Moreover, in economic practice, the chance and intuition of managers, including those in the tourism sector, underlay any decision related to the proper timing of the actions of organizations.

Thus, the subjective perspective towards time focuses on timing strategy as an important way to manage the chance, i.e. taking advantage of the chances, appropriate and favorable moments – time – or situations. Organizations can, therefore, tailor their timing strategies to improve their chances of success. With such a view, managers can assess the favorability of current and future chances to reap benefits from identifying and using a perceived chance by adopting different timing strategies (Wójcik & Juszczak, 2023). Jing and Van de Ven (2018) make three assumptions in their chance management concept. Firstly, many changes are cyclical and, therefore, predictable. Secondly, what is impossible now may turn out to be possible due to the changing rhythm of the environment (e.g., after introducing changes within the organization). Thirdly, change agents play a key role – they choose the time and change according to a specific vision.

Based on the relational approach to the use of chance, Jing and Van de Ven (2018) present four timing strategies: chance-grasping strategy, chance-entraining strategy, chance-riding strategy, and chance-creating strategy. They are identified based on how the entities deciding to introduce the change, the so-called change agents, perceive and evaluate the results of current and future momentum (see Figure 1).

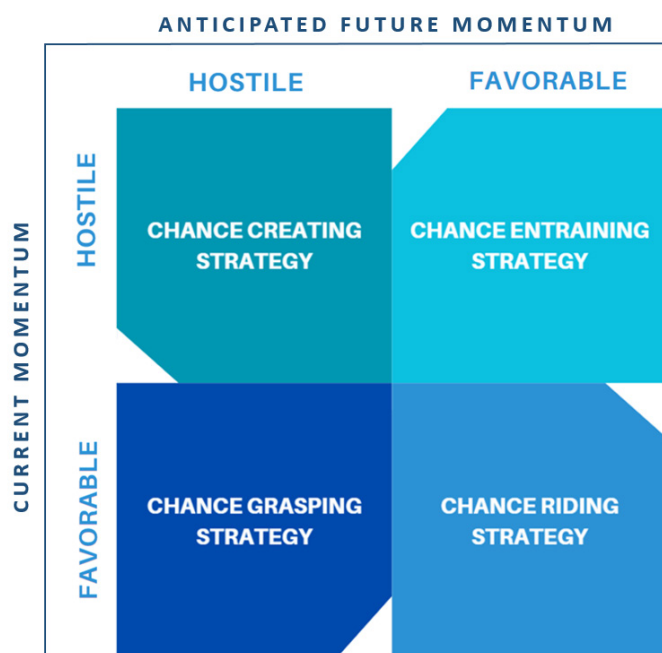


Figure 1. Four different timing strategies of chance management

Source: Jing and Van de Ven (2018).

The chance-grasping strategy can be used when the current momentum is favorable and, at the same time, future momentum is perceived as unclear or hostile. Thus, organizations should act promptly to grasp the chance; otherwise, it may slip away (Jing & Van de Ven, 2018).

The second, chance-entraining strategy refers to the situation when the current momentum is perceived as unfavorable for a change but is expected to turn favorable soon. Thus, organizations adapt their activities – when they are performed and at what rate – to the changing rhythm of the environment. Thus, with the chance-entraining strategy, organizations try to attune their actions parallel to favorable chances derived from environmental changes (Perez-Nordtvedt et al., 2008). This strategy is often used in situations of cyclical changes that, to some extent, can be predicted.

As for the third strategy, i.e. chance-riding strategy, it is possible to implement when entities in organizations perceive current and future momentum for changes as favorable. In that case, they create a vision and depending on the occasion, organizations pay particular attention to basing the development of the vision of the idea on the open imagination. They can then realize the vision based not only on the present but also on future opportune moments (Kotter, 1990). Therefore, this strategy is about developing a vision for long-term changes (with long-term benefits, not just a quick profit) to take advantage of a valuable opportunity.

The last of the strategies is the chance-creating strategy. It can be taken when both current and future momentum for change are perceived as hostile. This strategy is driven by organizations' motivation and plans, followed by their actions to perceive and manipulate the environment to create a favorable chance. In that approach, the chance creation is at least a partially endogenous process for organizations being change initiators. They first change some conditions, then wait for a response to their actions from the environment, and then take further actions once the situation is perceived to be favorable. Thus, organizations can create a chance by redirecting the momentum towards the environment (Jing & Van de Ven, 2018; Wójcik & Juszczak, 2023).

Tourism enterprises' orientation towards chance and short-term strategies in search of organizational resilience

Wójcik and Juszczak (2023) emphasize two variables to timing strategies, i.e. orientation towards strategy (in a long- or short-term perspective) and orientation towards chance (weak or strong). Based on the literature (e.g., Čorak et al., 2020; Kwok & Koh, 2022; Panzer-Krauze, 2022) and observation of economic practice, in the context of the unpredictability, uncertainty, and turbulence of the environment caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism enterprises and destinations had to adapt to new environmental conditions, abandoning existing plans, often also those of a strategic nature. Thus, they had to adopt a short-term strategy orientation (Čorak et al., 2020) and a strong orientation towards chance in their pursuit of organizational resilience.

The origins of the concept of resilience, often used in the context of a crisis, are described in various ways in the literature. Some researchers point out that the concept of resilience ("elasticity") comes from ecology (Holling, 1973), where "resilience" was expressed as the tolerance and response of ecosystems to various types of changes. Subsequently, the concept has found wide application in psychology, engineering, social sciences, and other disciplines (Jinyan et al., 2023). In management, it is used especially for entrepreneurs' coping with crises (Bangso et al., 2023). With the deepening of research, scholars have generally recognized that the concept is not only "maintaining stability and restoring the original state" as covered by "engineering resilience" and "ecological resilience," but also "renewing, transforming, establishing a new growth path, resisting risks," which is emphasized by adaptive resilience based on an evolutionary perspective (Hu, 2012).

The business world recognizes resilience as a crisis management strategy for business stability and adaptability to all types of changes during natural disasters and emergencies (Sharma et al., 2021). Business resilience is linked to the organization's ability to adapt to the environment and new circumstances to mitigate the effects of the incident (Supardi et al., 2020). Resilience strategies include coordination, various crisis management techniques, creating relationships with partners, sometimes even a comprehensive network, recognition, usage of opportunities/chances, and timely response to them (Alves et al., 2020).

Tourism enterprises have undertaken many activities reflecting short-term strategy orientation and a strong orientation towards chance in their pursuit of organizational resilience. For instance, the rapid implementation of innovations, e.g. innovative products and services, start-ups, innovative models of mass cooperation, or crowdsourcing (Qiu et al., 2020). All of them were perceived as a chance to improve companies' survivability and, thus, organizational resilience. For example, to continue operating and limit customer contact, restaurants created theme boxes and outdoor bar activities or focused on delivery or pick-up instead of on-site service (Breier et al., 2021). Moreover, companies explored solutions

such as artificial intelligence (AI) to help with personalization and cost savings (e.g., AI-powered telephony and chatbots), and robots to offset the labor shortage and increase productivity (Berman, 2023; Seo & Lee, 2021). Digitalization of tourist operations was also perceived as an essential opportunity for tourism sector resilience due to contact restrictions and the closure of in-person experiences (Sharma et al., 2021; Fontanari & Traskevich, 2023).

Another visible change in companies' activities was related to the sustainability trend (Casado-Aranda et al., 2021). For instance, some restaurants decided not to implement a delivery service instead of an on-site service because management staff did not perceive this solution as sustainable (Breier et al., 2021). Actions for sustainable development were visible not only at the level of companies but also of entire destinations (Sumanapala & Wolf, 2022; Romagosa, 2020; Seabra & Bhatt, 2022) and are also perceived as a very important element of tourism resilience (Čorak et al., 2020).

The pandemic also resulted in greater government involvement in helping companies during the pandemic crisis, but also in the sudden implementation of various restrictions affecting national and international tourist travel (Sharma et al., 2021; Romagosa, 2020). Such restrictions had a significant impact on companies' short-term activities and, consequently their ability to generate income. As Gössling et al. (2020) claim, international travel restrictions have been especially unprecedented and particularly damaging to the tourism sector. During the pandemic, there was a greater emphasis on domestic tourism due to temporary border closures and obstacles to international tourism (Farmaki et al., 2020), with tourism sector companies abandoning international offerings almost immediately.

Moreover, the pandemic required fast implementation of certain sanitary safety solutions, especially in accommodation services, such as remote check-in, disinfection of rooms, etc. (Farmaki et al., 2020; Salem et al., 2021), which resulted in considerable costs for tourism enterprises (Qiu et al., 2020).

All these activities were aimed at quick implementation and were usually perceived as a chance to survive in the market during a challenging time. In practice, this means implementing emergent strategies (Downs et al., 2003), characterized by improvisation and entrepreneurship in formulating ad hoc actions (Brown & Eisenhardt, 1997) while at the same time learning from current situations and experiences (Noe et al., 2003). Therefore, it can be indicated that in the contemporary shaping of the strategy of tourism enterprises, it is visible that activities are adapted to current situations and a specific, favorable moment.

It is worth emphasizing that an approach reflected in short-term strategy orientation and strong chance orientation has been reinforced by further macroeconomic factors faced by the tourism sector, such as inflation (Huseynli, 2022), geopolitical risk (Hailemariam & Ivanovski, 2021), including the war in Ukraine (Pandey & Kumar, 2023) and the subsequent global volatility and uncertainty (Hadi et al., 2020). The above-mentioned events intensified the activities of tourism enterprises, aimed at treating environmental barriers as opportunities rather than threats (Efrat et al., 2022). This is, for example, noticeable in the context of shaping intangible resources and inter-organizational relationships, i.e. concluding spontaneous and *ad hoc* cooperation agreements (Nguyen et al., 2022).

The flexible and time-based strategy (Stańczyk-Hugiet, 2004; Mintzberg, 1985; Smith & Rupp, 2003; Weber & Tarba, 2014; Dahl et al., 2016) implemented by tourism entities to make changes suddenly appearing in the environment not only allows tourism enterprises to survive in a turbulent and discontinuous environment but also allows for development (Fatonah & Haryanto, 2022). It should be emphasized, however, that although timing strategies seem to be extremely important in contemporary environmental conditions from the organization's functioning point of view (especially in the context of tourism entities affected by the breakthrough crisis of COVID-19) and although they have redefined the classic approach to strategy, in the area of strategic management they remain poorly understood (Jing & Van de Ven, 2018). In particular, we do not know whether and which of the four identified timing strategies are used by tourism enterprises and what chances they see in the actions they undertake, which are assessed through the prism of favorable or hostile momentum, both current and future. Thus, chance management and timing strategies still require further empirical research.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

In this paper, qualitative research was conducted within the interpretative paradigm, assuming that the reality under study is subjective (i.e., as it is presented and interpreted by the interlocutors (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007)). The rationale for using this type of research was that the researched issue (especially with its theoretical background being chance management and timing strategies concepts) is relatively new, and at the same time is socially important, and of a complex nature.

The research was done in two stages – in the first, in-depth interviews (IDIs) and in the second, Focus Group Interviews (FGIs) were conducted. Before each interview started, interviewees were informed about the aim of the

research, that all information is confidential, and that personal data will not be known to the reader. Moreover, participants of FGIs were informed about the rules of the FGI and that there are no right or wrong answers (Morrison-Beedy, Côté-Arsenault & Feinstein, 2001).

IDI were conducted in April-May 2021, with 12 representatives of four purposefully chosen industries of the tourism sector. The choice of the industries resulted from the criterion of their importance in the tourism sector and the fact that they play a key role in it. The selection of interviewees was purposeful, combined with the snowball technique. According to the sample selection criteria, the interviewees had to represent:

- various types of enterprises in terms of 1) the form of activity, 2) size (number of employees), 3) specificity of the product/service offer, 4) location, and 5) form of ownership; this was to ensure diversity, which is important in qualitative research;
- be company owners/managers who know how the pandemic situation has affected the functioning of the company they represent.

The resulting selected IDI sample consisted of:

- 3 representatives of tourist attractions – i.e. two museums and a mine adapted for tourism purposes;
- 3 representatives of tourist intermediaries – i.e. travel agencies;
- 3 representatives of accommodation facilities (two hotels and one agritourism);
- 2 entities representing MICE companies;
- 1 Polish Chamber of Tourism representative.

All enterprises were located in the south of Poland, in the Silesian Voivodeship. Characteristics of IDIs participants are presented in Table A in the paper's appendix.

At this first stage of the research, a semi-structured questionnaire was used. It contained a list of issues and questions that the moderator wanted to ask. These questions were open and concerned three groups of problems: 1) how the entity's activities in the provision of services/product sales changed during COVID-19, 2) how relations with the external and internal environment changed, and 3) the assessment of one's professional work as a result of changes caused by the pandemic. Within all three groups of issues, the interviewer inquired about the chances that appeared as a result of the pandemic.

At the second stage of the research – from December 2021 to January 2022 – 4 Focus Group Interviews (FGIs) were conducted. FGI was used as a complementary method to IDI. It enables discussion that generates a variety of ideas and also emotions that may be missing in IDI (Richard et al., 2018). FGIs also allow us to better identify similarities and differences of opinion between interviewees. Participants were asked about the same three issues as during IDIs. Additionally, they were asked how they perceived the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic from a longer perspective and how they thought they had changed over time.

FGI participants were representatives of each of the four industries mentioned. The total number of interviewees at this stage was 22 people. The participants selected purposively had to meet the same criteria as those in the first stage of the research. However, in the case of location it was assumed that in order to broaden the scope of the empirical research, they would represent organizations from different parts of Poland, so as to ensure diversity related to the functioning of enterprises during a pandemic in different parts of the country. At this second stage of the research, each of the 4 industries was represented by 5 or 6 interlocutors – 5 from each: accommodation facilities and tourist attractions and 6 interviewees from each: travel agencies and MICE entities. Small groups of FGI participants (Krueger, 2014) allowed for comfortable conditions favoring free expression and discussion, which is necessary for FGI. The detailed characteristics of FGIs participants are presented in Table B in the paper's appendix.

Due to the ongoing pandemic during both stages of the research, the interviews – both IDIs and FGIs – were conducted online using Zoom or Google.meet platforms. IDIs were conducted online or in person (in places suggested by interviewees). It depended on the preferences of the interlocutors because, at that time, due to the pandemic, there were substantial restrictions on face-to-face meetings. In turn, FGIs were conducted entirely using the Zoom platform. Due to restrictions, it was much easier to invite several people to an online meeting than to organize it live. Research in the field of hospitality has shown that online FGI has the potential to generate similar levels of idea diversity as in-person FGI, while at the same time being: easier to schedule, lower cost, providing more succinct and focused discussions, and delivering findings faster (Richard et al., 2018, 2021).

The shortest IDI lasted less than one hour (54 minutes), the longest one was nearly 3 hours (174 minutes), and the average was almost 2 hours (108 minutes). As for the FGI – the shortest lasted 2 hours 12 minutes, the longest 2 hours 24 minutes, and the average interview lasted 2 hours 17 minutes.

Each IDI and FGI was – with the consent of the interlocutors – recorded. Then, each of them was transcribed by a third-party company. In general, the material was coded and analyzed under the method based on three related activities (Miles & Huberman, 1994), i.e. data reduction (transcribing data, creating case cards for all participants taking part in IDI and FGI and coding material with the use of NVivo software application); data display (development of the final list of codes, agreed by two coders and previously sorted) and data verification (verifying and analyzing data using existing literature, concerning especially chance management and timing strategies concept, together with organizational resilience).

The data was coded by two authors of the paper using deductive codes corresponding to three groups of issues directly related to chance management theory, i.e.: 1) conditions stimulating short-term orientation in business activities and strong chance orientation demonstrated by interviewees, 2) types of chances recognized by interviewees during the COVID-19 pandemic serving organizational resilience, and 3) types of timing strategies: chance-grasping, chance-entraining, chance-riding and chance creating strategy. Each of the two coders first assigned the material to three groups of deductive codes, and then, as the transcripts were read, both groups of codes were detailed inductively by two coders, working independently of each other. As a result, after coding all the material, the coders discussed the code list and developed a common set of final codes. When establishing it, the authors discussed the differences that emerged in their opinions. At this stage, the list and structure of the codes were finally modified, adding individual codes or combining some of them into one group. The final list of codes (deductive and inductive ones) is presented in Table 1. In relation to deductive codes, Table 1 also includes definitions adopted on the basis of the chance management concept (Jing & Van de Ven, 2018).

Table 1. List of codes

No.	Type of code	Code name
1.	D	Conditions stimulating short-term strategy and chance orientation – new environmental conditions to which one must adjust by adopting a short-term strategy orientation, abandoning existing plans, often of a strategic nature
1.1.	I	Unpredictability of changes
1.2.	I	Unpredictability of aid from the state/local authorities
1.3.	I	Changes resulting from changing customer expectations
1.4.	I	Accelerated digitization
2.	D	Chances recognized during COVID-19 crisis serving organizational resilience (chance being an occasion which allows something to be done)
2.1.	I	A chance to improve/change/expand the product/service offer
2.2.	I	A chance to acquire new customer
2.3.	I	A chance to use digital competences
2.4.	I	A chance to use additional time for previously postponed activities (e.g., thinking about the future of the company, applying for grants, etc.)
2.5.	I	A chance to build new relationships with:
2.5.1.	I	Customers
2.5.2.	I	Contractors
2.5.3.	I	Competitors
2.5.4.	I	Employees
3.	D	Types of timing strategies – reactions tailored to current situations and a specific, favorable moment in time
3.1.	D	Chance-grasping strategy – current momentum being favorable and future momentum predicted to be hostile or uncertain; change agents grasp the available chance by promptly taking change actions
3.2.	D	Strategy chance-entraining strategy – situational momentum being currently unfavorable but anticipated to become favorable in the near future; entities entrain their change actions with the changing rhythm of the environment
3.3.	D	Chance-riding strategy – both current and future momentum predicted to be favorable, change agents ride this incredible chance to plan and implement organizational change over the long run
3.4.	D	Chance-creating strategy – both current and future momentum perceived to be hostile; change agents create a chance to change by redirecting the development of internal or external momentum

Note: * D – deductive, I – inductive code.

To ensure “thick description” important in qualitative research and increasing its credibility, also allowing us to show the issue of seeing chances in the difficult situation of the pandemic through the eyes of the interviewees, and thus to understand better the analyzed phenomenon (Czernek-Marszałek & McCabe, 2022), we present quotations from our IDIs and FGIs. Each quotation is followed by the participant's code (according to the pattern: [FGI number, R, participant number] and [R, IDI number] – depending on the type of interview (IDI or FGI).

RESULTS

Our research showed that during the COVID-19 pandemic, entrepreneurs took advantage of many different chances, which ultimately, as interviewees claimed, had a positive impact on the functioning of enterprises, serving organizational resilience. Taking advantage of these changes was facilitated by significant and frequent changes, often difficult to predict, affecting the functioning of enterprises in new pandemic conditions.

Operating in conditions of constant change as a catalyst for taking advantage of chances

The changes caused by the COVID-19 pandemic were primarily related to new operating conditions for enterprises, caused by a sharp decline in demand (inability to travel, closure of many institutions and facilities related to entertainment, tourism, or sports), and the inability to conduct business (e.g., due to lack of income, need to lay off employees). As our research participants claimed, all this was accompanied especially by changing customer expectations and preferences, unpredictability of future changes, development and acceleration of digitalization, and uncertainty of further state aid policy towards entrepreneurs. In these conditions – much more difficult than normal – i.e. of constant and hard to predict change, and therefore limited possibilities to plan further actions – entrepreneurs tried to adapt to new market conditions flexibly:

It's hard to plan anything here when we're actually like a boiled frog. So the situation actually changed in such 2-week cycles [3R3]

Undoubtedly it was probably the most difficult period in the activity of our company (...). So everything came to a standstill, we changed the direction of our activities a bit for the time being, until we get organized and we don't know what to do next. [3R5]

In the broadly understood event, we had to adapt to the times, adapt to the pandemic and learn to convince customers that something can also be done online so as not to lose continuity of revenues and keep the company as a functioning and active company, without any terrible debts. Also as a product, we had to... as if we were forced into a very fast digital revolution, which taught us how to produce online events. We have created a small virtual studio in our office from which we can connect and organize such events [3R2].

Importantly, these difficult market conditions became a catalyst for taking advantage of various business opportunities taken by the interlocutors. This served organizational resilience, i.e. allowed companies to survive on the market, retain employees, gain new customers, and sometimes even to expand the business and gain a market advantage.

Our research identified the following chances to:

- introduce changes in the company's offerings (including extension/narrowing, quality improvement, or the method of providing offerings). Some of these changes were planned earlier and the pandemic created an opportunity to accelerate them; some were absolutely not planned;
- develop or use (often previously acquired) digital competences to implement digitalization;
- use time that appeared during the pandemic for activities that were previously postponed in the company (e.g., thinking about the company's further strategy or preparing European Union grant projects);
- build new relationships with various stakeholder groups, i.e. customers, employees, contractors, and even competitors.

Chances to change offerings provided

Referring to changes in the scope of the offer provided, interlocutors indicated that the pandemic had become a catalyst for changes in this area, i.e. it created an opportunity to accelerate previously planned changes to the offer, e.g. introducing new products or services, entering foreign markets or increasing the scope of online sales in the overall sales volume. For instance, one interviewee claimed that in addition to schools' trips offered by her travel agency, she started to prepare an offer based on sustainable tourism, which is something she had planned to do before the COVID-19 pandemic (see Table 2). These changes allowed for organizational resilience and provided an opportunity both to survive in the market and to expand the business. This is shown by the words of some of our interlocutors:

Interviewee: Currently, we have received a lot of inquiries, much more than before, the so-called super individual ones. So there is an inquiry to organize a trip for two people, three people, five people or a group of friends, up to six people (...).

Researcher: Such an exclusive offer, i.e. clearly changing needs and your reaction to these changing needs.

Interviewee: Exactly. So here... it's funny, because it was one of the elements of the development strategy that we had developed there before COVID. This was also the scope we were supposed to develop. It accelerated significantly on its own. [2R4]

The pandemic also created a chance to implement previously unplanned actions to change the company's offer. In this regard, similar to accelerating activities previously planned, entrepreneurs expanded the scope of their offer to adapt it to new customer needs. Thus, they gained new customers and cooperation partners. Importantly, at the same time, by diversifying their offer, entrepreneurs diversified the risk of their business – one business complemented the other (in case one of them had to be completely shut down due to the lockdown) and, as they claimed, they were better prepared for possible difficult situations in the future. All this was mainly intended to serve organizational resilience and the company's survival in difficult market conditions:

We changed, I mean we opened up, I started to be more active in 2021 on Facebook (...). Looking for people, clients, because we haven't been operating for many years, only recently (...). In 2021 we have expanded our service by, that is, we have found new customers. In this way. We also started producing small gifts and started producing gifts generally related to Kryłów. This hasn't happened in the countryside until now. Additionally, we have a historic building, we have a point where these people can be taken. I have an art studio. In this way, one activity stimulated another. [1R2]

Researcher: What has this pandemic changed for you in these three aspects?

Interviewee: for me there is a certain dynamic, not so much of total changes, but of perception of the reality that is here and that may be in a moment. This means a certain diversification of both the activities already undertaken, as well as planning taking into account what has happened. That is, searching for areas and activities that can provide greater certainty of stability. Because, of course, no action will ever give 100% certainty, but certain actions can give greater certainty that we will be prepared for something next, something that is to come or something that has already begun [3R4]

Some interviewees also indicated that the new situation forced them to think more openly and innovatively and, as a result, search for new solutions, which is reflected in the company's diversified offer. For instance, as one of the interlocutors indicated, his company started cooperation with the film industry to rent an accommodation facility and minimize losses related to the lack of customers (see Table 2). As interviewees claimed, such new solutions ensured organizational resilience understood not only as companies' survival on the market but also their development because sometimes these new services became, as they put it, "sales hits":

The benefit is probably that the tour pilots stopped looking at... as I say, at reheated cutlets, that is, at doing the same trip all the time, visiting the same things, showing and saying different things. We have forced, and I think this pandemic has also forced us to look a little broader, not to duplicate programs, but to try to diversify them in some way. And thanks to this, we gained many new attractive products that became sales hits this year. And which turned out to be such a hit and attracted us customers. And also new ones, because it's not just about relying on existing customers all the time. But also

to reach out to new ones and acquire new customers. So I think that the added value is opening up to something new and looking for something more than what we have been doing before. [2R3]

Chances to use digital competences

Interviewees also pointed to the chances of using previously acquired digital competences to implement an online offer. This, as well as taking advantage of the opportunity to change the company's offer, allowed enterprises not only to survive on the market, but also to acquire new customers, in the case of some interviewees, gain a competitive advantage and ensure further development of the enterprise:

Well, but then the online option appeared, there was a need for the market to evolve online and the world to move to this world, to this virtual reality (...). it appeared in such a nice place, when we could do it and the competition couldn't. So thanks to this, we probably gained some competitive advantage, thanks to which we gained some interesting clients who are still with us and work with us to this day. And it certainly had a positive impact on our professional position, because it protected us from the effects of this pandemic, which probably if it weren't for the world, these new clients and some of the old ones, could have ended tragically for us. [3R2]

These words clearly show what is crucial in the chance management concept, i.e., when a company perceived the time and circumstances as favorable to introducing changes, it implemented them. This allowed the company not only to survive the difficult time of the pandemic, but also to gain a competitive advantage (when for the competition, this moment to introduce changes was not suitable).

Chances to gain additional time to think about the company's future strategy

Our interlocutors also indicated that the pandemic created a chance to use the additional time that appeared (e.g., due to the lack of customers) to think things over or take actions that earlier entrepreneurs did not have time for. For example, to think about the company's strategy and future, write a European Union project, renovate a facility, implement previously indicated digital solutions or develop other forms of activity leading to the diversification of the offer. This also contributed to the company's development, including acquiring new customers, as well as diversifying the business risk:

I thought to myself: okay, maybe this is the right time to enter, for example, the Internet and start working there. And within half a year, out of 200 contacts on LinkedIn, I now have over 15,000 followers on LinkedIn. So I managed to create a rich, large community that follows me and that constantly recommends me, comments, and supports me. And it's nice that I used this time to, instead of sitting and crying, act and do something that will help me further develop. I think that even if this time wasn't difficult, because it was very difficult, there was this space and this time to maybe try to act a little differently and maybe look for something for yourself. I think I took advantage of it. And I don't regret that I made such and no other decisions during this COVID (...). I believe that this is the time for this transforming leader, for this leader of changes who can use every opportunity to think a little differently and start acting. [3R4]

These words clearly show that during the pandemic, there were chances that could be used not only for quick results but also in a short time. But, when future circumstances were also perceived as favorable, entities implemented changes potentially providing long-term benefits for the company. This is related to the so-called chance-riding strategy discussed in further considerations.

Chances to establish and/or develop business relationships with different groups of stakeholders

In the business context, the pandemic was also an opportunity to start or change the scope of cooperation with various stakeholder groups, i.e. employees, customers, contractors, and competitors. These changes included, among others: changes in these engaged entities, their number, or the nature of cooperation with them.

Concerning employees, entrepreneurs drew attention to the pandemic as an opportunity for greater team integration. It resulted, among others, from greater than usual empathy among team members, which is, to some extent, the result of similar experiences related to concerns about the health of loved ones during the pandemic and the desire to share their

dilemmas with their colleagues. Moreover, a more flexible approach to working time also contributed to strengthening these relationships.

When it comes to customer relationships, their strengthening during the pandemic was a chance for entrepreneurs to undertake new activities, sometimes on the initiative of the customers themselves. An example may be entrepreneurs looking for new activities during the pandemic.

Opportunities to introduce changes in relationships with contractors and competitors were especially interesting. Regarding the first group, the need for changes in the offer, forced by the pandemic, was an impulse for entrepreneurs to introduce changes in the offer, and these were sometimes a chance to look for new contractors, often operating nearby, and build relationships with them:

Also when it comes to organizing some events, there will be some cards, and menus, in quotation marks, because we are not a restaurant, but when it comes to the proposed meals, there will be more emphasis on what we have around us. And we started to cooperate with people who (...). Maybe not any creation, any new institution, but generally there have already been a few meetings in a closer circle, where we will offer such things, do such things, and maybe cooperate more. [R2]

Among the contractors, state and local government offices were an important group in the case of entrepreneurs who noticed a change in approach and a chance for better cooperation with them. The change in approach towards entrepreneurs resulted from the possibility of a wider extent of remote communication.

The next group of stakeholders for whom the pandemic was an opportunity to build or tighten relationships were competitors. Such cooperation had a different nature, including the lending of equipment and sharing of experiences. It led to the introduction of new, cheaper, sometimes innovative solutions from the perspective of companies:

If the set designer calls me and says: Marek, we have such and such an idea, we talk to each other about certain innovative solutions that sell well with one client and this supplier with whom we live closely, he is not afraid to talk to us about it, he just boasts that we should also try to promote it and indeed this cooperation at this level works very, very well and if we have a product that we will develop, we try to promote it to other clients, also showing that there are such possibilities, that thanks to what we have done, we can duplicate it, we can improve it, sometimes make it cheaper if possible, just to show that we also try to look at the market and the fact that it is difficult situation because customers are reducing their budgets, even though they sometimes demand more than before the pandemic. [4R5]

A particularly important issue in this case, which was the impulse to build those relations, was frequent changes in the introduction and removal of restrictions. The appropriate interpretation of the regulations required legal assistance, which was cheaper to obtain by working together. Moreover, such cooperation created an opportunity to represent one's position towards the authorities and, thus, allowed organizational resilience.

As the above findings show, even in such an extremely difficult period for running a business as the COVID-19 pandemic, entrepreneurs representing the tourism sector were able to identify various types of chances. They served organizational resilience because, thanks to their use, companies could survive on the market and, in some cases, develop their offer. The circumstances caused by the pandemic were a kind of catalyst for changes in business activities, some of which were planned even before their appearance. In some cases, digitalization provided more time that could be used for more careful planning of strategic activities. The relationships built with employees, clients, contractors, and competitors increased the chance of survival on the market through a faster response to market expectations or the ability to present one's position through various types of associations, making it more visible to the authorities.

Synthetically, together with some additional quotations, we present our findings regarding chances recognized by tourism entrepreneurs during the COVID-19 pandemic and serving organizational resilience in Table 2.

Table 2. Chances taken during the COVID-19 pandemic by tourist entrepreneurs serving organizational resilience

Type of chance	Actions taken to seize the chance	Organizational resilience effects	Quote
Chance to change the offer provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> introduction of new products/services to the offer (e.g., individual tourism; next to group tourism; production of gifts alongside accommodation activities; introducing offer based on sustainable tourism) more open and innovative thinking entering new markets, e.g. foreign ones changes in the seasonality of business activity increasing the scope of online sales in the overall sales volume 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> survival on the market (e.g., thanks to risk diversification resulting from the diversification of goods and services; one activity complementing another), business development (e.g., by increasing the company's turnover, gaining new cooperation partners; introducing new elements in the offer being "sales hits") better preparation for future difficult situations (alertness) 	<p><i>Interviewee: But somewhere in the back of my mind I have an idea for sustainable development... to teach kids how to travel responsibly. Because it is very, very, very important nowadays.</i></p> <p><i>Researcher: I understand that it is also about ecological aspects related to caring for the climate, yes, we are talking about that?</i></p> <p><i>Interviewee: yes, as ecological as possible. But also supporting some local organizations or local places. Stopping at local farms, not necessarily McDonald's (laughter). And things like that. So somewhere around here we will also slowly implement such things into school trips. And since, as I say, this topic is very close to me, I hope that it will also be like this... increasing the attractiveness of the offered trips, our trips. [2R1]</i></p> <p><i>We are a small business structure, but this year we also established a limited liability company that engaged in the production of hemp products and cold-pressed oils. We are also looking for other sources of income (...) it is a side activity, but related to the fact that, well, we are located in the countryside and we have opportunities to do something other than tourism [3R3]</i></p> <p><i>Oh, and maybe going back to the entity's activities – I'm also in talks with the film industry, because, as you can see behind me, we have historic interiors that have already taken part in some productions several times. It is also a solution and a supplement to the budget apart from tourism. So I also want to develop the functioning of the facility in this direction [3R3]</i></p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Previously planned</p>		
Chance to use digital competences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> using existing digital competences development of new digital competences online event production gaining knowledge and experience regarding the advantages and disadvantages of online solutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> survival on the market (including by acquiring new customers) gaining a competitive advantage enterprise development 	<p><i>One of the initiatives I organized was a networking space, the Dialog Possibilities conference, where we talked on various topics with our invited speakers. And when it stopped, the event that had been organized systematically for 3 years stopped. And then it was made... this question, this decision, what to do, whether to stop activities completely or look for an alternative that would enable further development. And then we created or moved our event to online. And we created an event on the Internet in the form of a conference with experts and our participants, where tickets were normally sold, where everything took place in our virtual space. Also looking for a way not to completely close down the business and at the same time look for a solution to what happened. And everything that was event-related and what was happening offline was stopped at that moment [3R4]</i></p>
Chance to gain additional time to think about the company's future strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> rethinking the company's strategy and future writing a European Union project to get financial support for business activities renovation of the facility implementation of previously indicated digital solutions development of other forms of activity leading to the diversification of the offer 	<p>Company development thanks to acquiring new customers and diversifying business risk</p>	<p><i>[COVID] postponed all of that for us. In a sense, it lengthened. But maybe it can also be explained by the fact that thanks to this we still have a moment to refine something, improve something (...) these were not milestones (laughter), it was just a fight for survival. Now we can only enjoy the fact that we have rested and have the strength to continue working somewhere here. That we've just done things during the pandemic that will help us diversify in the future [R1]</i></p>

Type of chance	Actions taken to seize the chance	Organizational resilience effects	Quote
Chance to establish and/or develop business relationships with different groups of stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • searching for new tasks for employees during the closure of the facility • looking for opportunities to change the company's offer through cooperation with other entities • mutual lending of equipment by existing competitors • using the possibility of remote communication • accepting proposals from existing customers • creation of new entities representing the interests of the sector 	Company survival and development through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • better team integration • higher number of contractors • a new product in the offer • a more competitive offer • better negotiating position in contacts with the authorities 	<p><i>Currently, due to the pandemic (...), I am also preparing these offers.</i></p> <p><i>I am not only a person who only sells the finished product, but it also creates. Thanks to this, I also met many new contractors, people. Not only those that were already known to me from somewhere, but as if now you can get to know them in person, over the phone, or simply how they eat sees face to face. [2R3]</i></p> <p><i>However, what has changed is the emergence of new creations from the bottom up. Here I use the word "creation" as creations then and now established organizations, such as the Turystyczna Organizacja Otwarta. Organization which started to speak out very strongly on matters above all these smaller entrepreneurs. (...) But personally... it was also the case that we among themselves... I saw it with various owners of travel agencies. Also we talked and, as if potentially competitors, although I think that the Warsaw market is so huge that we are not for ourselves competition [2R2].</i></p>

Timing strategies

As shown by previous analyses of the activities of tourism sector entrepreneurs undertaken in the face of the crisis related to the pandemic, not all of them assessed the situation as clearly hostile to their organization. Therefore, we are dealing with a subjective perception of time, which was the starting point for the use of various timing strategies related to the use of opportunities emerging in the environment. Our research findings allowed us to identify examples of all four timing strategies in chance management, i.e. chance-grasping, chance-entraining, chance-riding, and chance-creating strategy.

Chance-grasping strategy

In entrepreneurs' statements, relatively often, one could see references to the chance-grasping strategy – seizing an opportunity related to the assessment of the current situation as favorable and the future as at least unclear. The interviewees emphasized that the pandemic had created conditions in which the product they offered was more popular than usual or the circumstances caused by the pandemic favored faster changes in their professional activity. It acted as a catalyst for these changes. In this case, appropriate behavior allowed them to seize the opportunity. At the same time, they were unsure about the future situation. Such a strategy was already evidenced by the previously quoted statements of the interlocutors regarding, for example, the use of digital competences or changes in the offer. They are also highlighted in the following statements:

Generally speaking, this pandemic has certainly given us the advantage of accelerating some of our assumptions as an office. So we wanted to expand the offer to include trips there in months other than the classics. And we succeeded, we did it and we will definitely strive to get there. When it comes to entering other foreign markets there, we also did it because we had time for it during this pandemic. But we must be very careful in our actions and, above all, in expecting results. So we have a large margin here that everything we plan somewhere at some time may simply not work out. [R4]

As I mentioned at the beginning, we were renovating this house because it is 120 years old. We renovated it for 10 years, only on weekends (...). We do it economically. Do the renovation ourselves. The pandemic has actually grounded us here permanently. My job in a corporation in Warsaw is over. This house came to life. You could say that the pandemic helped us make a life decision and open our own business. The pandemic helped us decide to open it and finally take up agritourism. [R2]

This is related to the pandemic of this type and so far schools have not been interested in coming to us because they preferred to go elsewhere. The schools looked for places as close as possible to the fact that the kids had not been together

for a year. This was dictated by the pandemic. The children were not integrated. There was a terrible wilderness there. These children couldn't even play together. They were distracted and difficult to reach. Teachers were looking for outside activities. This is a change of offer. We simply went in to meet their needs. We did not limit ourselves only to agritourism and hosting people here but also made an extra offer. Because of the pandemic... These were forced behaviors of teachers, children, and in general. Revenue volume. It automatically increased. This mainly allowed us to exist throughout September and half of October. Tourism has stopped. And schools would allow us to engage in additional activities. [R2]

Chance-entraining strategy

Some statements showed a positive attitude towards the future, despite the current unfavorable situation. However, it was noticed that the pandemic situation would not last forever and, according to the changing rhythm of the environment, it would pass one day. Therefore, entities could adjust their actions in the long run to the expected favorable situation in the future. This approach was consistent with the assumptions of the chance-entraining strategy:

I hope that our entity will continue to exist as it existed and we will develop. Especially since we also have a plan for... maybe not a great diversification of services, but before the pandemic we bought a tenement house where we have an office and we want to open a hostel there. So our heads are also busy, today, when there are no customers, they are busy with renovation and thinking about the future. Of course, it will take a while, because it is an old tenement house, over two hundred years old, in the center of Bielsko-Biała. So I hope I'll see you in about 2 years. Then we hope to move (laughter) and I hope that by then we will no longer think about closing hotels, hostels, and so on. [2R1]

Chance-riding strategy

Some enterprises focused on taking advantage of short-term opportunities that appeared in the environment, and also tried to take actions that were to have a positive impact on the company in the future, which they expected to change for the better in the long term. This approach was part of the chance-riding strategy:

First of all – take advantage of this moment before we are locked up. So if there is something, we try our best to take it and not give it up. Well, we are actually thinking about using this time, when nothing will be happening, for additional tasks – writing additional projects, obtaining funds perhaps for some other activities, not necessarily for education for children and youth. Renovation of the exhibition, because the building is old, is also... Well, actually 7 years old, so it also requires some renovation and renewal. So, well, we can use this time of stagnation to prepare ourselves for the better times, maybe. [R1]

Here the company introduced a lot of new improvements strictly for COVID. And it has changed for the better because to some extent the meetings are not as pleasant as you mentioned before, but only online, but we can do much more of these meetings, if someone cancels the meeting, we save time. [R7]

In other cases, the interlocutors did not refer so much to their activity, but to the activity of entities in the environment and the impact of actions taken as a result of the chance created by the environment on the functioning of entities in the long run:

These were funds to maintain fees and leases, which we didn't manage to get, and they were also funds to change the course of action, i.e. someone who took advantage of this moment and went online, that is, bought equipment for video, for streaming today these companies are doing well, so it helped some. We didn't succeed for various reasons, in the sense that we approached it fairly, that maybe our situation wasn't that bad, and maybe there was no need to fight for something that turned out to be not good after all. [R10]

Chance-creating strategy

Due to unfavorable external conditions during the pandemic, which also influenced the perception of the future as unclear or hostile, some entities had to use the chance-creating strategy to survive on the market. Creating an opportunity

involves diversifying one's professional activity or trying to influence the environment through activity on the Internet. The following statements may demonstrate this approach:

The times are very uncertain, it is not known whether there will be events or weddings, I have a few events for January, but I am already afraid that they will be at great risk. I acquired some other skills, such as photographing interiors, and apartments, filming interiors, and real estate. So I'm slightly changing my industry in a different direction. I also used to program websites and stores for 12 years, and then I got into product and advertising photography, then into events and weddings. And slowly, at the same time, I will probably go back to my roots, because the future is so uncertain that you have to balance a bit because you don't know what will happen. [R1]

For me there is a certain dynamic, not so much of complete changes, but of perception of the reality that is here and that may be in a moment. This means a certain diversification of both the activities already undertaken, as well as planning taking into account what has happened. That is, searching for areas and activities that can provide greater certainty of stability. Because, of course, no action will ever provide 100% certainty, but certain actions can provide greater certainty that we will be prepared for something next, something that is to come or something that has already begun. So for me personally, it's like this... It's a time of a bit of fear and a bit of fear at the beginning, but then transforming into change and searching for new solutions. For example, listen, at the very beginning of this COVID I thought to myself, what can I do? (...). I thought to myself: OK, maybe this is the right time to go, for example, to the Internet and start working there. And within half a year, out of 200 contacts on LinkedIn, I now have over 15,000 followers on LinkedIn. So I managed to create a rich, large community that follows me and that constantly recommends me, comments and supports me. And it's nice that I took advantage of this time (...). I think that even if this time was not difficult, because it was very difficult, there was this space and this time to maybe try to act a little differently and maybe look for something for yourself. I think I took advantage of it (...). I would probably never want to go back to these situations. However, I have faced them and I believe that this is the time for a transforming leader, for a change leader who can use every opportunity to think a little differently and start acting. [3R4]

As the above examples show, the environmental conditions caused by the pandemic and their subjective assessment resulted in tourism sector entities using all four timing strategies.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Uncertainty is considered one of the key properties of crises (Nohrstedt et al., 2018). Some crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic – due to their scope, meaning, global reach, and non-expected appearance – are labeled as large-scale emergencies (Crick & Crick, 2020). As our research has shown, the large-scale emergency crisis caused by COVID-19 forced entrepreneurs to react in a timely manner to adapt to the new market situation flexibly. Thus, our research is in line with works stressing adopting a short-term strategy orientation by tourism enterprises during the COVID-19 pandemic (Čorak et al., 2020; Do, Nguyen, D'Souza, Bui, & Nguyen, 2022; Alves, Lok, Luo & Hao, 2020).

However, our research extends the knowledge from the literature in this context because, in addition to the short-term orientation taken by tourism enterprises, it shows – with the use of the chance management concept – that the research entities were also highly chance-oriented. We see this as a contribution to the theory because the concept of chance management, including timing strategies, has not been widely used in the management literature. In particular, it has not been used in the context of organizational resilience of tourism enterprises. At the same time, this concept, unlike other theories more established in the literature and useful to analyze opportunities/chances (e.g., dynamic capabilities or effectuation theory), allows us to consider a chance – its recognition and use – primarily from the time perspective, i.e. by assessing the time of implementing changes, depending on whether current and future circumstances are subjectively perceived as favorable or unfavorable. This allows the identification of timing strategies, which are a key issue in chance management. Secondly, the issue of opportunities/chances in the context of tourism resilience after COVID-19 has so far been analyzed mainly by the entire tourism sector, not individual enterprises. Thus, our contribution relates to fulfilling the two indicated gaps of knowledge.

In our paper, we answer the two research questions: RQ1) What chances are recognized and used by tourism entrepreneurs in crisis conditions for organizational resilience?, and RQ2) How and when do tourism entrepreneurs use chances in crisis conditions for organizational resilience, i.e., what timing strategies did they use?

Regarding the answer to the first question, our research made it possible to identify various types of emerging chances that served organizational resilience. Tourist entrepreneurs used them to help the company survive in the market, but also – what may be more surprising – develop their business and even gain a competitive advantage (Krupski, 2013; Juszczak & Wójcik, 2023). Some of those chances were identified in the literature, although it should be emphasized that they were not the main area of interest and empirical research in these works. Thus, this research also brings added value in this respect because it allows for organizing knowledge about the opportunities perceived and used by tourism enterprises during the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The identified opportunities include, in particular, a possibility for development of an offer based more strongly on sustainable tourism and ecotourism (e.g., Romagosa, 2020; Seabra & Bhatt, 2022), increasing travelers' trust in companies (Laparojkit & Suttipun, 2021), taking chances to introduce changes in organizational culture and leadership (Czernek-Marszałek, 2022) as well as increasing level of digitization of the sector (Ntalakos et al., 2022; Sharma et al., 2021; Fontanari & Traskevich, 2023). Thus, our research shows that companies focused on solutions such as diversifying their services and supply chains, using local and diversified markets, and using digital technologies (Rastegar et al., 2023). This is in line with the claim by Kuckertz et al. (2020) that companies that treated the adversity caused by the COVID-19 crisis as a chance gained access to broader opportunities in the environment and, therefore, to greater benefits.

Our research also showed that the pandemic conditions forced entrepreneurs to diversify their offers and look for completely new solutions. Flexible adaptation, modification, extension, or a complete change of the existing offer enabled entrepreneurs to acquire new customers, and – sometimes even to their surprise – the offered products or services became “sales hit.” For example, it can be indicated that the change in the offer allowed entrepreneurs to establish cooperation with schools that organized trips for children and became reliable customers in the absence of a lockdown.

In this context, it is worth emphasizing that in conditions of uncertainty, cooperation has become more important (Zafari et al., 2020). Entrepreneurs undertook inter-organizational cooperation and built new relationships with various stakeholder groups, i.e. customers, employees, contractors, local authorities, and even competitors. Such cooperation was different, concerned different areas, and had a different scope, including the lending of equipment and sharing of experiences. It also allowed for the implementation of new, cheaper, and sometimes also innovative – from the perspective of companies – solutions. Thus, our research findings are in line with those works in which inter-organizational cooperation emerges as a critical means to effectively address typically adverse implications of crisis (Crick & Crick, 2020; Deters & Zardo, 2023; Islam et al., 2023). It is argued that the intense and multidimensional cooperation involving authorities, companies, universities, and competitors expedite development and innovations (Turner et al., 2022; Deters & Zardo, 2023). Environmental uncertainty potentially opens up greater opportunities to generate relational rents through inter-organizational cooperation (Castañer & Oliveira, 2020).

Comparing our research findings to previous work in the field of tourism resilience, we can conclude that the literature also emphasized the importance of the opportunities/chances arising from the crisis. Hence, our conclusions are consistent with previous works in many areas. For instance, the literature stresses that crises could generate a chance to create more resilient companies that become more proactive, learn from their experiences, and collaborate in the social and regional spheres (Castro & Zermeño, 2020). In this context, the concept of resilience is adaptability to all types of changes, during different crises, disasters, and emergencies (Sharma et al., 2021). In the same way, it was perceived by our interviewees who, using their adaptive capacity, often treated barriers in the environment as chances for their enterprises' development, which at the same time constituted an important lesson for the future (Price et al., 2022; Noe et al., 2003). The COVID-19 pandemic has provided tourism entrepreneurs with certain characteristics, such as much higher flexibility in acting, and developing innovativeness, including technological ones (Price et al., 2022; Sharma et al., 2021; Fontanari & Traskevich, 2023), which allowed them to face crises and strengthen the resilience of their enterprises (Castro & Zermeño, 2020). In this context, they learned to adapt their efforts to the external pace of environmental change based on the assessment of the dynamics of the situation, i.e. pay attention to changing conditions both inside and outside the organization to change their actions if necessary (Huy, 2001) and be better prepared to implement them in the future.

Relating to the second research question concerning timing strategies, our findings are in line with what Pettigrew (2012) stressed, that simple concepts for formulating and implementing long-term strategies must grapple with deeper layers of complexity in times of change and uncertainty. Such adaptation to changes in the environment means that organizations

have to use dynamic strategies adapted to emerging chances, such as timing strategies (Wójcik & Juszczyk, 2023). Indeed, according to our interlocutors, the growing uncertainty and turbulence of the environment often make long-term plans and strategies lose importance as determinants of an organization's development. Thus, affirmatively, chances are perceived as possibilities in a positive way, in turn, timing strategies as a way to move away from the paradigm of "linear order, regularity, and constancy" (Merry & Kassavin, 1995) in the long term, and instead perceived as spontaneous, sudden actions, adapted to the current situation.

Our research identified four types of timing strategies that companies used to overcome the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. These were: chance-grasping strategy, chance-entraining strategy, chance-riding strategy, and chance-creating strategy (Jing & Van de Ven, 2018). Taking into account the statements of the interlocutors, it can be noted that the chance-grasping strategy was dominant. In this strategy, entrepreneurs perceived current circumstances as favorable for the implementation of changes, while future circumstances were perceived as at least unclear. This assessment of future conditions resulted from several changes taking place in the environment and high uncertainty as to how they will develop in the future (Juszczyk & Wójcik, 2023). Our research shows that this uncertainty was strengthened by, for example, changes in customer expectations and preferences (Hu et al., 2021) or difficulties in predicting public aid policy towards entrepreneurs (Shubtsova et al., 2020). Hence, in case of uncertainty about the future or the perception of the future time for change as unfavorable, entrepreneurs in the tourism industry believe that to take advantage of the opportunity, change should be introduced as soon as possible. Our interlocutors acted *ad hoc*, using their entrepreneurship and improvisation (Brown & Eisenhardt, 1997) by introducing changes to the offer or quickly acquiring digital competencies, which was also associated with changes in professional activity. The chance-grasping strategy, as the most frequently used one, allows us to conclude that tourism enterprises operating in conditions of uncertainty adapt mainly to the situation after the fact – that is, they are reactive and much less proactive. This is consistent with the findings of Bhaskar and Filimonau (2021), who explain their findings by referring to some specific characteristics of tourism enterprises, such as belonging to SMEs or limited resources.

The findings of our research also showed the use of the chance-entraining strategy. In that case the dynamics of changes in the environment resulting from COVID-19 were perceived as unfavorable for changes, but entrepreneurs expected that they would change to a favorable one shortly. The studied enterprises, therefore, adapted their activities to the changing rhythm of the environment (Perez-Nordtvedt et al., 2008; Jing & Van de Ven, 2018), hoping for the further development of their entities. Examples included the desire to diversify services and plans to open a new hostel after the pandemic. As in the case of all four strategies, the use of this type of timing strategy results from the individual perception of managers of tourism enterprises (Venkataraman, 2003). In this approach, the timing strategies implemented allowed not only the survival but also the development of enterprises.

The third timing strategy identified in our research was the chance-riding strategy. Our interlocutors perceived the current and future momentum of change as positive. The COVID-19 pandemic was treated by tourism entrepreneurs not only as a present, convenient moment to introduce changes and implement plans (Kotter, 1990) but also as an element allowing for long-term benefits and, therefore, a valuable opportunity. The activities undertaken in these circumstances included: submitting appropriate applications for external funds (for activities not yet implemented), renovation and modernization of exhibitions, and – as the interlocutors emphasized – preparing for new, better times.

The last identified as a result of the research timing strategy, i.e. the chance-creating strategy, manifested itself in the perception of the current and future situation by tourism enterprises as hostile. As a result, entrepreneurs consciously diversified their professional activity and acquired new skills and competencies to be able to find their way in an uncertain reality and a future perceived as hostile. In this approach, chance creation was an endogenous process among the surveyed entrepreneurs, and therefore, they were the initiators of changes (Jing & Van de Ven, 2018; Wójcik & Juszczyk, 2023).

To conclude, based on our findings, it can be said that enterprises that used the appropriate timing strategy and treated the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic as a chance were not only able to survive on market but also to develop. Moreover, some businesses underwent a certain transformation, adopted innovative solutions, and, as a result, were renewed (Prince et al., 2022). Thus, chance management serves organizational resilience.

Last but not least, our research can also be related to previous work in the literature on opportunities. For instance, in the context of different approaches on whether opportunities are discovered or created by entrepreneurs or whether they exist as objective phenomena or are subjectively perceived by entrepreneurs (e.g., Shane, 2003; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; Sarason et al., 2006; Edelman & Yli-Renko, 2010), our research is consistent with these works, which emphasize that both ways of understanding opportunities are correct (e.g., Renko, Shrader & Simon, 2012). Chance management

emphasizes that perception is subjective, but it requires adaptation to objectively existing external changes. Moreover, it is the time in which the decision is made to introduce a change and adapt to internal and external factors in a specific way (i.e., using timing strategies) that determines the effect of the implemented changes. The authors of the chance management concept – Jing and Van de Ven (2018) – claim that the role of change agents is assumed to be both adaptive and purposeful. Also, our research showed that when the assessment of current and future momentum for introducing a change allowed it, entrepreneurs decided to implement previously planned strategies. Additionally, these changes could be long-term in terms of their implementation time and their effects.

This corresponds to the results of some research on opportunities in other theories, e.g. dynamic capabilities or effectuation and causation. For instance, our research has shown that, as Renko, Shrader, and Simon (2012) claim, it is possible that entrepreneurs actively search for opportunities, even when they do not know the actual target of this search, and that the process of opportunity recognition may have both an element of search and serendipity. Our participants' perception of opportunities did not exclude active shaping and exploiting opportunities, as is the case with opportunities based on dynamic competences. These opportunities are proactive and aim to capitalize on emerging trends and changes, and their benefits are often long term. In our research, examples of the chance-creation strategy were also associated with the active creation of opportunities and did not exclude long-term changes.

Referring to the theory of effectuation and causation, it seems that chance management is only close to the logic of effectuation at first glance. This means that, especially in uncertain conditions, a set of entrepreneurial actions is dominated by the means at hand and a flexible and experimental strategy-oriented logic. However, chance management does not entirely rule out causation, a set of entrepreneurial actions dominated by a goal and planning-oriented logic. Our research showed that previously planned and well-thought-out changes were also implemented. Our findings in this context are, therefore, consistent with those which indicate (e.g., Cherbib, 2024) that the combination of causation and effectuation may be particularly beneficial (especially in conditions of uncertainty) and may foster the potential of highly entrepreneurial-oriented firms.

Limitations and future research directions

Our study has some limitations. First, research in the form of IDIs and FGIs is not representative, so it shows the situation only of entities selected for research, although this does not mean that the presented findings were not also characteristic of other entities in the tourism industry. Secondly, empirical research was carried out during the period of restrictions resulting in the occurrence of COVID-19. This was before the emergence of further factors stimulating changes in the environment, such as the war in Ukraine or rapidly increasing inflation. Repeating the research may allow researchers to assess to what extent the occurrence of new circumstances influenced the emergence and identification of new opportunities in the environment and their use by enterprises. Moreover, it would be possible to assess to what extent taking advantage of the chances that emerged as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic allowed tourism sector enterprises to gain a competitive advantage in the long term, and not only during the pandemic itself. Another limitation is the fact that the empirical research was conducted on a group of enterprises operating in the Polish tourism market, which, due to the specific nature of certain events in the environment caused by, for example, the policy of the state authorities, the public's approach to restrictions, could influence the nature of the emerging opportunities, precisely in this specific market. Conducting similar research in other countries would perhaps help identify other types of chances perceived and exploited by tourism enterprises during crisis periods. Finally, the qualitative nature of the study only identified the types of chances perceived and used by tourism enterprises without indicating which were most frequently used and which had the most significant impact on the enterprise.

Managerial implications

The conducted research has shown that even the most difficult conditions in the organization's environment, caused by difficult-to-predict global changes, such as the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, can generate chances for tourism sector entities. However, their use requires, first of all, the ability of entrepreneurs to recognize them, and this ability may be related to the competencies they have, not always those directly related to their business (e.g., in the case of the COVID-19 pandemic, in particular in the field of digital competences). Also, four identified timing strategies used in chance management seem to be particularly useful for managers in the context of identifying, assessing, and exploiting perceived chances, i.e. the chance-grasping strategy, chance-creating strategy, chance-riding strategy, and chance-creating strategy.

Managers should be aware that employees are a particularly important group in the context of strengthening relationships. Due to the inability to perform typical tasks resulting from their duties, the situation caused by the pandemic was an opportunity to integrate the team better. Managers' attention should also focus on all groups of external stakeholders because cooperation with them can generate many opportunities. Closer than usual cooperation with clients, contractors, and competitors may constitute a chance, among others: to diversify the offer and reduce business costs, which is crucial for the organization's survival in challenging environmental conditions.

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Appendix

Table A. IDIs Interviewee characteristics

Interviewee code	Type of activity	Function in the company	Year of establishment	Legal form	Size	Location	Range of activity
R1	accommodation	owner	2006	private sole proprietorship	micro	Żarki	national
R2	travel agency	owner	1991	private sole proprietorship	micro	Bielsko-Biała	regional
R3	travel agency	director	1992	general partnership	small	Bielsko-Biała	regional
R4	MICE	owner	2010	private sole proprietorship	micro	Katowice	regional
R5	travel agency	owner	1997	limited liability company	small	Żory	national
R6	accommodation	director	2001	limited liability company	medium	Zawiercie	national
R7	travel agency Polish Chamber of Tourism	Owner	1991	civil partnership	micro	Gliwice	regional
R8	tourist attraction	office manager	1953	association	small	Tarnowskie Góry	global
R9	MICE	owner	1991	private sole proprietorship	micro	Katowice	European
R10	tourist attraction	director	1970	public institution	small	Chorzów	regional
R11	tourist attraction	director	2004	public institution	small	Tychy	national
R12	accommodation	manager	2015	private sole proprietorship	small	Ustroń	national

Table B. FGIs participants' characteristics

No.	Code	Position	Age	Education	Year of establishment	City	Voivodship	Company size	Legal form	Reach	Type of activity
1	1R1	manager	31-40	higher	2019	Gdynia	pomorskie	micro	private sole proprietorship	national	accommodation
2	1R5	operations director of the resort	31-40	higher	2021	Karpacz	dolnośląskie	medium	limited liability company	national	accommodation
3	1R4	owner	41-50	higher	2016	Łęki Dukielskie	podkarpackie	micro	private sole proprietorship	national	accommodation
4	1R3	manager	up to 30	secondary	2020	Muszyna	małopolskie	micro	private sole proprietorship	national	accommodation

No.	Code	Position	Age	Education	Year of establishment	City	Woivodship	Company size	Legal form	Reach	Type of activity
5	1R2	manager	41-50	higher	2020	Kryłów	lubelskie	micro	private sole proprietorship	national	accommodation
1	3R1	owner	41-50	higher	2017	Konin	wielkopolskie	micro	general partnership	national	tourist attraction
2	3R5	marketing director	31-40	higher	2011	Bałtów	świętokrzyskie	large	limited liability company	national	tourist attraction
3	3R2	owner	41-50	higher	2005	Ząbki	mazowieckie	micro	private sole proprietorship	regional	tourist attraction
4	3R3	owner	51-60	higher	2012	Ścibórz	opolskie	micro	private sole proprietorship	national	tourist attraction
5	3R4	owner	31-40	secondary	2016	Zabrze	śląskie	micro	private sole proprietorship	national	tourist attraction
1	2R2	owner	31-40	higher	2015	Warszawa	mazowieckie	micro	private sole proprietorship	regional	travel agency
2	2R4	managing director	41-50	higher	2011	Wrocław	dolnośląskie	micro	private sole proprietorship	regional	travel agency
3	2R5	owner	31-40	secondary	2019	Kalisz	wielkopolskie	micro	private sole proprietorship	regional	travel agency
4	2R1	owner	41-50	higher	1991	Bielsko-Biała	śląskie	micro	private sole proprietorship	regional	travel agency
5	2R3	owner	41-50	higher	2000	Warszawa	mazowieckie	micro	private sole proprietorship	regional	travel agency
6	2R6	owner	61-70	higher	2011	Ślupsk	pomorskie	micro	private sole proprietorship	regional	travel agency
1	4R9	owner	31-40	higher	1999	Warszawa	mazowieckie	micro	private sole proprietorship	national	MICE
2	4R3	president	31-40	higher	2018	Warszawa	mazowieckie	small	private sole proprietorship	national	security (cooperation with event industry)
3	4R7	project manager	31-40	higher	2013	Warszawa	mazowieckie	small	limited liability company	national	MICE
4	4R1	owner	31-40	higher	2015	Warszawa	mazowieckie	micro	private sole proprietorship	regional	MICE
5	4R5	senior project manager	31-40	higher	2009	Warszawa	mazowieckie	small	limited liability company	national	MICE
6	4R10	owner	41-50	higher	2018	Łódź	łódzkie	micro	private sole proprietorship	regional	MICE

Biographical notes

Katarzyna Czernek-Marszałek is an Associate Professor and the head of the Department of Management Theory at the University of Economics in Katowice. Her research interests include inter-organizational relationships (especially cooperation and competition), its determinants (e.g., trust, social embeddedness), innovations, and knowledge transfer. Her empirical research focuses on the tourism sector. Her works are published in journals such as *Industrial Marketing Management*, *Tourism Management*, *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, *Annals of Tourism Research*, *Journal of Travel Research* or *Current Issues in Tourism*.

Dagmara Wójcik is a Ph.D. Assistant Professor in the Department of Management Theory at the University of Economics in Katowice. Her research interests include strategic management issues, i.e. inter-organizational cooperation and competition in the creative industries such as performing arts. She is also the researcher involved in individual and team projects subsidized by the National Science Centre, the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, or the European Commission.

Patrycja Juszczyk is a Ph.D. Assistant Professor in the Department of Management Theory at the University of Economics in Katowice. Her research interests include the issues of strategic management, in particular, competition, cooperation and competition, especially in non-commercial organizations (public and non-profit). As a researcher, she conducts research that focuses mainly on the issues of social relationships and other sociological concepts and theories in management and quality studies.

Paweł Piotrowski is a Ph.D. Assistant Professor in the Department of Management Theory at the University of Economics in Katowice. His research interests focus on management and marketing issues related to the tourism sector, especially public management in tourism, place marketing, heritage management, events marketing, and tourism.

Brendan Richard is a Vice President of Marketing Analytics at Delaware North. His research focuses on innovation in hospitality and tourism with interests including the sharing economy, crowdsourcing, revenue management and future studies. He has published articles in *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *Journal of Revenue & Pricing Management*, *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, and *Journal of Tourism Futures*.

Authorship contribution statement

Katarzyna Czernek-Marszałek: Conceptualization, Data Curation, Data Analysis, Funding Acquisition, Method, Project Administration; Supervision, Writing – Original Draft, Writing – Review & Editing. **Dagmara Wójcik**: Conceptualization, Data Curation, Funding Acquisition, Writing – Original Draft. **Patrycja Juszczyk**: Conceptualization, Data Curation, Funding Acquisition, Writing – Original Draft. **Paweł Piotrowski**: Data Curation, Data Analysis, Funding Acquisition, Writing – Original Draft. **Brendan Richard**: Writing – Review & Editing.

Conflicts of interest

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