

Immersive Demarketing: Leveraging 360° Videos to Mitigate Tourism Demand at Overtourism Hotspots

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Abstract

Abstract: Overtourism at iconic sites harms the environment, disrupts local communities and undermines visitor experiences. Restrictive measures are widely used to control tourist flows, often triggering political backlash, while psychological approaches remain underused. Building on grounded cognition theory, we investigate whether immersive 360° videos can serve demarketing objectives. Across two experimental studies (N = 193; N = 465), immersive portrayals of severe crowding significantly reduce visit intentions through heightened negative affect and reduced cognitive absorption. Effects are stronger among independent travelers. Crowding simulations not only deter intentions to visit but also increase openness to alternative destinations, enabling strategic demand redistribution. Our findings advance grounded cognition and immersive technology research within tourism demarketing and provide destination managers with a scalable, non-restrictive tool to influence tourist behavior. Keywords: overtourism, demarketing, immersive technology

Track: Tourism Marketing