

Exploring the Staycation Phenomenon After COVID-19: A Grounded Theory Approach

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Abstract: *The staycation phenomenon has received significant attention in recent years, especially during the pandemic, as more and more people choose to spend their free time close to home. However, the staycation phenomenon does not necessarily disappear when the pandemic ends, as many people, especially urban dwellers, still choose to do staycations as an alternative vacation. The continuous interest in staycations underscores the need for a deeper exploration of the motivations, experiences, and implications associated with this recreational trend. Therefore, this research employs a grounded theory approach to delve into aspects of the staycation phenomenon, aiming to provide a comprehensive understanding of its dynamics and impacts. Researchers conducted direct interviews with several millennial participants (aged 27 – 37 years old), seeking to uncover the fundamental factors driving individuals' decisions to choose staycations. By elucidating the determinants of staycation choice, this study is expected to contribute to the fields of recreation studies, and tourism, and provide fresh insights that can be utilized by the hospitality industry or related associations to enhance their services, thus ensuring that staycations remain a sustainable and inclusive recreational option for diverse populations. Based on the research results, the researchers obtained coding results of 42 from 9 respondents which were then classified into 19 categories and 13 themes: Location, Reviews, Price, Facility, Services, Proximity to the culinary / souvenir area, Healing, Cozy Place, Quality, Activity in Hotel, Me-time, Looking for New Atmosphere, Bonding. The highest scores that drive individual decisions in choosing a staycation is Healing.*

INTRODUCTION

The staycation phenomenon began during the pandemic of COVID-19 in Indonesia. Travel restrictions and limitations on outdoor activities made staycations a trend, as there was no need to

travel far, and the need for private and safe vacations could be met. The COVID-19 has dramatically changed the travel and tourism landscape around the world. Travel restrictions imposed to control the spread of the virus have forced many people to look for safer and more controlled holiday alternatives. During this situation, the staycation phenomenon has emerged as an increasingly popular solution for tourists who want to stay on holiday without having to leave the city or even their own home.

Based on Collin Dictionary, A staycation is a holiday that you spend in your own home or your own country, relaxing and enjoying leisure activities there. In the pandemic era, staycation can be understood as well as a strategy used by accommodation providers to attract guests by offering short holiday experiences lasting one to two nights. This is considered to be able to relieve stress or fatigue by carrying out recreational activities in the city or residence. This concept is popular among urbanites who are looking for relaxation and exploration without having to travel far (Suyasa, 2022). Staycations offer a convenient and cost-effective way to unwind and enjoy leisure time without the need for extensive travel.

The staycation trend that started since the pandemic itself can be proven from the picture below:



Figure 1. Google Trends searches for a staycation over the past ten years.

This data shows that the increase in searches using the keyword "staycation" began in August 2020 and continued even after the pandemic was over - data in May 2023 is the highest search on Google Trends for the keyword "staycation". We can see that before the pandemic of COVID-19, staycation was not something that popular. The purpose of a staycation itself varies depending on each individual's preferences. Families tend to look for children's recreational facilities, while travelers who want to explore the surroundings look for strategic locations. Some even have a staycation in the middle of the week to work from the hotel. The popularity of staycation criteria includes beautiful views, proximity to shopping centers and tourist attractions, as well as adequate pool and room facilities (Henry, (2021).

In line with the data above, as published in the coverage on Liputan6.com, the staycation trend persists and even continues to increase, as evidenced by hotel occupancy rates also show an increase, this is because currently, the hotel industry has become a lifestyle and a need for people to relax or vacation (Henry, 2023). Currently, there is an increasing demand for accommodation that combines high comfort with a touch of luxury service as a part of a staycation, some hotels or apartments even make their accommodation like a home, each room is equipped with a kitchen, equipment, and a washing machine. That way, guests can cook and do laundry in their rooms more comfortably. There are also 24-hour concierge and security services, daily housekeeping services, in-room dining, and transportation to or from the airport. Guests can also maintain

fitness through the swimming pool, 24/7 fitness center and sauna (Mutiah, 2023).

Nowadays, staycations are now experiencing a shift in perspective compared to the previous pandemic era, now staycations have been integrated into lifestyle choices and preferences to achieve work-life balance. Staycations have developed into a multifaceted cultural trend, and essentially offer a holiday experience close to home while replicating the atmosphere of a traditional holiday, staycation, is also an alternative where individuals choose to explore and experience local destinations on their own. (Zulaika, 2023).

Meanwhile, during the pandemic, Staycation is a concrete manifestation of a shift in societal norms in travel behavior, including perceptions of risk, especially health problems which have emerged as the main factor influencing the transformation of behavior among tourists. In the pandemic era, tourist behavior patterns are driven by the motivation to protect themselves from health risks originating from fear of exposure to the virus (Kurniasari, 2023).

This study aims to explore the staycation phenomenon in Indonesia after COVID-19 using a grounded theory approach. By adopting this approach, the study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the factors influencing the decision to choose a staycation, the experiences and motivations of individuals during their staycation, and the potential implications for the tourism industry in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative design with a Grounded Theory approach. A grounded theory is a systematic, qualitative procedure used to generate a theory that explains, at a broad conceptual level, a process, an action, or an interaction about a substantive topic (Creswell, J. 2016). Its analysis employs several distinct steps to reach conclusions. It initiates with coding, wherein interview transcripts are scrutinized to distill significant information into concise phrases, known as codes. These codes are subsequently organized into categorical groups during the categorization process. Each group is then linked to its corresponding theme, facilitating the emergence of broader conceptual insights (Fauzan 2024)

This research uses interview techniques which function as a basic technique for gathering in-depth insights about participants' experiences, perceptions, and behavior. Interviews allow researchers to delve into the intricacies of human experience, offering a wealth of data that cannot be easily captured through other means (Dursun, B., 2023)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Data collection used one-on-one interview techniques, participants were aged between 25 - 37 years with various professions ranging from private employees, housewives, and creative workers, to doctors (Table 1). In data processing, researchers carried out a coding process (Table 2), specifically focusing on the use of open coding. This emphasizes the importance of analyzing codes to identify similarities and group them into categories based on common properties (Khandkar, S. H. 2009).

Table 1. Respondent Data

Name	Age	Profession
Sari Dwi Noviayanti	29 years old	Online Seller
Anna Andriyanti	32 years old	Employee
Chika	37 years old	Sales Manager
Mela	33 years old	Housewife
Aya	25 years old	Graphic Designer

Kevin	33 years old	Employee
Fauziah Fikri, Wardhani	27 years old	Doctor
Arya Arifin	27 years old	Employee
Andi Sarah	30 years old	College Student

From the results of the interviews that were carried out, the researcher obtained coding results of 42 from 9 respondents which were then classified into 5 categories which included Facility, Motivation For Staycation, Staycation Activity, psychological and Emotional Response, Personal Preference in Choosing Place to Stay (Table 2).

Table 2. Coding Results

Respondent	Coding	Category																
		Facility	Sport Activity	Indoor Activity	Bonding with Family / Friend	Nearby culinary area / shopping area	Hotel with good star	Nearby Location	Price	Reviews	Feeling happy / relax afterward	Services	Instagramable place	Healing	Large bedroom	Me-time	Cozy Place	New Atmosphere
Sari Dwi Noviyanti, 29 yo, Online Seller	Spending quality time with families or besties				1													
	Pool, Gym, Kitchen	1																
	Swimming, Gym		1															
	Cooking																	
	Price affordable																	
	Feel happy after staycation from reviews about the place									1	1							
Anna Andriyanti, 32 yo, Employee	A holiday without too much activity													1				
	Minimum 4 star hotel						1											
	Pool	1																
	Rooms are more spacious (suite)														1			
	Swimming		1															
	Gossiping with friend				1													
Chika, 37 yo, Sales Manager	Soak in the bathup								1							1		
	Location not too far																	
	Cozy place																1	
	Bath-up, kitchen, pool	1																
	Soak in the bathup															1		
	Swimming		1															
Mela, 33yo, Housewife	Cooking				1													
	Price range start from 450k								1									
	Want to relax for a while after tired at work													1				
	More fresh after staycation										1							
	Because you don't have to go anywhere far away, you don't have to look for other tourist destinations, you can just go to that place (nearby home)							1										
	Pool	1																
Aya, 25yo, Graphic Designer	Budget								1				1					
	place that instagramable																	
	nearby culinary area, nearby souvenir area					1												
	Healing												1					
	Cheap accommodation																	
	the location is not too far							1										
Kevin, 32yo, Employee	Budget								1									
	Chit chat with bestie				1													
	watching movie, play game, eating				1													
	Cozy place																1	
	good services (Netflix or other streaming platform),											1						
	Refresh																	
Fauziah Fikri, Wardhani, 27 yo, Doctor	relieve fatigue from work																	
	budget								1						1			
	reference from social media (IG & Tiktok)									1								
	looking for the culinary near the hotel					1												
	Feel more refresh											1						
	try a new atmosphere, because feel bored at home																	1
Arya Arifin, 27 yo, Employee	Playing game				1													
	Chit chat with bestie					1												
	Low budget								1									
	good place																1	
	can accommodate many people														1			
	The mind becomes fresher											1						
Andi Sarah Buqis, 30 , College Student	Try a new atmosphere																	1
	Playing game				1													
	chit chat with friend					1												
	The mind becomes fresher											1						
	Promo																	1
	Gather with family or closest friend,					1												
	chit-chat, cooking, using the facilities				1													
	Budget								1									
	reference from social media										1							
	nearby from home							1										
	Relieve from stress											1						

After the coding process is complete, the next step is to classify the categories into major themes. This is to find out the relationship between the categories that have been compiled. From the research results, four major themes were obtained from the results of interviews with nine respondents: Reason for Staycation, Activity, Impact and Preference (Table 3)

Table 3. Themes Result

Category	Score	Themes													
		Location	Reviews	Price	Facility	Services	Proximity to the culinary / souvenir area	Healing	Cozy Place	Quality	Activity in Hotel	Me-time	Looking for New Atmosphere	Bonding	
Facility	4				4										
Sport Activity	3										3				
Indoor Activity	5										5				
Bonding with Family / Friend	6													6	
Nearby culinary area / shopping area	2						2								
Hotel with good star	1									1					
Nearby Location	4	4													
Price	7			7											
Reviews	3		3												
Feeling happy / relax afterward	7							7							
Services	1					1									
Instagramable place	2								2						
Healing	3							3							
Large bedroom	2				2										
Me-time	2											2			
Cozy Place	3								3						
New Atmosphere	2												2		
Promo	1			1											
Total	58	4	3	8	6	1	2	10	5	1	8	2	2		

Based on the result above, the Healing theme got the highest score, namely 10, then the price and the activity that can be done in a hotel were in second place with a score of each are 8.

CONCLUSION

Based on research conducted on nine respondents representing various professions with ages ranging from 25 years old to 37 years old, it can be concluded that the staycation phenomenon continues even after the pandemic has ended, the factor that influences people to have a staycation during the post-pandemic period is because they want to heal for a moment from the busy routine they carry out every day.

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