

Tourism in Times of Scarcity: Traveling During the Pandemic

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Abstract

The financial and health limitations imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic require extensive changes in people's lives, specifically regarding travel. But might consumers use travel as an emotional regulation tool or a reward during pandemic times? The present work sheds light on how COVID-19 activates unexpected travel behaviors and how consumers' views on traveling shift depending on the scarcity mindset (high vs. low mutability). Paradoxically, results from three studies (N = 889) show that monetary scarcity can increase consumers' predisposition to travel post-COVID as a way to restore well-being (Study 1). Studies 2 and 3 further investigate this unexpected downstream effect by showing that pandemic effects on travel behavior depend on the way consumers construe scarcity (low vs. high mutability). When consumers frame the pandemic as an external threat with low (vs. high) mutability, they have a more positive attitude to travel during the pandemic and perceive traveling as less risky.

Keywords: *COVID-19; mutability; scarcity*

Track: Tourism Marketing