
INFLUENCE OF ONLINE CUSTOMER REVIEWS ON HOTEL BOOKING INTENTION: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SRI LANKA TOUR PACKAGES

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Abstract

Modern tourism is focused in developing and encompassing a growing number of new destinations. These factors have made tourism as one of the key drivers in socio-economic progress. Normally consumers don't like to perceive more risks which associated with purchasing tourism services because they cannot easily evaluate tourism destinations and services before they make the consumption due to intangibility and heterogeneity of tourism services. But with the development of web 2.0 applications, consumer-generated media has increased transforming word-of-mouth communications into different types of electronic communities allowing tourists to gain information on different destinations and hotels easier. But when it comes to Sri Lankan context, there is lack of information on how tourists use these indicators of online customer reviews to make their purchase decisions. Having recognized this knowledge gap, this study was designed to investigate the influence of consumer online reviews on hotel booking intention of Sri Lanka tour packages. Online reviews, the independent variable divide into five dimensions and examined the influence of the consumer online reviews on dependent variable, with reference to Sri Lanka tour packages. Primary data collected through a well-structured questionnaire. Researcher selected 100 respondents (both male and female) who have booked tour packages in Sri Lanka depending on or not online consumer reviews. Regression analysis used to examine impacts of these attributes upon travelers' online booking intention. Five features of online reviews contents were identified namely Valence, Usefulness, Timeliness, Comprehensiveness and Volume. Regression analysis results testified positive relationship between Valence, Timeliness and respondents' online booking intention. A negative relationship was identified between Volume, Usefulness, Comprehensiveness and online booking intention. Comprehensiveness in examining features of review content is a major theoretical contribution of this study. This study also generated areas worthy of more research efforts for practitioners and researchers.

Keywords: *Online Consumer Review, Electronic Word of Mouth, Hotel Booking Intention.*