

Impact of Social Media Benefits on Purchase Decision of Hotel Accommodation

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ABSTRACT

Social Media plays a vital role in many aspects of tourism particularly including purchase decision making process of travelers. A decision of selecting a satisfying hotel accommodation is crucial since a wrong decision can ruin the whole travel experience. Hence, social media is an ideal platform for searching information and for obtaining the recommendations and opinions of previous travelers regarding their accommodation experiences. Since the social media permits its users to connect with thousands of individuals all over the world, users can take advantage of numerous benefits which have diverse impacts on their purchasing decisions. Therefore, with the increasing number of international tourist arrivals and with the increasing involvement of social media in travel and tourism industry, this study mainly was to identify the impact of social media benefits on purchase decision of hotel accommodation. To achieve the proposed research objective, the quantitative research method was adopted and data were gathered in the form of primary data through self-administered structured questionnaires from 384 inbound travelers visiting Sri Lanka. Consequently, finding of this study suggested that hedonic, social, psychological, monetary, and functional benefits of social media have a significant positive impact on purchase decision of hotel accommodation. The study had further identified that hedonic benefits and social benefits of social media as the greatest predictive variables. Thus it's recommended for hospitality practitioners to maintain an active presence in social media while ensuring the social enhancement, personal identity, involvement, and trust of the travelers. Moreover, triggering the accommodation need of travelers through social media and strengthening the interaction via social media such as chat rooms, videos, pictures, virtual product presentations, and informative postings identified as a valuable articulation for hotel accommodation purchase decisions of travelers.

Key words: accommodation, inbound travelers, purchase decision, social media