

# We are all in this Together! Evolution of the Brand-related Sentiment in Times of Global Crisis

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## **Abstract**

The COVID-19 pandemic, which started at the end of 2019, soon emerged as a major global service crisis. Given its novelty and unprecedented scale, COVID-19's effects on customers remain underexplored. Of particular interest is how customers' reactions evolve as the crisis develops. This study employs sentiment analysis on 276,000 airline-directed tweets to provide an empirical account of the longitudinal development of brand-related sentiment and content during the lasting exogenous crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The results indicate that while the sentiment towards the airlines improves significantly in the early stages of the crisis, the improvement is not lasting. A similar is true to the content of the tweets. We argue that ignoring the detected sentiment trend could mislead service providers' evaluations of the crisis response strategy's effectiveness.

**Subject Areas:** *Attitude, Consumer Behaviour, Consumer Services, Customer Relationship Management and Customer Satisfaction, Decision Support Systems*

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