

Investigation of people familiarity towards virtual tourism as an alternative to travel

Rafidola Mareta Riesa^{1*}, Alfatah Haries²

^{1,2} *Destinasi Pariwisata, Politeknik Negeri Padang, Indonesia*

**Corresponding author: Rafidola Mareta Riesa*

Corresponding email: rafidola@pnp.ac.id

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 18 August 2022

Accepted 02 October 2022

Available 10 October 2022

ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought the development of the tourism industry to a very low point. With social restrictions, people are expected not to travel in advance and can keep their distance. This research aims to further deepen public understanding regarding virtual tourism and its use in the city of Padang during the lockdown at various tourist objects. This research found that the government introduced virtual tourism as an alternative amid distance restrictions, because tourist can enjoy the tourism object without having to be physically present. The availability of many media that can be used as tools in displaying virtual tourism. This research provides suggestions so that the relevant government can provide socialization to the community so that virtual tourism can be used as an alternative to traveling during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords:

Virtual Tourism, Lockdown,
Social distancing, Virtual event,
Virtual destination



<https://doi.org/10.55980/ebasr.v1i3.30>

1. Introduction

Since the outbreak of COVID-19 throughout the world in 2020, almost all countries have anticipated the spread of the virus by limiting the mobilization of the population (de Palma et al., 2022; Yu et al., 2023; Zubairu Surajo, 2022), both entering and leaving the country. Around 181 countries out of 200 countries in the world have been affected by the COVID-19 virus and caused casualties. There were nearly three million cases with 207,978 fatalities. Thus, several countries implemented lockdown policies (Cantarutti & Márquez Reiter, 2022) to slowing down the spread of the virus and to reduce the number of sufferers (Agius et al., 2022; Chela-Alvarez et al., 2022; Tsai et al., 2022). With a lockdown, the country closes its borders and suppresses transportation movements so that it simultaneously suppresses the movement of the virus (Sakawa & Watanabel, 2022; Yan et al., 2022).

As recommended by the World Health Organization, Indonesia is also implementing a lockdown and social distancing policy (Rahmawati et al., 2022; Syafitri et al., 2022). Physical restrictions in the community are applied. According to WHO, it is a fairly effective step to break the chain of transmission of COVID-19. The government has also given instructions to stop all activities that cause crowds. However, the facts that there are still many of these activities that have escaped the monitoring of the authorities. So that the government issued regulations through the Ministry of Health (Kemenkes) which are regulated in Minister of Health Regulation (Permenkes) No.9/2020 concerning Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) in the framework of accelerating the handling of COVID-19, so that it can be immediately implemented in various regions.

Then, this regulation was applied in several regions in Indonesia, including West Sumatra Province, which consists of 19 regencies. Padang as the capital of the province of West Sumatra is one of the cities with quite high cases of COVID-19, with 78 death cases. With the widespread of COVID-19 in the Padang city, the local government is increasingly conducting outreach to the public so they don't carry out activities outside the home (Dianat et al., 2022; Naseri et al., 2023), organize worship in places of worship (Dahlan et al., 2021; Makridis, 2022), and travel (Ancheta et al., 2023; Hossain et al., 2023; Vukomanovic et al., 2022), both within and outside the city.

Since the spread of COVID-19, tourism sector experienced a very heavy impact, where all lines of tourism activities have stopped (Henseler et al., 2022; Huang et al., 2021; Langle-Flores et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2023). To anticipate the negative impact of movement restrictions due to lockdown, virtual tourism is promoted as a alternative solution of limiting access to tourism destinations (Talwar et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2022). Virtual tourism is usually presented in the form of a virtual tour that technology places the user in the picture and allows the user to increase situational awareness and significantly increase viewing, capturing and analyzing virtual data (Chen et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2020; Verma et al., 2022). Virtual tour itself is usually used to give the experience of "having been" somewhere just by looking at the monitor screen (Cheng & Huang, 2022; Wei et al., 2023). Presentation of virtual tours can be done by utilizing images, photos or videos, besides that you can also use 3-dimensional models (Abbasi et al., 2023; Li et al., 2019).

This research aims to explore public understanding regarding virtual tourism and its practice during lockdown at various tourist objects. The results of this research are the development of virtual reality products in the field of tourism in the city of Padang. Aside from being an alternative for travel, Virtual tourism can also be developed as a medium for product promotion and tourist destinations in the city of Padang.

2. Methods

To find out how far the people of Padang are familiar with virtual tours, this research used the Google Docs platform as a medium for distributing questionnaires (questionnaire), which was developed as a data collection instrument. Respondents of this study was limited to the productive age group and determined randomly. According to the City of Padang in Figures (2019) the population of the city of Padang of productive age (15-64 years) in 2018 was 660,803 people. So that the number of respondents can be determined using the formula for determining the number of samples by Slovin as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}n &= N / (1 + Ne^2) \\n &= 660.803 / (1 + 660.803(0,10)^2) \\n &= 660.803 / 6,609,03 \\n &= 99,984 \sim 100\end{aligned}$$

Information:

n: minimum number of samples

N: population

e: error margin

This research model refers to the classification of social media and online travel communities developed by Fernandez, Amboage and Boga (2019), as follows:

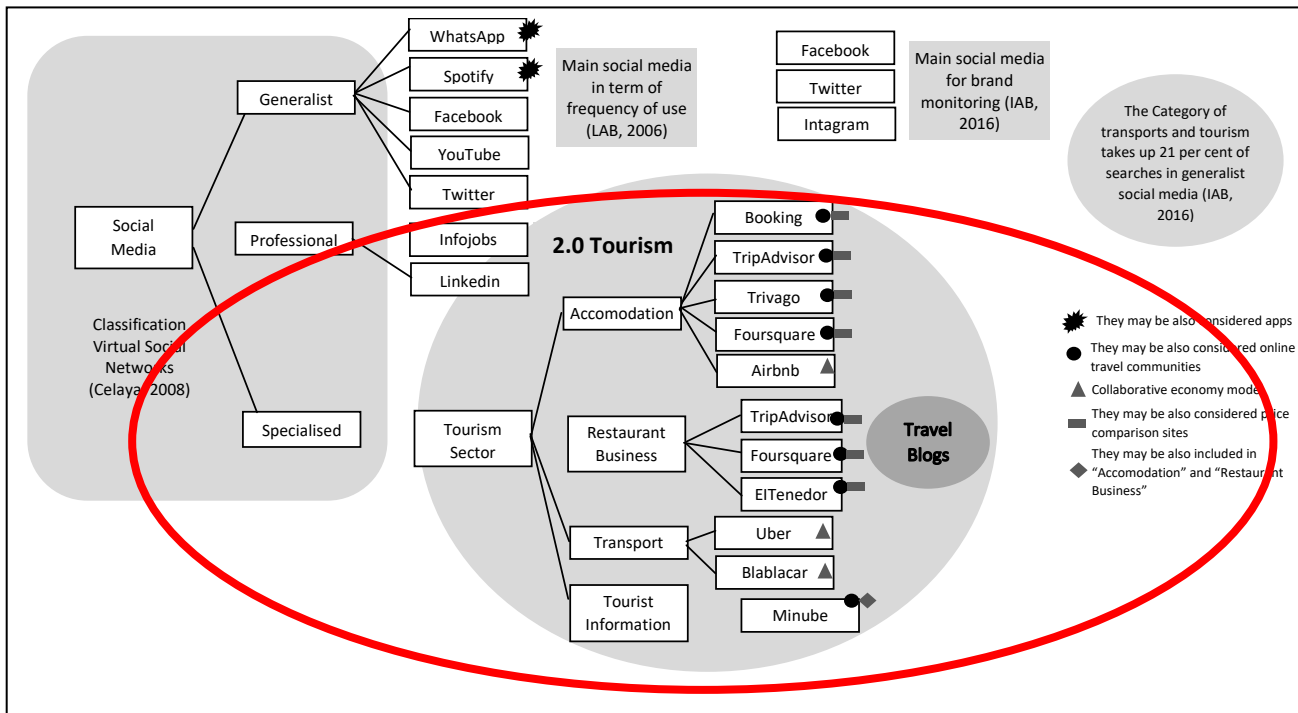


Figure 1. Adopted from Fernandez, Amboage and Boga (2019)

The results of the research entitled Review of the Familiarity of the Padang City Community Against Virtual Tourism as a Travel Alternative are expected to be the first base for further research that is planned and can contribute to the development of Virtual Tourism, especially in the City of Padang, and West Sumatra in general. For this reason, the plan for conducting this research is shown in the flow chart (roadmap) in the form of a fishbone of figure 2.

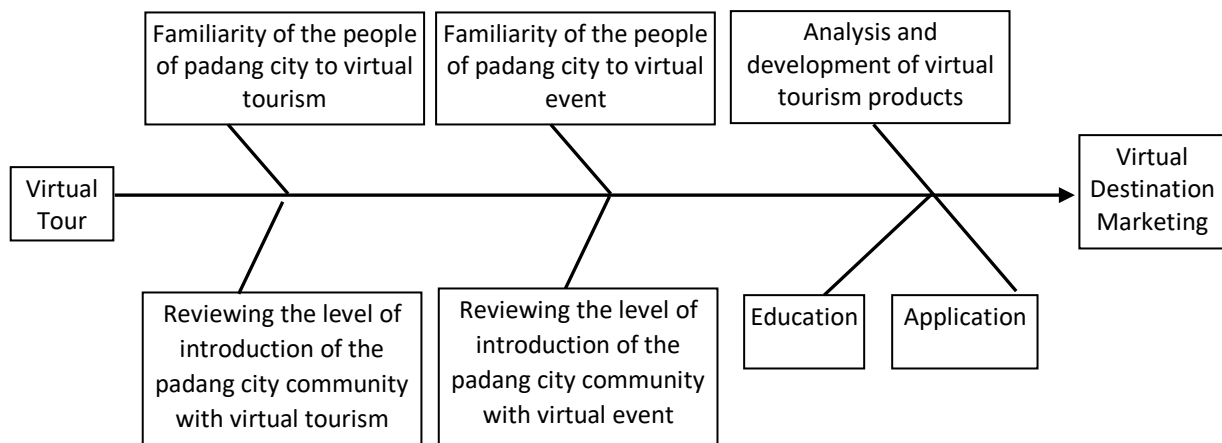


Figure 2: Research Flowchart

In the figure 2, it is shown that this research is aimed at obtaining virtual tourism product development.

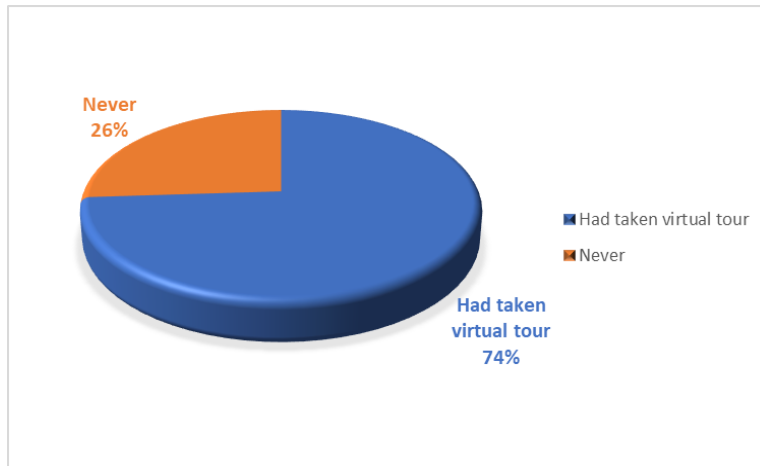


Figure 3, Respondents Have Taken a Virtual Tour

3. Results

From this questionnaire it can be seen that as many as 26% (26 respondents) stated that they had taken a virtual tour and as many as 74% (74 respondents) had never taken a virtual tour. This means that most of the respondents are not familiar with virtual tours. So far, before COVID19, the people of Padang City carried out tourism activities by visiting tourist objects directly. When the COVID-19 outbreak broke out, the people of Padang City thought they could no longer travel.

As many as 69% (18 respondents) took virtual tours during COVID-19, while 31% (8 respondents) took virtual tours before the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the COVID-19 pandemic broke out and various travel bans including travel were limited, people who are thirsty for tourism activities have turned to using technology for tourism. Virtual tours are an option during the pandemic because they are considered more efficient and provide new experiences in traveling for the community.

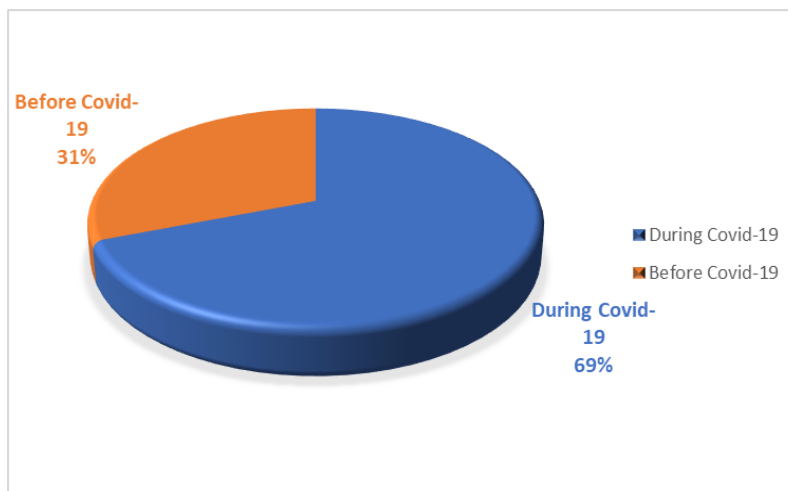


Figure 4, When did Respondents Take a Virtual Tour (virtual tours)

As many as 26% (10 respondents) conducted virtual tour activities via Youtube. As many as 23% (9 respondents) carry out virtual tour activities via Zoom. Another 23% (9 respondents) conducted virtual tour activities through the website. As many as 18% (7 respondents) carried out

virtual tour activities via Instagram and 10% (4 respondents) conducted virtual tour activities via Facebook.

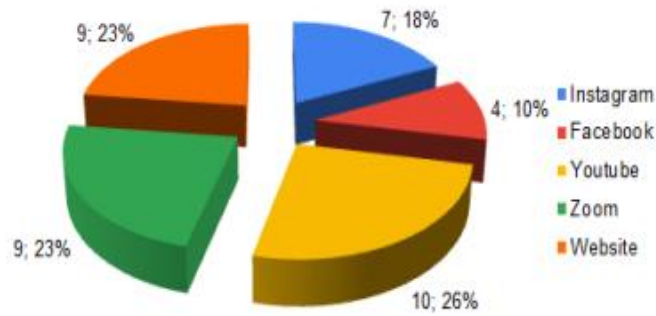


Figure 6: Respondent Media Accessing Virtual Tour

From the results of research conducted using a questionnaire, some of the travel trips that have been carried out by respondents virtually are: Bandung, Nature Tourism, Tourism Village, Culinary tour, Louvre Museum Tour, Cingkuak Island, Arau Valley Tour, Sawahlunto Heritage, Labuan Bajo, Explore Google Earth, Raja Ampat, Bromo, Mande, Sikuai, Maldives, Bandung Geological Museum.

Respondents already know several virtual tour products. As many as 30% know Interactive 360° Video as a virtual tour product. As many as 23% know video as a virtual tour product and as many as 18% know Virtual Reality Photography (VRP) as a virtual tour product. As many as 15% know 360° Video as a virtual tour product and 14% know pictures and photos as a virtual tour product.

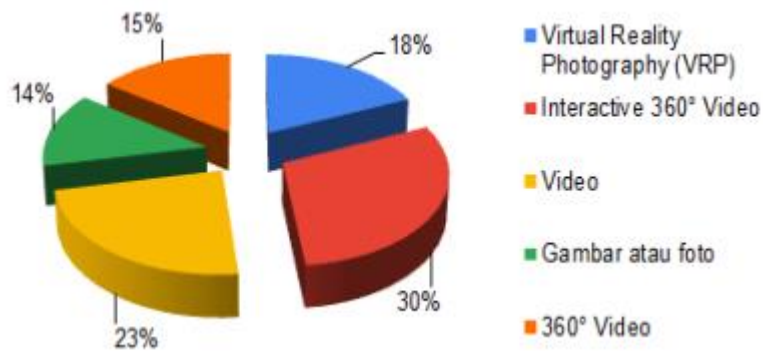


Figure 7: Data on Respondents' Knowledge of Virtual Tour Products

4. Discussion

From the results of this study it can be concluded that, out of the 100 respondents in this study, there were 26 respondents who had taken a virtual tour, while the other 74 respondents had never taken a virtual tour. Among the 26 respondents, not all respondents understand what media can be used to enjoy virtual tours. In this case, it can be concluded that the people of the city of Padang are not very familiar with virtual tourism, which is an alternative to current tours during the COVID-19 pandemic. Traveling virtually also provides a different experience that can be felt by tourists visiting tourist objects without having to be directly at the object. Furthermore, from 26 respondents who had taken a virtual tour, 18 respondents (69%) took this virtual tour when the COVID-19 pandemic occurred and another 8 respondents (31%) had taken a virtual tour long before the COVID-19 pandemic occurred happened.

5. Conclusion

This research aims to further deepen public understanding regarding virtual tourism and its use in the city of Padang during the lockdown at various tourist objects. The government and related institutions can provide an understanding to the public about virtual tours as an alternative to traveling during a pandemic. The government and virtual tour content providers can increase content production so that they can provide a travel experience to the public, especially during a pandemic like now, besides that it is hoped that this can also break the chain of transmission of COVID-19.

6. References

- Abbasi, A. Z., Tsiotsou, R. H., Hussain, K., Rather, R. A., & Ting, D. H. (2023). Investigating the impact of social media images' value, consumer engagement, and involvement on eWOM of a tourism destination: A transmittal mediation approach. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 71(December 2022), 103231. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2022.103231>
- Agius, K., Sindico, F., Sajeve, G., & Baldacchino, G. (2022). "Splendid isolation": Embracing islandness in a global pandemic. *Island Studies Journal*, 17(1), 44–65. <https://doi.org/10.24043/isj.163>
- Ancheta, D. P., Tani, R., & Uchida, K. etsu. (2023). The relationship of social vulnerability and travel behavior with COVID-19 in Metro Manila, Philippines. *Asian Transport Studies*, 9(March 2022), 100093. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eastsj.2022.100093>
- Cantarutti, M. N., & Márquez Reiter, R. (2022). "What have you done?" Accounting for Covid-19 lockdown breaches on talk radio. *Discourse, Context and Media*, 49(December 2021). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dcm.2022.100639>
- Chela-Alvarez, X., Sanchez-Rodriguez, C., Bulilete, O., Vidal-Thomàs, Mc., & Llobera, J. (2022). Experiences and Concerns of Female Hotel Housekeepers in the First Stages of the COVID-19 Lockdown in the Balearic Islands (Spain): A Qualitative Study. *Qualitative Report*, 27(12), 2816–2838. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2022.5153>
- Chen, Y., Chen, R., Hou, J., Hou, M., & Xie, X. (2021). Research on users' participation mechanisms in virtual tourism communities by Bayesian network. *Knowledge-Based Systems*, 226, 107161. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.knosys.2021.107161>
- Cheng, L. K., & Huang, H. L. (2022). Virtual tourism atmospheres: The effects of pleasure, arousal, and dominance on the acceptance of virtual tourism. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 53(May), 143–152. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2022.10.002>
- Dahlan, M., Bustami, M. R., Makmur, & Mas'ulah, S. (2021). The Islamic principle of hifz al-nafs (protection of life) and COVID-19 in Indonesia: A case study of nurul iman mosque of Bengkulu city. *Heliyon*, 7(7), e07541. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2021.e07541>
- de Palma, A., Vosough, S., & Liao, F. (2022). An overview of effects of COVID-19 on mobility and lifestyle: 18 months since the outbreak. *Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice*, 159(January), 372–397. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tra.2022.03.024>
- Dianat, A., Hawkins, J., & Habib, K. N. (2022). Assessing the impacts of COVID-19 on activity-travel scheduling: A survey in the greater Toronto area. *Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice*, 162(June), 296–314. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tra.2022.06.008>
- Henseler, M., Maisonnave, H., & Maskaeva, A. (2022). Economic impacts of COVID-19 on the tourism sector in Tanzania. *Annals of Tourism Research Empirical Insights*, 3(1), 100042. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annale.2022.100042>
- Hossain, S., Islam, A., & Akther, M. S. (2023). COVID-19 impact on travel and work habits of office workers in Bangladesh. *Transportation Engineering*, 11(August 2022), 100162. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.treng.2023.100162>
- Huang, S. (Sam), Shao, Y., Zeng, Y., Liu, X., & Li, Z. (2021). Impacts of COVID-19 on Chinese nationals' tourism preferences. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 40(February), 100895. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2021.100895>
- Kim, M. J., Lee, C. K., & Preis, M. W. (2020). The impact of innovation and gratification on authentic experience, subjective well-being, and behavioral intention in tourism virtual reality: The moderating role of technology readiness. *Telematics and Informatics*, 49(January), 101349. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2020.101349>

- Langle-Flores, A., López-Vázquez, Z., Chávez-Dagostino, R. M., & Aguilar-Rodríguez, A. (2022). COVID-19 Impacts on Whale-Watching Collaboration Networks. *Sustainability*, 14(21), 13846. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su142113846>
- Li, C., Guo, S., Wang, C. L., & Zhang, J. (2019). Veni, vidi, vici: The impact of social media on virtual acculturation in tourism context. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 145(November 2017), 513–522. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2019.01.013>
- Liu, Y., Cheng, X., Liao, S. S., & Yang, F. (2023). The impact of COVID-19 on the tourism and hospitality Industry: Evidence from international stock markets. *North American Journal of Economics and Finance*, 64(December 2022), 101875. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.najef.2022.101875>
- Makridis, C. A. (2022). When houses of worship go empty: The effects of state restrictions on well-being among religious adherents. *European Economic Review*, 149(September), 104279. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.euroecorev.2022.104279>
- Naseri, M., Delbosc, A., & Kamruzzaman, L. (2023). The role of neighbourhood design in cycling activity during COVID-19: An exploration of the Melbourne experience. *Journal of Transport Geography*, 106(November 2022), 103510. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jtrangeo.2022.103510>
- Rahmawati, R., Ratnasari, S. L., Hidayati, T., Ramadania, R., & Tjahjono, H. K. (2022). What makes Gen Y and Z feel stressed, anxious and interested in doing social tourism when pandemic? *Cogent Business and Management*, 9(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2022.2084973>
- Sakawa, H., & Watanabel, N. (2022). The impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on Japanese shipping industry: An event study approach. *Transport Policy*, 130(July 2022), 130–140. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tranpol.2022.11.002>
- Syafitri, W., Prestianawati, S. A., & Naldi, G. A. (2022). the Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on Informal Sector Migrants in Rural East Java-Indonesia. *International Journal of Professional Business Review*, 7(4), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.26668/businessreview/2022.v7i4.e566>
- Talwar, S., Kaur, P., Escobar, O., & Lan, S. (2022). Virtual reality tourism to satisfy wanderlust without wandering: An unconventional innovation to promote sustainability. *Journal of Business Research*, 152(July), 128–143. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2022.07.032>
- Tsai, I. C., Chiang, Y. H., & Lin, S. Y. (2022). Effect of COVID-19 lockdowns on city-center and suburban housing markets: Evidence from Hangzhou, China. *Journal of Asian Economics*, 83(101), 101544. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.asieco.2022.101544>
- Verma, S., Warriar, L., Bolia, B., & Mehta, S. (2022). Past, present, and future of virtual tourism-a literature review. *International Journal of Information Management Data Insights*, 2(2). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jjime.2022.100085>
- Vukomanovic, J., Barbieri, C., Knollenberg, W., Yoshizumi, A., & Arroyo, C. G. (2022). To travel or not to travel during COVID-19: The influence of political ideology on travel intentions in the USA. *Annals of Tourism Research Empirical Insights*, 3(2), 100078. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annale.2022.100078>
- Wei, Z., Zhang, J., Huang, X., & Qiu, H. (2023). Can gamification improve the virtual reality tourism experience? Analyzing the mediating role of tourism fatigue. *Tourism Management*, 96(November 2021), 104715. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2022.104715>
- Yan, Y., Zhong, S., Tian, J., & Jia, N. (2022). An empirical study on consumer automobile purchase intentions influenced by the COVID-19 outbreak. *Journal of Transport Geography*, 104(January), 103458. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jtrangeo.2022.103458>
- Yu, L., Zhao, P., Tang, J., & Pang, L. (2023). Changes in tourist mobility after COVID-19 outbreaks. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 98, 103522. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2022.103522>
- Zhang, S. N., Li, Y. Q., Ruan, W. Q., & Liu, C. H. (2022). Would you enjoy virtual travel? The characteristics and causes of virtual tourists' sentiment under the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic. *Tourism Management*, 88(July 2021). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2021.104429>
- Zubairu Surajo, A. (2022). Covid-19 pandemic and social exclusion in Kano Metropolis: challenges and the prospects. *Economics, Business, Accounting & Society Review*, 1(2), Press. <https://doi.org/10.55980/ebasr.v1i2.21>