**Minimising Perceived Travel Risk in the Aftermath of the COVID-19 Pandemic to Boost Travel and Tourism**

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**Abstract**

***Purpose***

This study empirically confirms expected impact of COVID-19 related perceived travel risk on the likelihood of tourists to visit a destination. It then aims at identifying the key predictors of perceived travel risk in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

***Design/methodology/approach***

A mixed methods design is adopted. In the first phase referred to as study 1, a cross-sectional design is adopted based on a sample of 217 international outgoing tourists surveyed at the Mauritian International Airport and data analysed using hierarchical regression. In phase 2, referred to as study 2, a purposive sample of tourists around the world are interviewed and data analysed using the thematic analysis technique.

***Findings***

The results show that among those tourists who are willing to travel in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis, the related perceived risk is likely to influence their traveling intention. Several key predictors of perceived travel risks are uncovered, those are categorised as: COVID-19 status; transportation services; national sanitary measures; healthcare services; accommodation services; ecotourism facilities. Moreover, the potential effects of those factors on perceived COVID-19 related travel risk are likely to be moderated by trustworthiness of information.

***Originality***

The study provides an original comprehensive model to understand the predictors of perceived travel risks in relation to COVID-19 at a destination.

***Practical implications***

The implications of the study are important for researchers and policy makers to better understand and predict travellers’ behaviour in times of pandemics and also to tourism marketers, and transport and hospitality service providers to more effectively manage and mitigate the effect of such events.