

Understanding Factor Influence in Mask-Wearing Intention Onboard Airplanes during COVID-19: Attitude as a Mediator

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Abstract : Airlines in the US have taken protective measures to battle the COVID-19 pandemic, with a mask mandate being the most important one, especially in the aircraft cabin. As the industry is recovering from the pandemic, mask-wearing will eventually become a personal choice during flight. Nevertheless, COVID-19 will continue to create uncertainty for a long time into the future, making it necessary to understand the attitude and voluntary use of masks by air travelers on airplanes even after masks are no longer mandatory. This study aimed to understand the relationship between demographic characteristics and mask-wearing intention in the US. For age, gender, income, educational, and ethnicity groups, this study examined three factors - subjective norms, risk avoidance, and information seeking and their influence on the mask-wearing intention onboard airplanes during COVID-19 and whether or not attitude toward masks was an important mediator. The results show that all demographic factors except gender could help to explain the group variations in factor impact and the mediating effect in mask-wearing intentions. In particular, Asian travelers had mask-wearing intentions that were not affected by attitude either directly or indirectly. These findings provide useful implications to enhance the health and safety of air travelers, especially in the US, where opposing views toward mask-wearing still widely exist.

Keywords : COVID-19, passenger demographics, aircraft cabin, mask-wearing intention, attitude as mediator

Conference Title : ICTPP 2022 : International Conference on Transportation Planning and Policy

Conference Location : Bali, Indonesia

Conference Dates : October 20-21, 2022