

THE YOUNG TRAVELLERS BEHAVIOUR FACING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Andreea MARIN-PANTELESCU¹ ORCID: 0000-0001-9773-1018

Abstract: On January 29, 2020, at the Ministry of Internal Affairs took place the meeting of the Technical-Scientific Support Group on the management of highly contagious diseases on the territory of Romania, following the declaration of emergency state for public health with international impact due to the new Coronavirus. On March 16, 2020, it was decided to suspend the serving and consumption activity in restaurants, hotels, cafes, and public establishments. Their activity was able to continue with home delivery or other activities, that do not involve customers on the premises. For the first time in 30 years, tourism stopped. The state of emergency closed down the tourism activity and nobody knew for how long. The following months were tense and hard to manage with pressure from the employers' organizations in the tourism sector to get back to normal as soon as possible. Thus, in that restricted period it was opportune to carry out a research on the travel preferences of young travellers in Romania. Between April 27, 2020, and May 24, 2020, a marketing questionnaire was conducted within the Bucharest University of Economic Studies, alongside students from the Faculty of Business and Tourism, to investigate the behaviour of young tourism consumers facing the Covid-19 pandemic. The sample size was 384 respondents, of which 47.4% were aged between 18-20 years, 35.7% were aged between 21-23 years and 16.9% between 24-26 years. Regarding the gender of the respondents, 61.5% were women and 38.5% men. As study level, 90.3% bachelor's degree, 8.9% master's degree, and 0.8% doctorate. The results showed that 78.4% of the respondents intended to spend their holidays in the country, only 21.6% abroad, and 63.7% intended to go on holiday as soon as the self-isolation measures were raised. As means of transport used to get to the holiday destination, 78% opted for the personal car, and the main forms of tourism desired were adventure tourism (42.6%) and family vacation (39.6%). As it can be seen, young travellers do not give up holidays in 2020, except these will be made in isolated places, for a shorter period and with great care for social distancing rules.

Keywords: *youth tourism, Covid-19, hotels, travel, tourists' arrivals*

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¹ Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania, Faculty of Business and Tourism, Department of Tourism and Geography, Romania, Email: marin.andreea@com.ase.ro

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Pp. 17-24