

## **Sustainability | Individual communication**

### **IC - (20839) - THE SOCIAL COGNITIVE DETERMINANTS OF AVOIDING CROWDED PLACES: A COMPARISON ACROSS FOUR LARGE CITIES**

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#### **Background and objectives**

Why citizens undertake physical distancing from crowded places during pandemics remains understudied. This study seeks to explain this behavior through an integrated model using a multinational sample and then analyze cultural differences in their components.

#### **Process and methods (for empirical research)**

The survey was conducted online with 1196 respondents in four cities: Taipei, Tokyo, New York, and Brasilia. Questions in a Likert-type scale of five points focused on the theory of planned behavior, risk perception, and moral norms.

#### **Main results (or main arguments in the case of critical reviews)**

In the total sample, the model explained roughly 40% of the variance in behavior by risk perception, moral norms, and the determinants of planned behavior. Differences in injunctive norms, risk evaluation, perceived behavioral control, and intention explained 47% of variation in behavior in Brasilia, 36% in Tokyo, 33% in New York, and 20% in Taipei. Significant differences were found across their mean scores especially in risk perception, moral norms, and behavior. The results suggested that in (1) Tokyo, the determinants explained behavior well, but they lack salience, due to relatively low scores; (2) Taipei presented results that reflect its controlled situation, showing that model's sensitiveness to the public health situation; (3) Brasilia, in a low-income country under emergency, had the largest scores for fear, moral norms, and behavior; (4) New York citizens can be most motivated to avoid crowded places by positive beliefs and injunctive norms, which its administrative policies could reflect.

#### **Implications for research and practice/policy | Importance and originality of the contribution**

The results underscore that authorities and researchers should consider social-cognitive determinants along with cities' cultural and public health differences in environment behavior studies in the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, scholars should include (1) risk perception, due to willingness for self-protection, and (2) moral norms, due to feelings of moral obligation that are, in nature, independent from social norms.

**Palavras-chave : COVID-19, Crowdedness, Social Distance, Risk perception, Theory of planned behavior, Moral norms**