

Consumer evaluations of the tourist industry's response to the COVID-19 crisis and their attitudes towards future travel

Stephanie Slater
Cardiff University
Carmela Bosangit
Cardiff University

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Abstract

Since the COVID-19 pandemic broke out in 2019 the global tourism industry has seen a rapid decline in the number of travellers going abroad for their holidays. The uncertainty brought on by the pandemic to the tourism industry has deterred travels for many at a global scale due to lockdowns, fast-changing and varying rules on travel and increasing cases of the pandemic. Adopting a qualitative research approach, this paper examines how COVID-19 has affected tourists' holiday packages and how tour operators responded to the crisis. The data was collected between the months of July and September 2020 which also allowed us to explore tourists attitude towards making future plans (i.e. their willingness to travel and perception of risk). The findings have managerial implications for the tourism industry, in particular the tour operators as they provide valuable insights on what consumers think of the current crisis, their opinions of how tour companies handled it and the circumstance in which they are likely to travel in the future. This paper can contribute to literature on crisis response strategies and travel risk perception during a health pandemic.

Keywords: *COVID-19; package holidays; travel risk perception*

Track: Tourism Marketing