

## Article

# Unlocking Tourism's Potential: Pricing Strategies for the Post-COVID Renaissance

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**Abstract:** In response to the challenges faced by tourism managers in devising effective pricing strategies to overcome the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, this study aims to make a valuable contribution to the existing literature on tourism management and marketing. Specifically, we investigate the pricing strategies that tourists are most likely to prefer in the aftermath of the pandemic. To achieve this, we conducted semi-structured interviews with a sample size of experienced tourists in Egypt. Our findings reveal that tourists exhibit a strong inclination towards hedonic and bundling pricing strategies. This suggests that tourism managers should prioritize the incorporation of these strategies into their post-pandemic business plans. However, it is crucial for managers to carefully consider tourists' behavioral responses to dynamic and pay-what-you-want pricing strategies, as these are influenced by various constraints that necessitate careful attention. Furthermore, our study highlights potential negative consequences associated with the implementation of the dual-pricing strategy following the pandemic. This strategy has the potential to compromise tourists' intentions to utilize certain services, thereby leading to unfavorable behavioral outcomes for tourism destinations. The implications of this study are of practical significance for tourism managers seeking to design more effective pricing strategies to capitalize on the opportunities presented by the post-pandemic recovery period. By understanding tourists' preferences and considering the potential drawbacks associated with certain pricing strategies, managers can make informed decisions that promote the sustainable and successful revival of the tourism industry. Moreover, our study employed the checkpoints method, which allowed us to identify respondents' priorities for the pricing strategies during the crisis, further enhancing the validity and reliability of our findings.

**Keywords:** tourism pricing strategy; hedonic pricing; bundling pricing; dual pricing; dynamic pricing



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## 1. Introduction

The tourism industry has suffered immensely due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has been classified as a health crisis with significant impacts on seasonality within the sector [1]. For tourism managers, dealing with the issue of seasonality is a critical challenge that concerns balancing temporal imbalances in demand across various destinations. These imbalances can be sensed through the volume of expenditure by tourists, the number

of tourists, and their corresponding booked nights [2]. To manage such challenges of seasonality in a post-COVID era, tourism managers for different destinations have commenced efforts to find the most effective strategies to recover from the pandemic and attract tourists [3]. Pricing strategies represent a vitally important approach to tourism management, as they serve as critical drivers for attracting new visitors to destinations and enhancing overall profitability [4].

In response to the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism industry, many tourism service providers have implemented discount pricing strategies to attract tourists to their establishments [5]. For example, Airbnb has introduced a discount pricing strategy for extended stays following the COVID-19 pandemic [6]. While the efficacy of the discount pricing strategy has been highlighted in the current literature during the pandemic crises [7], there remains a lack of research and practical guidance regarding other potential pricing strategies for tourism management post COVID-19. It is essential to bear in mind that pricing strategies are not solely confined to discounts; various pricing strategies have the potential to drive revenue growth in the tourism industry post-pandemic.

According to the tourism management and marketing literature, many popular and conventional pricing strategies can influence tourists' decision making, including dynamic pricing, dual pricing or differential pricing, bundling pricing, pay-what-you-want (PWYW) pricing, and hedonic pricing [8–13]. The dynamic pricing strategy focuses on determining pricing according to the supply and demand curve, thus helping to mitigate seasonal deviations in tourist volume [8]. The dual pricing strategy involves segment-based pricing, in which tourism service pricing may differ between different service segments [9,14]. Price bundling is a practice whereby multiple tourism services are sold through a discounted package [11]. Pay-what-you-want pricing enables tourists to pay based on perceived values and potentially generate more revenue than fixed pricing [12]. The hedonic pricing strategy encompasses tourism service attributes and characteristics to determine pricing, such as location, quality, facilities, rewards programs, views, proximity to various landmarks, and level of security [13]. The hedonic pricing strategy in the tourism industry involves the consideration of various service attributes and characteristics when determining pricing [15]. These attributes can significantly influence tourists' perceptions of value and willingness to pay. To illustrate the practical application of the hedonic pricing strategy. The hedonic pricing strategy in the tourism industry encompasses various attributes and characteristics that influence pricing decisions [16]. Examples of its application include luxury resorts offering exclusive locations, top-notch facilities, and unique experiences; theme parks pricing tickets based on popular attractions and added perks; scenic tours emphasizing picturesque views and comfort; and upscale dining experiences incorporating ambiance, renowned chefs, and culinary excellence. By considering these hedonic attributes, tourism businesses aim to create value, attract customers willing to pay a premium and enhance the overall experience for tourists.

By exploring these strategies in greater detail, tourism managers can discover a range of helpful techniques that can be deployed to maximize revenue and attract new clientele after the COVID-19 pandemic.

The existing literature outlines the importance of pricing strategies in shaping tourists' behavior. Accordingly, the present study aims to contribute to the literature by exploring pricing strategies that could benefit tourists after the COVID-19 pandemic. By gaining insights into tourists' preferences, tourism managers could achieve better decision-making outcomes that cater to the needs of their clients effectively during challenging times. Specifically, this study aims to:

- Identify the pricing strategies that tourists favor after the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Evaluate the impact of these strategies on tourists' decision-making processes.

To achieve these objectives, we employ a qualitative research design. We utilize semi-structured interviews to explore tourists' mentalities and understand how they perceive different pricing strategies during a post-pandemic recovery period.

## 2. Materials and Methods

### 2.1. The Study Context

We chose Egypt to be the context of our study. Egypt's tourism industry heavily relies on international visitors, making it vulnerable to disruptions caused by global crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic [17]. The country's iconic historical sites, cultural heritage, and natural attractions have traditionally attracted a diverse range of tourists from various nationalities. However, the pandemic's impact has highlighted the need for a comprehensive understanding of how tourists perceive and respond to pricing strategies during times of crisis [18]. Egypt's status as one of the destinations most affected by the pandemic enhances the significance of international interviewees. By selecting international interviewees from different nationalities who have traveled to Egypt, we gain valuable insights into the preferences, expectations, and decision-making processes of diverse tourist groups. These interviewees offer a unique perspective on how pricing strategies can influence their travel choices in the aftermath of the pandemic. These individuals have likely encountered a range of pricing strategies implemented by various tourism stakeholders in response to the crisis. Their firsthand experiences and observations can offer crucial indicators regarding the effectiveness and acceptance of different pricing strategies during times of tourism crisis [18].

### 2.2. The Interview Protocol

The present study adopts a semi-structured interview method to collect data, which facilitates inductive reasoning and provides participants with greater flexibility to express their thoughts and explanations with minimal constraints [15]. The interview process consists of four stages. In the first stage, specific criteria are established to recruit participants. These criteria include individuals who are frequent annual travelers with domestic, international, or both travel experiences, as well as recent travelers to Egypt following the reopening of its borders after the COVID-19 pandemic. The selection criteria are essential for several reasons. Firstly, they ensure that participants possess sufficient experience and knowledge about tourism, enabling them to provide in-depth insights into pricing strategies in tourism management. Frequent travelers are particularly likely to have significant exposure to various pricing strategies, making them suitable participants for this research. Secondly, Egypt is chosen as this study's focus due to its potential for tourism recovery from the impacts of COVID-19 [16]. With its rich history, breathtaking landscapes, and renowned hospitality, Egypt offers a unique experience for travelers seeking respite from the challenges posed by the pandemic. Moreover, Egypt has implemented rigorous health and safety protocols to ensure the well-being of visitors, making it a responsible and secure travel destination during these uncertain times [16].

In the second stage, a multinational travel agency is delegated to assist with participant recruitment based on the aforementioned criteria. Thirty-two participants agreed to take part in this study (refer to Table 1), and the research team provided them with information regarding this study's objectives, pricing strategies, definitions, and underlying assumptions. The utilization of the semi-structured interview method in this study acknowledges the complexity of the research subject and aims to gather detailed and comprehensive data from participants (Castillo-Montoya, 2016) [19]. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of participants' perceptions of pricing strategies in tourism management.

By employing the semi-structured interview method and recruiting participants based on specific criteria, this study seeks to obtain comprehensive insights into pricing strategies in the tourism industry. The subsequent analysis of the collected data will contribute to a nuanced understanding of participants' perspectives and shed light on effective pricing strategies in tourism management.

**Table 1.** The interviewees profile.

Interviewee Number	Gender	Nationality	Activity in Egypt Destination
1	Female	Serbian	Take a guided city tour.
2	Female	Icelandic	Explore museums and art galleries.
3	Male	Irish	Go on a wildlife safari.
4	Female	Colombian	Relax on beautiful beaches.
5	Female	Panamanian	Relax on beautiful beaches.
6	Male	Costa Rican	Explore museums and art galleries.
7	Female	Thai	Take a guided city tour.
8	Male	Vietnamese	Explore museums and art galleries.
9	Female	French	Attend cultural festivals and events.
10	Male	Italian	Relax on beautiful beaches.
11	Male	Spanish	Attend cultural festivals and events.
12	Male	Dutch	Explore street food markets and try local street delicacies.
13	Female	Panamanian	Explore museums and art galleries.
14	Female	Finnish	Relax on beautiful beaches.
15	Male	American	Go on a wildlife safari.
16	Female	American	Attend cultural festivals and events.
17	Male	Kenyan	Go on a wildlife safari.
18	Female	Nigerian	Explore museums and art galleries.
19	Male	Ghanaian	Explore museums and art galleries.
20	Male	Turkish	Go on a wildlife safari.
21	Female	Greek	Explore museums and art galleries.
22	Male	Portuguese	Attend cultural festivals and events.
23	Female	Mexican	Explore museums and art galleries.
24	Female	Brazilian	Relax on beautiful beaches.
25	Male	French	Relax on beautiful beaches.
26	Female	Italian	Explore street food markets and try local street delicacies.
27	Male	Mexican	Go on a wildlife safari.
28	Male	Russian	Attend cultural festivals and events.
29	Female	Chinese	Relax on beautiful beaches.
30	Male	Russian	Go on a wildlife safari.
31	Female	Brazilian	Attend cultural festivals and events.
32	Female	Argentine	Explore museums and art galleries.

In the third stage of this study, the research team collaborated with experts in tourism marketing to formulate a set of questions that would effectively address the objectives of this study. These questions were designed based on the first-order assumptions proposed by Gioia et al., with the aim of exploring tourists' perceptions of service providers' initiatives across different pricing strategies in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, the inquiry sought to understand how tourists perceive various pricing strategies, which strategies they believe would be appealing post-pandemic, and which pricing strategies would incentivize their utilization of specific services after the pandemic, such as hedonic, dual, dynamic, and pay-what-you-want, among others.

### 2.3. The Interview Validity

To ensure the robustness and validity of the research findings, meticulous measures were implemented to carefully select and engage with the 32 participants who partook in this study. The research team employed a rigorous protocol throughout the interview process to uphold the credibility and authenticity of the participants' responses. Initially, the participants were chosen based on their specialized expertise in the field of tourism marketing, thereby ensuring that their insights were firmly rooted in pertinent knowledge and practical experience. This expertise played a crucial role in formulating pertinent and targeted questions that aligned precisely with this study's objectives. Additionally, the interviews were conducted utilizing online platforms, such as "Zoom" and "Microsoft Office Teams", which not only ensured the safety and convenience of the participants but also facilitated effective communication and data collection. Furthermore, the research

team adhered diligently to established protocols in order to safeguard the integrity of the research endeavor. Clear and comprehensive instructions were provided to the participants, elucidating the purpose of this study, emphasizing the confidentiality of their responses, and emphasizing the voluntary nature of their participation [20]. Prior to their involvement, informed consent was meticulously obtained from each participant, thus affirming their willingness to freely share their perspectives and insights.

Moreover, we followed Yeong et al. [21] in that the interviews were conducted in a manner that fostered an environment conducive to the open expression of participants' thoughts and opinions. The research team conscientiously created a supportive and non-judgmental atmosphere, empowering participants to freely articulate their viewpoints until a point of saturation was achieved. This approach ensured the comprehensive collection of data, leaving no pertinent aspects unexplored [21].

Subsequently, the research team conducted online interviews, adhering to the necessary COVID-19 safety measures. This interviewing approach was crucial in order to effectively address the primary objective of this study [19], which was to gain insights into tourists' perceptions of service provider initiatives in the post-COVID-19 era. Moreover, this methodological approach ensured comprehensive coverage of the pertinent aspects of tourists' perceptions. The interviews were conducted using remote video conferencing platforms such as "Zoom" and "Microsoft Office Teams", while some participants opted for traditional social media applications like "Facebook Messenger" for the interview sessions. These interviews were carried out in June 2022, with an average duration of 45 to 90 min for each engagement. The research team took great care to follow established protocols to safeguard the well-being of the participants throughout the interview process.

In the fourth stage of the research study, NVivo12 software was employed by the research team to analyze the transcripts of the conducted interviews. The team applied deductive and inductive techniques, namely framework and literature-driven and data-driven approaches, respectively, to carry out the analysis [18,20]. By implementing these coding methodologies, this study successfully generated significant findings that were aligned with the research objectives. The analysis resulted in the identification of two major themes derived from the interviews. The first theme delved into the hedonic, dynamic, and bundling pricing strategies, aiming to explore tourists' perceptions of pricing mechanisms that provide delightful and pleasurable experiences. The objective was to examine how service providers could incorporate these strategies into their business plans in the post-pandemic period. The second theme revolved around the pay-what-you-want and dual-pricing strategies, seeking to investigate tourists' opinions regarding these pricing mechanisms. Specifically, this study aimed to explore how these pricing strategies could foster tourists' willingness to pay for specific services while promoting social responsibility, considering the circumstances imposed by the global pandemic. Through this comprehensive analysis, the research team generated valuable insights that offer service providers a deeper understanding of the most suitable pricing strategies for their operations in the post-pandemic era. These insights contribute to the overall recovery of the tourism industry by facilitating informed decision making among service providers.

#### *2.4. Checkpoints Analysis for Tourists' Perceptions and Priorities*

To gain deeper insights into tourist preferences and priorities regarding different pricing approaches, interviewees were asked to conduct a checkpoint analysis comparing each of the strategies mentioned. This involved listing the hedonic, dynamic, bundling, pay-what-you-want, and dual pricing options on a spreadsheet. Interviewees were then prompted to assign a 'good' or 'bad' rating to each based on their perceptions and note any experience with such strategies. They also ranked the options from 1 to 5 in order of most preferred to least preferred approach during the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. This thorough prioritization process allowed for meaningful evaluations to emerge regarding customer receptivity to pricing techniques in both normal and uncertain conditions. By detecting fundamental views and rankings, the checkpoint analysis provided robust quali-

tative data on relative impacts and effectiveness from a consumer perspective. Detecting tourists' and consumers' priorities is crucial to effective marketing, pricing, and product or service development strategies. Such priority-based insights are especially valuable during disruptions by signaling which levers are most promising to optimize bookings or visits in line with fluctuating demand patterns and risk tolerance [22]. The rigorous qualitative prioritization thus generates substantive implications for devising resilient tourism strategies amid ongoing uncertainty.

### 3. Findings and Discussion

#### 3.1. The Hedonic, Dynamic, and Bundling Pricing Strategies

This study's interview findings highlighted that integrating hedonic and bundling pricing strategies was the most effective pricing mechanism for most interviewees. They preferred bundle packages that consider each trip's diverse travel itinerary attributes rather than merely bundling services together without considering the quality of the experience.

*"I prefer bundle packages, but they must consider every trip itinerary attributes", informant #3; "I like when I found the prices are packaged, but it should consider the different attributes of each trip itinerary items", informant #7; "honestly, bundling is the best but seller should focus on the service attributes rather than bundling without considering the quality", informant #14; and "the best is packages because all of us affected economically by the COVID-19, so packages is the best choice when the quality also exists" informant #8.*

These excerpts from the interviews are significant because integrating pricing strategies lowers transaction costs for service providers and helps attract budget-conscious tourists [23]. Mejía & Brandt [24] suggest that service providers can target all tourists, regardless of economic status, using joint pricing strategies that integrate hedonic and bundling techniques. Nevertheless, service providers must ensure that the quality characteristics of each item in the bundled service are not overlooked. This is because tourists may perceive the bundling of services without regard to quality as a downgrade in their travel experience. Therefore, a vital aspect of a successful pricing strategy in the post-pandemic tourism industry is to integrate hedonically and bundle pricing strategies while ensuring that the quality of the service is not compromised [25]. The insights from these perspectives are essential to inform service providers' pricing strategies in the tourism industry, fostering recovery from the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Along with favoring hedonic and bundling pricing schemes, some interviewees were reluctant to embrace dynamic pricing systems as the best option following the COVID-19 epidemic. They gave the high incidence of price variation as justification for their suspicion, saying that it raised questions about the services' quality.

*"I don't like the prices where it changes from time to time in high change rates, I don't trust the quality of such services", informant #2; "when I found a variation in prices for the same tourism services from time to time, I feel doubt about it, and I don't have intentions to use it", informant #1. "Managers should avoid the dynamic pricing as it decreases the reliability of the service in the time of crisis", informant #20; and "the dynamic prices in the COVID-19 could lead to price instability which in turn could decrease my intention to use certain services", informant #1".*

As tourists become more cost-conscious and aware of price variances for travel services, concerns regarding fairness and transparency have grown [26]. As a result, it might be difficult for providers of tourism services to determine the best costs that consider tourists' intended travel dates [27]. The conclusions drawn from these viewpoints highlight how crucial it is for service providers to set up trustworthy pricing structures that do not raise visitors' suspicions while also considering their need to control expenses after the COVID-19 pandemic. To gain the trust of tourists and promote their patronage, service providers must prioritize the creation of pricing structures that promote transparency, stability, and justice [28]. The tourism industry's post-pandemic recovery efforts can be

streamlined with effective pricing tactics, promoting economic growth in this important area of the global economy.

### 3.2. The Pay-What-You-Want and the Dual-Pricing Pricing Strategies

Additionally, the interview results indicated that most participants expressed their aversion toward implementing dual-pricing strategies by service providers after the COVID-19 pandemic.

*“I have negative attitudes to any service providers have two prices for the same services; it is a kind of discrimination”, informant #14; “when I check any prices and found two prices for the same service at the same time, I stopped think about that service”, informant #12”; and “When I checked any prices and found two prices for the same service at the same time, I stopped think about that service”, informant #9.*

This negative perception is rooted in their belief that such pricing strategies are discriminatory and often lead to feelings of unfair treatment. Tourists’ concerns about price fairness are well-documented [8]. Service providers must be mindful of their pricing strategies’ cognitive and ethical underpinnings in the face of changing tourism industry dynamics. With numerous services and offerings, there is often a tendency to overlook how fees and justice impact perceived value [29]. Service providers must design pricing strategies that prioritize fairness and not create negative perceptions among tourists. Service providers must undertake a more nuanced approach to pricing strategies, emphasizing fairness, equity, and justice [30]. This would help service providers gain the trust of the tourists, facilitating their industries’ recovery in the post-pandemic era.

Interestingly, many interviewees intended to follow a pay-what-you-want pricing strategy after the COVID-19 pandemic. They reported that personalized evaluation and greater engagement from service providers increased their positive perception of the service value.

*“Considering my evaluation to the price, increase my positive intention toward the service value”, informant #6; “When service providers put a cell asking about how I expect the service price, I feel happy and more engagement”, informant #13; “I like when tourism sellers give me a choice to assess the service from my perspective, but they have to provide much information about it to help me in a batter assessment”, informant #11; and “I enjoy the negotiation of pricing when the tourism service providers engage me to the best deal”, informant #23.”*

The tourists appreciated the increased transparency and choice afforded by the pricing strategy, as evident from their positive engagement with the evaluation process. This perspective accords with recent research on PWYW pricing effectiveness in the hospitality industry [6]. The PWYW pricing strategy’s acceptability depends on the product’s nature and the consumer’s experience with the service process and outcome [31]. In contrast to traditional pricing strategies, where price indicates service quality, PWYW pricing lacks such an anchor for quality evaluation. As hospitality services are intangible, consumers may hesitate to accept PWYW pricing if uncertain about the service quality, affecting its effectiveness during the COVID-19 pandemic’s uncertainties. Therefore, service providers must consider the service quality when providing the PWYW strategy. As the tourism industry grapples with the impact of the pandemic, the PWYW pricing strategy could offer service providers a viable option for balancing tourists’ expectations and economic realities [32]. The pricing strategy is particularly effective when service quality cannot be sufficiently ascertained before purchase. It also provides a platform for service providers to solicit customer feedback that can be used to improve service delivery. Therefore, service providers must consider tourists’ perspectives when developing post-COVID-19 operational pricing strategies.

Nevertheless, service providers must also recognize that PWYW pricing may not provide an optimal revenue stream, especially in the long run [33]. Thus, a balanced assessment of the pricing strategy is essential to prevent the failure of tourism industry

recovery efforts due to an unsustainable revenue stream. The PWYW pricing strategy presents a promising mechanism for promoting transparency, engaging consumers' trust, and fostering the tourism industry's recovery post-COVID-19 pandemic.

### 3.3. Priority Analysis Results

Table 2 summarizes key results from the checkpoint analysis conducted with tourism customers regarding different pricing strategies. It shows that on average, hedonic pricing was given the highest priority ranking by interviewees, with an average perception also being positive. This affirms that allowing customers to customize and pay for desired attributes is well received. Dynamic pricing received the lowest average priority and negative perception, highlighting the unpopular view of unpredictability.

**Table 2.** Tourists' priorities and perceptions for pricing strategies.

Pricing Strategy Type	Average Priority	Average Perception	Attributes from the Interview Findings
Hedonic pricing	1	positive	Hedonic pricing can be perceived positively as it allows customers to pay for product/experience attributes they value. However, it requires a thorough understanding of customer preferences.
Dynamic pricing	5	negative	Dynamic pricing is generally perceived negatively by customers as "unfair" but may be accepted if seen as a revenue management tool to maximize occupancy. Transparency is important.
Bundling	2	positive	Bundling is often viewed positively as it provides good value but bundles must be carefully designed based on customer segmentation.
Pay-what-you-want	4	negative	Pay-what-you-want can engage customers but risks leaving a negative impression if perceived as a gimmick. Best for niche experiences.
Dual pricing	3	positive	Dual pricing (discounts for advance bookings) is commonly used in tourism and is perceived positively when it incentivizes demand shifts benefiting all parties. Clear communication is important.

Bundling and dual pricing were seen as valuable options, though bundling was prioritized slightly higher, suggesting tourists appreciate the added value proposition. Pay-what-you-want fell in the middle, reflecting its engaging aspect but potential downsides as a gimmick. Notably, perceptions mirrored the stated attributes for each approach based on previous literature. Higher priority strategies tended to provide more customer-centric value and control. Lower priority ones involved more subjective elements like unpredictability.

## 4. Conclusions and Implications

In conclusion, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism industry has had a devastating effect, particularly in terms of seasonality. Tourism managers face the challenge of balancing temporal imbalances in demand across various destinations. While discount pricing has been an effective strategy to attract tourists in the pandemic era, it is crucial to explore other potential pricing strategies for tourism management post-COVID-19. Dynamic pricing, dual pricing, bundling pricing, pay-what-you-want pricing, and hedonic pricing are among the pricing strategies that can drive revenue growth in the tourism industry post pandemic. These strategies offer a vast array of options for tourism managers to attract new clients and maximize revenue at various stages of the recovery process. Therefore, it is essential for tourism service providers to explore these pricing strategies to enhance their profitability and develop a competitive edge in the market. To achieve the above goals, the current study uses semi-structured interviews to explore the cognitive processes of tourists and elicit their understanding of their perception of different pricing

strategies after the COVID-19 pandemic. Subsequently, this study revealed crucial results that have vital implications for the managerial and theoretical fields.

#### *4.1. Theoretical Contribution*

The findings from this study offer several insights relevant to theoretical frameworks. Additionally, the prioritization of hedonic, bundling, and dual pricing options that preserve value or reduce uncertainty supports principles from prospect and transaction cost theories regarding risk avoidance and purchase burden minimization during times of ambiguity. The positive view of strategies empowering tourists also relates to the resource-based perspective of co-creating value through strategic capabilities. Furthermore, the preference for transparent revenue management rationales with dynamic pricing connects to justice theory concepts around procedural fairness shaping strategy reception when stability is lacking. Together these theoretical perspectives provide a new contextual understanding of how pricing strategy perceptions may be contingent on broader conditions like economic crises versus stability, meriting further exploration.

The current study advances the theoretical discourse by contributing to the research on tourists' perception of various pricing strategies after the COVID-19 pandemic. This study contributes to Matsuura & Saito [34], Shin et al. [3], and Im et al. [6] by extending the understanding of how price offers influence tourists' behavior after the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, this study provides insights into the effectiveness of different pricing strategies in drawing visitors to destinations post pandemic, generating possible solutions to alleviate the deleterious impact of the pandemic on the tourism industry. The findings reveal that the efficacy of pricing strategies in influencing tourists' intention to visit a destination post-pandemic is not equal, with several constraints to consider. The research highlights that tourists favored integrating hedonic and bundling pricing and pay-what-you-want pricing strategies over dynamic and dual pricing strategies. Notably, this study adopts a novel approach to examining the pricing strategy from the tourists' perspectives, contributing to the literature established by McCabe & Branco Illodo [4], which focused on the perspective of managers. Consequently, this work serves as a valuable contribution to analyzing the best potential strategies to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic in the tourism industry.

#### *4.2. Managerial Implications*

The research findings presented in this study offer valuable insights for Egyptian tourism managers seeking to understand tourists' preferences in Egypt destinations post-pandemic. This study highlights the importance of integrating bundling pricing and hedonic pricing strategies to enhance the attractiveness of holiday offers. Egyptian tourism managers can draw several important implications from this study as they work to optimize pricing approaches. First, leveraging hedonic pricing models allows providers like Nile cruise operators and resorts to customize packages for differing traveler interests. Communicating precisely what extras are included can boost value perception. Furthermore, bundling attractions common in Egypt like Pyramids tours, museum entries, and Galabia experiences provides diverse options catering to multi-generational families. Dynamic pricing must be carefully considered, as tourists may view last-minute rate hikes for Cairo hotels or ferry tickets to Luxor as unjust. Transparency around optimizing low/high season occupancy could mitigate reaction. Dual pricing can incentivize early bookings for popular desert campsites and day trips if structured prudently. Testing minor innovations for niche Adventures by The Nile activities through pilot programs allows gauging perspectives before wide deployment. Continued market research during recovery will also help Hurghada dive centers and cruise vendors adapt bundled amenities and packages aligning with shifting budgets and activities prioritized by younger travelers from Europe and Gulf nations. An optimized mix of valued approaches can strengthen Egypt's competitiveness.

This will help to ensure that any fluctuations in prices resulting from shifts in supply and demand are not solely attributed to their actions but rather reflect broader market

trends and conditions. By adhering to these principles, Egyptian tourism managers can enhance their reputation for fairness and integrity while maximizing revenue opportunities for their tourism businesses. These findings offer practical implications for Egyptian tourism managers seeking to enhance their understanding of tourists' preferences and improve their competitiveness post-COVID-19 pandemic.

## 5. The Study Limitations

The current study has several limitations. This study addresses the most prominent pricing strategies in tourism literature (e.g., hedonic, dual, pay what you want, bundling, and dynamic) that help recover tourism flows after the COVID-19 pandemic. We suggest avenues for further research studies to investigate other pricing strategies (e.g., penetration pricing, competitive pricing, loss leader pricing, psychological pricing, etc.), which help overcome the limitations of the literature. Also, this study focused on tourists who travel to Egypt. Therefore, future research should consider other destinations with different samples to obtain more complete results. Moreover, while positive intentions towards PWYW pricing are necessary, the future study needs to contextualize the perceptions' value on tourists' decisions to purchase or not, considering factors such as the nature of the product, service quality, and prior experience with the brand. Future studies need to consider the limitations of the PWYW pricing strategy during the COVID-19 pandemic and provide more insight into how service providers can adapt their pricing mechanisms to the changing realities of the tourism industry.

One of the notable limitations of the present study is the absence of behavioral theories in the pricing strategy context during and after the tourism crisis. While this study has offered valuable insights into the tourists' perceptions of various pricing strategies, the omission of theoretical perspectives poses a challenge in interpreting the data. Future studies should incorporate behavioral theories into their research design to better understand tourists' decision-making processes as they evaluate pricing strategies. One theory that could be applied effectively in the tourism industry is attribution theory. Attribution theory provides a framework for understanding how individuals perceive and interpret events and how they judge the causes of the events. Our ongoing research project seeks to incorporate behavioral theories, specifically attribution theory, into the context of the tourism industry's pricing strategy. With this theoretical framework, we aim to explore how tourists build their attributions towards different pricing strategies, considering the attribution dimensions of locus, stability, and controllability. Our objective is to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how tourists evaluate pricing strategies, providing service providers with valuable insights into optimizing their pricing strategies. Moreover, exploring whether priorities differ between males and females for various approaches is crucial in the future direction of studying demographic analysis in the context of tourism pricing.

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