CHOICE BETWEEN URBAN AND NATURE TOURISM DURING THE COVID -19 PANDEMIC IN INTERNATIONAL TOURISM

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Abstract - In a world shaken up by COVID-19, tourism managements must rearrange there offering of sites, facilities, and attractions across destinations. Tourism research deals primarily with management and development from the suppliers' perspective and focus on specific destination. The objective of this study is to better understand these issues from the tourist (demand) point of view. Such approach is suitable for all destinations and does not focus on a specific one. The tourist preferences over urban and rural destinations may have changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its social implications.

This research tests the association between the tourist's preference over rural and urban sites and the desire for novelty, keenness to interact with the local community, spontaneity, and socio-demographic data. This research is based on a on a self-administrated questionnaire collected in June 2021 and covers 505 respondents. The survey included questions regarding the tourists domestic and international preferences. The results indicate that on international traveling there is no significant differences between pre-COVID-19 and current situation considering tourists preference over urban and rural sites. While in domestic tourism the preference for rural sites increases. In addition, the preference over rural and urban sites in international tour depends on desire for novelty, keenness to interact with the local community and spontaneity. For domestic tourism the preference depends on desire for novelty and education. In both cases tourists who define themselves as urban type prefer to travel to urban destinations and vice versa.

Keywords - Tourist Preferences; Urban Destinations; Rural Destinations