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**THE INFLUENCE OF EWOM ON BOOKING
INTENTIONS IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY**

Master Thesis

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İSTANBUL, 2021

T.C.
BAHÇEŞEHİR UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL
MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

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PREFACE

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ISTANBUL, 2021

MINARA MAMMADOVA

ABSTRACT

THE INFLUENCE OF EWOM ON BOOKING INTENTIONS IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY

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Business Administration Master's Program

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Kazım Selçuk Tuzcuoğlu

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Networking sites that have a wide variety of uses around the world and blogs, where knowledge exchange is the most powerful in terms of such social networking sites, have become very relevant in the tourism sector as well as in every other region, following the large-scale advances in information technology. In contrast to these tendencies, the tourist industry has become the fastest expanding and hence one of the most impacted industries because of international economy. The greater number of foreign incomes is derived from this sector, which, along with its success, makes the tourism sector very important to Turkey. Furthermore, the transfer from traditional platforms to social media, altering marketing tactics, and the effect of reviews, comments, and suggestions on social media websites and blogs all contributed to the transformation in consumer tastes in the tourist businesses. In recent years, a number of studies on the influence of online consumer feedback on purchase decisions have been conducted, and it has been claimed that these feedbacks play an important part in the purchase decision process of customers.

Keywords: eWOM, Purchase intention, Booking intention, Tourism, Hotel industry.

ÖZET

EAAP'NİN OTEL SEKTÖRÜNDEKİ REZERVASYON NİYETLERİ ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİSİ

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Dünya çapında çok çeşitli kullanım alanlarına sahip ağ siteleri ve bu tür sosyal ağ siteleri açısından bilgi alışverişinin en güçlü olduğu bloglar, tüm sektörlerde olduğu gibi turizm sektöründe de büyük ilgi görmeye başladı. Bu araçlar bilgi teknolojisindeki ilerlemeleri ölçeklendirmek için oldukça faydalıdır. Bu eğilimlerin aksine turizm sektörü, küresel ekonominin etkisi altında, en hızlı büyüyen sektör ve dolayısıyla en çok etkilenen sektörlerden biri haline gelmiştir. Turizm sektöründen daha fazla yabancı gelir elde edilmesi turizm sektörünü Türkiye için çok önemli kılmaktadır. Buna ek olarak, turizm endüstrisindeki tüketici zevklerindeki değişim, geleneksel platformlardan sosyal medyaya geçiş, değişen pazarlama kampanyalarına geçiş, incelemelerin, düşüncelerin ve önerilerin sosyal ağ siteleri ve bloglar üzerindeki etkisiyle motive edilmiştir. Son yıllarda, çevrimiçi müşteri geri bildirimlerinin satın alma kararları üzerindeki etkisine yönelik çeşitli araştırmalar yapılmış ve bu geri bildirimlerin müşterilerin satın alma karar sürecinde kilit rol oynadığı bildirilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: eAAP, Satın alma niyeti, Rezervasyon niyeti, Turizm, Otelcilik sektörü.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A more competitive climate, along with the increased effectiveness of social networking sites, has exposed the necessity for businesses to maintain their marketing strategy across several media. The rapid growth of communication platforms and a rise in the two-way information exchange of consumers about brands, products, and services, as well as in shaping consumer behavior through comments, points of view, and suggestions, is because social media sites and digital channels have a global impact relative to conventional communication types. It paved the path for it to grow as a source of opportunity and information (Deng et al. 2014). If purchase is taken, customers may access different social networking sites and blogs easily to decrease uncertainty and perceived risks and to profit from the experience of the customers, who have previously acquired their products (Ladhari & Michaud 2015; Godes & Mayzlin 2004; Litvin et al. 2008; Lee & Youn 2009).

In the tourist and housing sectors, more people may easily and quickly contact other users by acquiring knowledge and purchasing decisions, by commenting on social networking sites and by sharing information (Liu & Park 2015). Consumers' use of social networking sites and, in this context, especially their preference for blogs, influences the purchasing decision processes of other potential customers thanks to the feedback, opinions, comments and ratings published by the hotel customers through online channels (Stringam & Jr 2010; Leung et al. 2013; Xie et al. 2016). This is a prospective consumer problem; Because the services provided by hotel businesses are intangible and have not been tested previously, it leads to the use of information sources such as social networking sites and blogs in the processes of identifying alternatives, assessing alternatives, and making purchase decisions (Buhalis and Law 2008).

Silverman (2001) emphasizes the powerful and invisible effect of the WOM nuclear reaction by comparing it to radiation emission. The WOM effect is absolute, but it is not

a direct factor. In order to understand the illusion that marketers have experienced and to compare it with reality, it is necessary to understand WOM with every step and interpret the process accordingly. WOM has an impact on reality or illusion between marketing communication and action. When customers wish to acquire a product or service about which they are unfamiliar, they tend to gather as much information as possible about that product or service from reputable sources. Therefore, the source they choose is important to their customers and they turn to resources where they can spend less time and find quality information. Cakim (2010) to support this; He states that customers do not easily believe in professional reports and that most of the time, consumers have more confidence in the information obtained by researching both online and from the environment. Golin Harris (2008), in his study on consumers, revealed which source they used before their purchasing behavior and to what extent they trust these sources. As a result of the study, “Reliable Media Index Score” was formed and it was revealed that WOM is a more effective source than other daily media tools (Radio, television, newspaper, magazine) (Golin 2008: as cited in Cakim 2010, p.4). According to Silverman (2001), when the consumer decides to purchase the product or service, he wants to have a real experience using the product in order to reduce the risk. You can have experience in two ways. The first is direct experience; Cost increases due to time, money, risk of failure or disappointment. The second is indirect experience; information, concern and risk sharing about other consumer experiences (Gildin 2003). According to Silverman (2001), WOM also speeds up the product adoption process.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Before consumers purchase products or services of which they do not know or have little knowledge, they collect as much reliable information as possible from their environment or online platform sources. Consumers do not rely too much on company-based professional messages. Consumers are more confident in the messages of people who do not have any marketing purpose, but only share their ideas, experiences, and opinions. The advent and growth of the internet, as well as the construction of various infrastructure platforms in the online environment, have altered marketing interactions between firms and customers and carried them to various media. Traditional WOM

communication styles with virtual communities have begun to be defined as a new form called online WOM or electronic WOM (eWOM). Different platforms (social media, e-commerce websites, forums, etc.) developed with the Internet and Web 2.0 technology infrastructure have changed the physical purchasing behavior of the consumer with online purchasing behavior (Prendergast et al. 2010; Chan and Ngai 2011; Qiu et al. 2012). For this reason, consumer behavior and eWOM is an issue that needs to be examined in every detail.

Researchers have been studying the notion of WOM as a credible source of information in a social media platform for the last 45 years. WOM is a more strategic form of persuasive communication than marketer-to-consumer communication channels, as it involves sharing experiences between consumers. Many academics and practitioners have stressed the importance of word-of-mouth marketing in product or service assessment and customer purchase decisions (Chevalier and Mayzlin 2006; de Matos and Rossi 2008; Tantrabundit 2015). Findings in previous studies, in general; Factors such as e-AAP (eWOM) characteristics, critics, products or services, customer or merchant characteristics, future sales, motivation, high price and rating have been the main subject of behavioral studies.

Positive comments, opinions and ratings of customers who share their experiences in online environments; It creates a positive effect and a tendency to have confidence in the purchasing decisions of potential customers (Dickinger 2011). Trip planners need the comments and opinions of those who have experienced the planned travel and accommodation before, since there is no general measurement criterion of tourism experiences, and it is impossible to experience every choice before purchasing decisions.

For the last 45 years, the concept of WOM has been as a reliable source of information in a social network studied by researchers. WOM is among consumers marketer-to-consumer communication channels, involves exchanges of experience a more strategic form of persuasive communication than it. Trip planners no general measurement criterion of tourism experiences and it is purchasing planned, since there is impossible

to experience every choice before decisions, comments and users who have previously experienced the travel and accommodation need the opinions of and in this context, pre-travel reviews are often taken into consideration. They hold. As a result, user-generated content plays an essential part in the creation of brand and image, as well as target knowledge and selections (Mazzarol et al. 2007; Gretzel and Yoo 2008; Sweeney et al. 2008). For this reason, eWOM effect in reservation intention is a matter worth examining with different variables.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Findings from previous studies, in general; Factors such as eWOM characteristics, critics, product or services, customer or merchant characteristics, future sales, motivation, high price and rating have behavioral been the main subject of studies. While observing the effect of these comments, looking only at the positive and negative comments is insufficient while offering suggestions to companies. However, the expertise of the commenter, the extent of the comment, the amount, etc. The effect of factors is also worth exploring. The primary goal of this research is to look at the impact of eWOM on online consumers' purchase intentions on e-commerce websites that sell technology equipment.

1.4 HYPOTHESES/RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The rating valence of review, quantity of reviews, usefulness of review, review expertise, chronology of reviews, and thoroughness of review criteria were established based on the results of the literature review eWOM. To address the research questions, four factors were analyzed. These are the quantity of reviews, the substance of the comments, the credibility of the reviews, and the timeliness of the comments. For researching research questions, the hypotheses were developed below.

H1: The evaluation's worth influences hotel internet reservations.

H2: The accuracy of reviews influences hotel internet bookings.

H3: Recent reviews have a greater influence on hotel internet bookings.

H4: A large quantity of internet reviews has a greater influence on hotel bookings.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Travel blog sites and consumer reviews of the road taking the predetermined criteria with content analysis, to understand that potential customers have what degree of influence their choice of hotels and analyzing is crucial. Hotel managers and company owners in the industry should recognize the importance of social networking platforms, particularly blogs. The majority of studies in the literature is based on favorable or negative remarks, with the findings of the analysis done using the variables chosen in accordance with the study's goal, and the missing portion in the literature.

1.6 DEFINITIONS

WOM: Word of mouth (wom) is interpersonal communication with other customers about product ownership, usage, features, services, and suppliers (Westbrook 1987, p. 261). With the incorporation of the Internet into many aspects of life, the conventional wom has given way to e-wom. Electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) refers to the good or negative thoughts of future, present, or past consumers about a product or a company that are made available to many individuals and organizations over the Internet (Henning -Thurau et al. 2004, p.39).

Purchase Intention: To interpret the concept of intention in terms of the consumer and the customer, it would not be wrong to say that it occurs between the processes of evaluating purchasing alternatives and the occurrence of purchasing. Purchasing intention is the perceptual level of perception of the customer to purchase a product or service (Bergeron 2004, p. 17).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 TOURISM INDUSTRY

Tourism is also seen as a worldwide phenomenon, with an almost incomprehensibly vast infrastructure. Its relevance is obvious from the fact that it has a profound impact on society, politics, culture, and, most importantly, the economy. Indeed, this is the most rapidly growing sector of the world economy: according to the World Tourism Organization (WTO), 903 million tourists invested 625 billion US dollars in 2007, supporting a worldwide infrastructure of around 100 million workers in the new recreation and experiential industry (Gyr 2010, p. 1).

Tourism has gradually increased and diversified over the decades to become one of the world's fastest growing economies. Tourism in the modern era is directly linked to progress and includes an increasing number of new places. Tourism has also become an important engine of socioeconomic growth because of these tendencies. Compared to the same period last year, international tourist arrivals (overnight visitors) increased by 4 percent in January-March 2019, below the 6 percent average rise of the past two years.¹

Tourism involves all operations devoted to serving the needs of visitors, as well as loans from numerous operations. Complex and heterogeneous goods destined for tourists. They are a mixture of components divided by distance and time.

Packages of interrelated goods and services (transport, lodging facilities, leisure services, etc.) are also found in space. Tourism is often taken for granted purely in terms of number and expenditure on visitors (Aldebert et al. 2010, pp. 1205-1206)

Tourism was considered as “natural renewable resource industry”, with tourists described as coming only to enjoy the scenery, traditions, and monuments of a

¹ UNWTO Official Web Site 2020a, [Access Date: 08.08.2021]

destination area, not to consume. On the other hand, as tourism grew and scope, it became evident that this industry, like others, was competing for scarce financial resources, and that its non-consumptive attributes did not necessarily prevent attractions from being eroded or altered (Murphy 2013, p.1).

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), travel and tourism generate around \$6 billion USD in economic activity, with this figure predicted to rise to \$10 billion USD by 2015. Travel & tourism provide around 260 million jobs globally, accounting for 8% of total employment and 9% of global GDP (WTTC 2020).

In a post-modern world, where tourists are actively pursuing fresh and varied experiences, tourism is a competitive phenomenon and a highly trend-driven operation. This has led the tourism industry to leverage targeting strategies to develop diverse goods and services focused on customer preferences and values for very particular market segments (Page 2015, p. 6).

Turkey has undertaken significant infrastructure and superstructure upgrades during the last two decades. This also covers transportation infrastructure, such as upgrades, renovations, and new airports and air terminals. Domestic flights to all major cities and tourist locations are available in Turkey, as are international airports in major cities and tourist destinations.

The accommodation market currently comprises a wide variety of services. Some of these are “top-quality, super-modern deluxe hotels and holiday complexes, luxury hotels to economical ones”. Housing industry involves mostly “city hotels, summer resort hotels and holiday resorts”. In addition, “ski resorts, winter resorts and spa hotels” are also huge number in different parts of the world. Many high-end hotels and holiday resorts provide a range of leisure and entertainment services.

Today, Turkey has some opportunities such as “immense tourism potential, a wide range of natural resources, historical wonders, cultural values & events, lifestyle, attractions” to rival in tourism industry. Turkey offers a varied range of products that

are fit for market demands and are aimed at a variety of market sectors, including the most sophisticated and demanding tourist. Tourists are visiting Turkey at an all-time high. Record after record is being shattered. Regardless of the status of the worldwide travel and tourism industry, 2012 saw a record high of over 31 million annual visitor arrivals.

Aside from these, Turkey's share for "entertainment, nature-based, special interest tourism, yachting; sailing, meeting and reward tourism" does not reflect the country's enormous potential for diversity and what it really offers. It falls well short of what it was intended to be. There is a tremendous opportunity for growth for Turkey to grow its market share and further diversify its tourism industry.²

2.1.1 The Definition of Tourism

Tourism is now known as being a globally significant economic operation. As the importance of the operation has grown, significant attention given to it by states, public and private sector organizations, as well as academics (Jenkins and Lickorish 1997 p.2).

There are number of various definitions for tourism. Identifying a term that would provide a coherent and adequate interpretation of tourism is very complicated, because the concept is fragmented, vague and multidimensional (Kandampully et al. 2001, p. 1).

There are four classes of people involved and affected by tourism: visitors, companies offering the goods and services required by the tourism industry, host community government, and the local community. In the context of expressing on hosting tourists and other visitors' tourism is the sum of the concept. In addition, the relationships coming from the interaction of these four classes (McIntosh et al. 1995, p. 2).

The World Tourism Organization (WTO) defines tourism as "people traveling to and residing in destinations outside their typical environment for enjoyment, business, and other purposes for no more than one continuous year" (Tribe 2009, p. 2).

² TURSAB 2020a.

Some concepts of tourism acknowledged only by its economical or sector implications: According to Australian Tourism & Leisure Department (1975), “tourism is an industry that is identifiable and of national importance”. The industry comprises a broad cross-section of component activities. Transportation, leisure, food, lodging, and related services are some of these activities.

Technical definitions serve as tools for specialized applications in statistics, legislation, and industry. In 1963, the United Nations hosted a travel and tourism conference in Rome. The conference proposed the words "visitor" and "tourist" for use in international statistics collection. A "visitor" is someone who travels to a country other than his or her usual residence for several reasons.

Tourists are transitory visitors who remain in a location for at least twenty-four hours. Some of the reasons for this visit are as follows: (a) recreation (leisure, holidays, medical services, education, worship, and sports), as well as (b) work, families, purpose, and group gathering.

Holistic definitions try to convey a subject's "whole" essence. One of the Holistic meanings is the total of the thoughts and relationships originating from non-residents' travel and stay to the degree that they do not result in permanent residency and are unrelated to any earnings activity.

And there is the study of the human outside of his natural environment, the business that caters to his needs, and the effects he and the industry have on the owner's sociocultural, economic, and physical environments. (Theobald 2005, pp.10-14).

In a review of the nature of tourist regions a third holistic approach emerged. The designer can create a closed tourism environment system with five components: people in a market area with the desire and capacity to participate; attractions offer customer engagement activities; resources and facilities for users / support activities; transportation moves people to and from destinations of attraction; and knowledge and

advice broader efforts in learning, locating, and acquainting themselves with the destination of attraction.

2.1.2 Tourism Products and Services

A product is something that may be presented to a client for consideration, acquisition, usage, or sale in order to fulfil a need or desire. Physical items, infrastructures, people, places, organizations, and ideologies are all included. In this context, Kotler's definition is particularly relevant because it makes it clear that goods are not only physical objects but also the things — services, individuals, locations, organizations, and ideas — that constitute tourism (Kotler 1984, p. 463). There are four distinct product categories: (1) solely tangible products, (2) tangible goods accompanied by intangible services, (3) large intangible services accompanied by tangible goods, and (4) pure intangible services.

The tourist product is a collection of physical and service elements, as well as symbolic linkages, designed to meet the desires and wants of the customer (Jefferson & Lickorish 1988, p. 59), and, more succinctly, the tourist commodity is a satisfactory operation in a chosen place (Jefferson & Lickorish 1988, p. 211). Bill Hardman Sr.—former president of the Southeast Tourism Society—described a tourism product as "everything thrown into advertising" in a presentation titled "Tourist Product and Services." A tourism product can be a site or a piece of land for an entire neighborhood or a single organization. (Sharma 2007, p.23).

According to Peter Jones research on Managing Hospitality services are not easy to measure, the experience of each customer with the service is individual, and purchase and consumption of a service occur simultaneously (Jones 1996, p.7).

A different approach is suggested for modelling service products. According to Nordmann service can be core or secondary. For instance, drawing from the airline industry, Nordmann notes that flight from origin to destination is the airline's core operation, while bookings, check-in, in-flight means, baggage handling, aircraft

cleaning and servicing, comfort and staff's general attitudes are secondary services (Nordmann 1984, p. 585).

Quality of service is a way to control market operations to guarantee absolute customer loyalty at all levels (internal and external). It is a strategy that leads to an improvement in the overall company's productivity, profitability, and versatility.

The most significant features of the services, neatly distinguishing them the inability of distinguishing output and use from products; the impossibility of storing services; their non-material quality; timelessness and variability (Gržinić 2007, p. 84).

In conclusion, the quality of the goods is usually of concern, the service structure is usually seen as relatively complex, with various levels of service involved and, consumers are recognized as having a relation with the provision of services as often as possible (Norman 1984, p. 585).

Table 2.1: General aspects of product quality and service quality

| Dimension | Definition |
|-----------------------|---|
| Availability | Product or service is easily available |
| Guarantee | The personnel is polite, kind and educated |
| Communication | Clients receive information on all products and services and their changes in the language they can understand |
| Expertise | The personnel has the necessary knowledge and skills to produce and sell products or provide services |
| Standard | Products and services are up to the standard |
| Behaviour | Kindness, good manners and care of the personnel towards clients |
| Flaw | Each quality that is not defined and affects the satisfaction of the client |
| Duration | Performance, service result or product last longer |
| Engagement | The personnel shows understanding and gives individual attention to each client |
| Humanity | Product or service are provided so as to preserve dignity and self-respect of the client |
| Effects | Product or service produces the expected effect |
| Reliability | Capability to sell products or provide services in a discreet and reliable manner |
| Responsibility | Definite duration of product sale or providing of services |
| Safety | Product or service are provided in the safest possible way, without any kind of risk or danger |

Source: Measuring Service Quality Approaches in the Hospitality Sector J. Gržinić, 2007, p.84.

A basic distinction between products and services is the way they are processed and consumed. Services are actions that frequently take place as part of an open process in which consumers have a say in the outcome. Some of these services are as follows: are created in collaboration with the service provider's workers (such as airline and hotel services), whilst in others, the consumer is the "principal developer" of the service (such as telephone services or ATM machines). Services are often created, disseminated, and consumed in both space and time. The point at which processes converge and important activities are performed by the client.

Products, on the other hand, are the product of a sorting procedure that comprises material separation and consolidation, the distribution of pieces or components, the combining of these elements that meet the manufacturing standards, and the final manufacturing of the product. A significant consequence of these various processes of development is the goods are manufactured in advance of their manufacture and performance when services are not (Edvardsson et al. 2000, pp. 6-7).

2.1.3 The Origin of Tourism

Although this Athenians paid special attention to leisure, pleasure, and traveling, the *feriae* also had a term related to holidays; the argument being that mass tourism developed because of mixed forces that predisposed more time to travel and less working time for customers at first glance.

The root of tourism in etymological fields is traced by Korstanje (2020); the word tourism derives from the Ancient Saxon *Torn*, a word used by farmers in England in the 12th century B.C. In a circular direction to signify flight.

Originally, this thesis was formulated by Fernandez Fuster, who argued that the *Torn* (denoting whoever gives turns) was almost always introduced under the circumstances in which the traveler goes back. There is no question that the evolution of this term has been attributed to France and its language (Korstanje and Busby 2010, p.102).

Traveling has existed for thousands of years of time, when prehistoric man set out on long journeys in quest of food and clothes essential to his survival. People have traveled for a number of reasons throughout history, including commerce, religious faith, economic gain, conflict, migrations, and other exceptionally powerful causes (Theobald 2005, p. 5)

In the ancient world, especially even earlier in Egypt, recreational and educational travel occurred under the pharaohs. The wealthiest segments of society were the first to nurture pleasure cruises. According to their memoirs, they visited renowned ancient Egyptian temples and antiquities, such as the tiny Sakkara pyramid, the Sphinx, and the huge Giza pyramids—all of which were constructed over a thousand years ago. The Greeks followed the same rituals. They travelled to Delphi to compete in the Pythian Games (musical and athletic events) or the early Olympic Games in order to challenge the Oracle.

Travel and unique types of holidays were also given impetus by Classical Rome. The growth of infrastructure has made holiday travel increasingly relevant: “Around 300 A.D., there was a road network of 90,000 kilometres of main thoroughfares and 200,000 kilometres of smaller regional roads. “This allows the movement of soldiers and goods, private travel both. Based on this scheme, the idea of “affluent travellers finding edification and enjoyment” is supported. There was a veritable tourism industry in the first century after Christ that scheduled trips for groups and individuals, supplied data, and handled accommodation and dining arrangements.

The well-off Romans found respite or spent some time on the coasts of Egypt and Greece at the southern coastal resorts. (Gyr 2010, p.2).

During the Roman period, wealthy nobles and high-ranking government representatives frequently traveled for pleasure. People could escape the summer heat of Rome by going to their holiday homes in the coastal villages of Pompeii and Herculaneum. Except during the Dark Ages, travel has continued to grow and has performed an important part in the growth of civilizations throughout ancient times. Tourism as we

understand it now is a product of the twentieth century. According to historians, widespread tourism began in Britain with the emergence of the middle class and relatively inexpensive transportation during the industrialization (Theobald 2005, p. 5).

2.1.3.1 Antiquity

The introduction of the Olympic Games after 776 BC, based on a big athletic event, provided a significant boost for tourism. Greeks were lodged in tented camps after traveling to Olympic Games destinations, resulting in a tourist phenomenon. Due to Greek conflicts, international flights were prohibited during those times. In contrast, the rise of Rome and the Roman Empire was based on a combination of military conquest and administrative power. People from the government and the private sector built recreational facilities (such as spas, pools, and resorts) and followed Greek lifestyles. As illustrated by the current Gladiator film, the construction of colosseums for gatherings and spectator sports has enhanced the accessibility of tourism attractions. Rome has become an important urban tourism destination because of its standing as the capital city. To accommodate the needs of travellers, inns, taverns, tour guides, and souvenir sellers arose (Yıldız and Cekic 2015).

Traveling for pleasure may be traced back as 1500 BC in Egypt. Spas and beachfront resorts like Baiae were popular among the elite (Casson1994, p. 32).

2.1.3.2 Middle ages

The Medieval Times are defined as the period after the collapse of the Roman Empire, from 500 AD until Henry VII's ascension in 1485. Even during these comparably dark times, tourism can be traced back to the advent of festivals and event-based tourism, which was fuelled by the operations of the nobility and knights. The very first pilgrims to the Holy Land arrived in the late Middle Ages. Because of the limited exposure, proper travelling was problematic; nevertheless, because of the restricted access, there was a need for lodgings and hospitality facilities (such as meal, beverage, and amusement) along the route (Hargett 1985, pp. 67–93).

2.1.3.3 The grand tour

The 'Grand Trip' was a cultural, educational, and recreational tour of significant European locales and historical sites, mostly for the affluent, royal, and wealthy groups. Traveler's notebooks, letters, and memoirs from throughout all Western Europe, as well as guidebooks and tourism-related historic materials, bear witness to the Grand Tour. By the 18th century, the growing middle class had become a significant part of the Grand Tour. According to Towner (1985), in the mid-eighteenth centuries, 15,000–20,000 British volunteers travelled continental Europe, amounting for 0.2–0.7 percent of the total population. The Grand Tour was more than just a static phenomenon, as thoughts from Europe were taken back to England, and it is also possible to detect altering styles and trends in Grand Tourist preferences between 1550s and the earlier 1800s. The railroad's arrival coincides with the growth of the tourism industry. Paris, Turin, Florence, Naples, and Rome dominated the scene. The growth in popularity of Swiss was also due to a desire for scenery, with new means of transportation on land, inland waterways, and rivers (e.g., the introduction of steam engines on Swiss lakes in the 1820s) allowing for attractive tourism (Towner 1985).

According to Towner's most comprehensive research on the Grand Tour (1985, 1996), “The typical seventeenth-century traveller was a young nobleman guided by a teacher, but this could be an extreme exaggeration.” (Towner 1985).

The eldest child of Sigismund III, the young prince of Poland, Ladislaus Sigismund Vasa, was born in 1624 and proceeded on a tour around Europe, as was customary among the Polish nobles (Bohun, Wasa, Polski 1624-1625 p.12). He visited today's Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands, where he marveled at the Spanish troops' Siege of Breda, France, and Switzerland, along with Italy, Austria, and the Czech Republic. It was a learning experience that led to the formulation of Italian opera in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth (Roger Parker 1994, p.240 Amanda Holden 1993, p. 174). The procedure followed a predictable pattern from around 1660 until the introduction of large-scale rail travel in the 1840s. It functioned as both an education opportunity and a rite of passage. While predominantly connected with the British nobility and affluent gentry, rich young people from Protestant North European countries undertook similar

excursions to the Region, and some South American, American, and other youngsters from outside participated beginning in the second half of the 18th century. (Singh 2008 p.189).

2.1.4 Tourism Industry During Covid-19

Pandemics and emerging pathogens have long had a transformational impact on the world and other cultures. Although a single definition was not made for clarify term of pandemic, some common components of definitions are listed as:

- i. “Wide regional expansion - individuals are physically geographically scattered, or they are international,”
- ii. “Disease transmission or dissemination that may be followed from one area to another,”
- iii. “Frequency and explosiveness of fast attacks, i.e., several events occur in a short period of time,” “Lowest possible Immunity of Population”,
- iv. “Novelty, they are unique and/or correlated with new forms of existing species”.

Several processes have united to increase the risk of a pandemic. First, with almost half of the world's population residing there, urban centres, humanity is now more urbanized than before. Secondly, these urban centres are now more interlinked than ever, because of transport connections by air, train, and shipping and road. Thirdly, the increasing demand from consumers for meat and the loss of habitat and biodiversity leads humans to closer interaction with animal pathogens, which can then reach urban populations getting dispersed easily (Hall et al. 2020, pp. 578-580).

A pneumonia of unknown origin was detected in Wuhan, China, on December 31, 2019, yet was registered to China's WHO national office for the first time. In early January 2020, 41 people were brought to Chinese hospitals after being diagnosed with a rare coronavirus illness (COVID-19). Wuhan was confined to control the virus (a combination of regional and individual quarantine methods), and 80,000 cases across China had been stabilized until mid-February. By mid-March, 146 countries had been recognized as having global air transport capable of spreading the virus across all

continents. The number of reported cases globally has rapidly grown, because of many super-spreading instances, such as the Austrian ski resort of Ischgl. Since then, the rate of transmission has increased through community transmitters, with recorded cases in more than 200 countries exceeding 2 million by 15 April (with more than 125,00 fatalities). Because most nations prohibit testing, the true aggregate number of cases is unknown.

Without a vaccine to stop the infection and reduced medical interventions, most countries reacted with a variety of non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs), including "shutdown (home isolation, voluntary / mandatory quarantine), social distance (defend fewer or the whole communities), closure of schools / universities and non-essential enterprises / work environments, cancellation, or deactivation of government services."(Hall et al. 2020, pp.2-3).

Taking into account unanticipated travel limitations, in comparison to the previous year, the United Nations World Tourism Organization forecasts a "20 percent to 30 percent reduction in foreign tourists in 2020."

Market researchers in Europe have sought to foresee the consequences on the global hotel industry by 2020, predicting an 11–29-point drop in profitability. The KHN, which includes restaurants, cafés, and lodgings, has claimed that the new procedures put in place to prevent the virus from spreading are still having an effect. Delays and cancellations have increased by nearly half, according to the KHN study, and hotel businesses expect to lose 33% of their revenue because of the government's emergency measures.

In China, occupancy is down by much to 68 percent compared to last year. China, as the first coronavirus market, has also shown signs of stability. According to statistics, 87% of the hotels in the nation are already operating, and capacity is starting to grow.

Other countries include Hotels around the United States are reporting massive withdrawals as a result of the outbreak, which might kill up to four million people (this

accounts for 50 percent of all-American hotel jobs). Overall occupancy in Italy is down 96%, while occupancy in the United Kingdom is down 67% (Hospitality Insights 2020).

2.1.4.1 Covid-19 influence on hoteliers

The COVID-19 epidemic has dealt a significant blow to hotels throughout the world, with many activities being Hotel occupancy rates are plunging as events are annulled or rescheduled. When compared to the same month last year, revenue-per-available-room (RevPAR) at Marriott hotels declined by nearly 90% in Greater China and 25% in other Asia-Pacific areas in February 2020. As a result of the COVID-19 terror attack, leisure and business travel is anticipated to be postponed or cancelled in the United States, Europe, and Asia (Jiang and Wen 2020 p.2).

The tourist and lodging industry, which began 2020 with optimism, is one of the industries that would be severely impacted by the COVID-19 virus, which began in China and quickly expanded throughout the world. The tourist industry is vital in terms of both providing jobs and increasing the foreign exchange reserves that we require. Managers in the sector are having difficulty forming operating strategies for the approaching term, as well as cancelling bookings, managing staff, and reorganizing finance. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization, world tourism might drop by as much as 80% by 2020, causing a loss of up to US\$ 1.2 trillion in tourist export earnings and up to 120 million direct tourism employment. During this period, it will be critical for managers to keep their operational impact analysis up to date in a proactive manner based on different scenarios, as well as to closely monitor the related cash management and the support provided by the state; in the event of positive developments in the coming days, it will be critical for them to respond quickly to the demand in the sector. They will be able to make a difference because of it (Higgins-Desbiolles 2020 p.4).

The hospitality and tourism industry could have been heavily affected, with hourly staff facing potentially catastrophic difficulties. Marriott International (which employs roughly 174,000 people) is set to lay off tens of thousands of staffs. Hilton Worldwide

told its lenders on March 5, 2020, that it will borrow \$1.75 billion from a revolving loan to save money and preserve stability "in the midst of global market volatility."

MGM Properties International has halted operations at its Las Vegas properties, with casino operations ending on March 16 and hotel operations ending on March 17. Since March 1, 2020, average occupancy rate in Germany has dropped by far more than 36%. The new 6% occupancy rate harmed Italian cities, particularly Rome, while London remained the most stable, with an occupancy rate of roughly 47%. Finally, the COVID-19 problem has resulted in foreign inequities in the hospitality industry as well as significant decreases in the European hotel market (Nicola et al. 2020, pp. 185–193).

According to Neisdadt (2020), the situation in certain EU countries that are major tourist locations, such as Italy, Spain, and France, is particularly tough. Overall, according to Statista (2020a), the COVID-19 problem has jeopardized 1.6 million tourist-related jobs in Germany, while equivalent estimates for “Russia, Italy, Spain, France, and Portugal” were 1.1 million, 1 million, 0.8 million, 0.8 million, and 0.3 million, respectively. (Jones & Comfort 2020, p. 78).

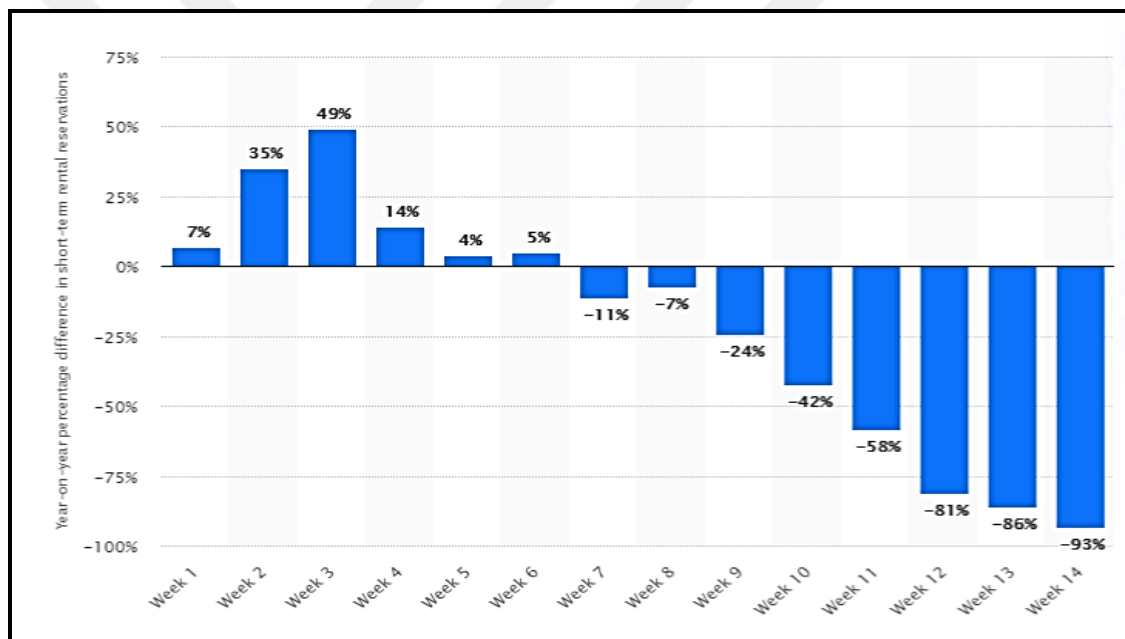
The main results of Covid-19 include (Simon 2020):

- i. Damage 9 times more than 9/11 on travel sector. (Tourism Economics)
- ii. Fifty per cent (projected) decrease in sales for 2020 (Oxford Economics)
- iii. Eight out of 10 in the rooms of hotels are vacant. (TSR)
- iv. Based on hotel occupancy rate, 2020 would be probably the worst year. (CBRE)
- v. The vacancy levels are projected at highest level in 2020 after the Great Depression in 1933. (CBRE)
- vi. 70 per cent of hotel workers is laid off or laid down. (Economics and Hotel quality at Oxford)
- vii. Due to recession, \$2.4 billion in salaries wasted per week (Oxford Economics and Hotel Effectiveness)
- viii. Owing to onset of the recession, approximately 3.9 million hotel-supported jobs lost. (Oxford Economics)

2.1.4.2 Booking terms and conditions during covid-19 in hotel industry

Include coronavirus vulnerability (COVID-19) and its related government steps for bookings made on or after April 6, 2020. If you do not book a flexible rate, you need not apply for a refund. The property will process your cancellation request depending on your preferred policies and consumer rule, if applicable. We recommend that you book an alternative with free cancellation during periods of confusion. If your plans change, you will be allowed to cancel free before the free cancellation expires.³ (.

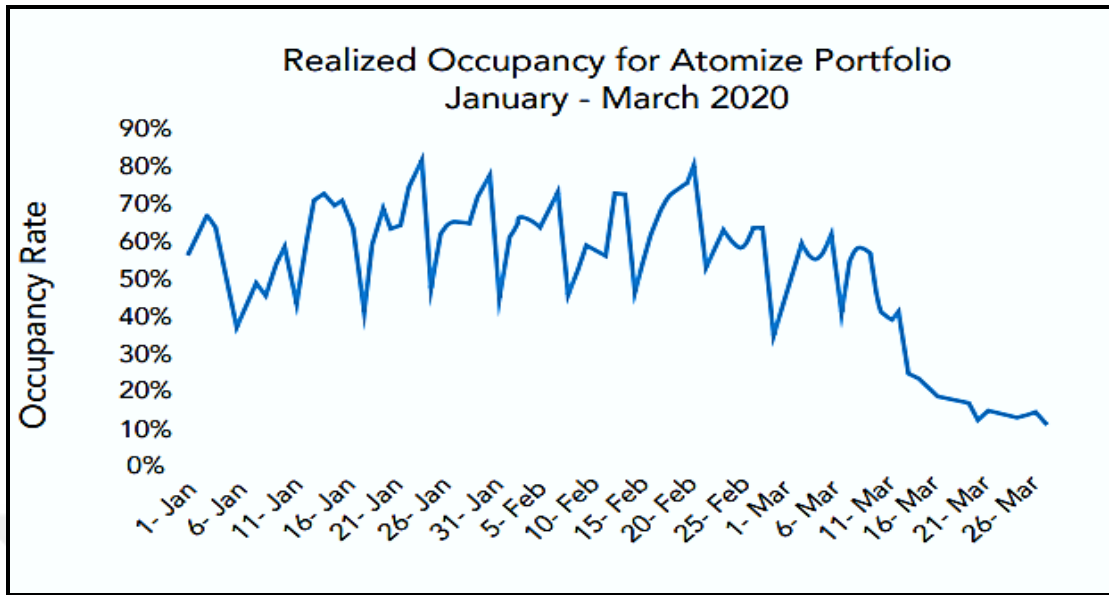
Figure 2.1: Due to the worldwide Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, short-term rental options on Booking.com decreased in the first quarter of 2020, by week, year-over-year.



Source: Short-term Rental Reservations Statistics, Statista. 2020b, [accessed September 2020].

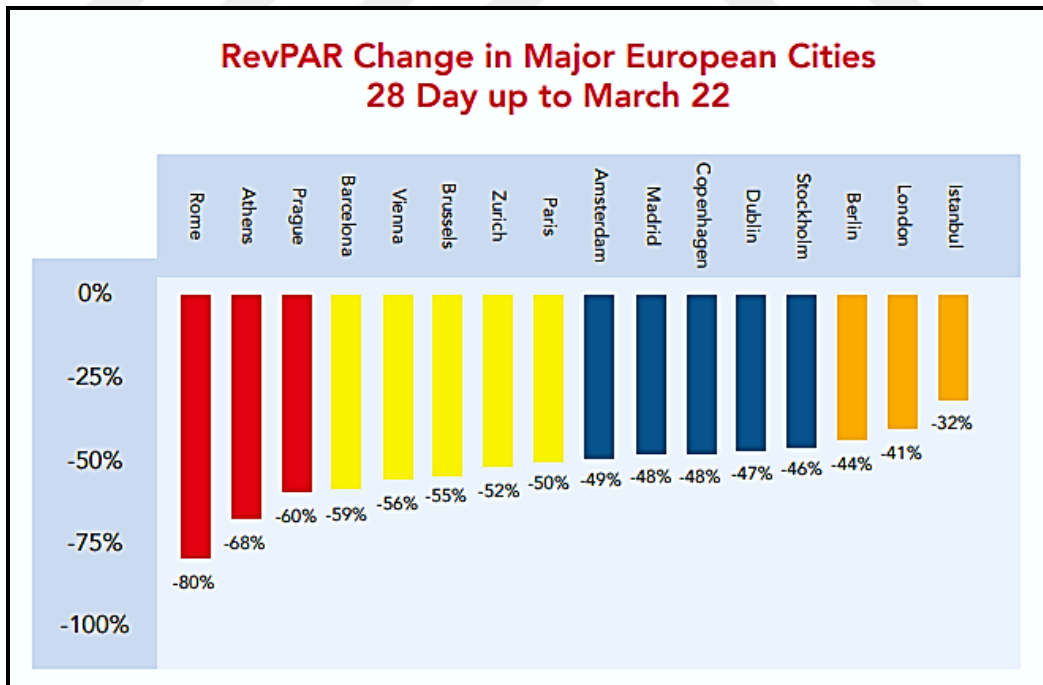
³ Booking.com 2020a.

Figure 2.2: Occupancy rate from January to March 2020.



Source: The Influence of COVID 19 on Key Travel Sectors at a Glimpse, Global Tourism Forum, 2020, [accessed 16 Sep 2020].

Figure 2.3: RevPAR transition in big cities 28 days until 22 March



Source: The Influence of COVID 19 on Key Travel Sectors at a Glimpse, Global Tourism Forum, 2020, [accessed 16 Sep 2020].

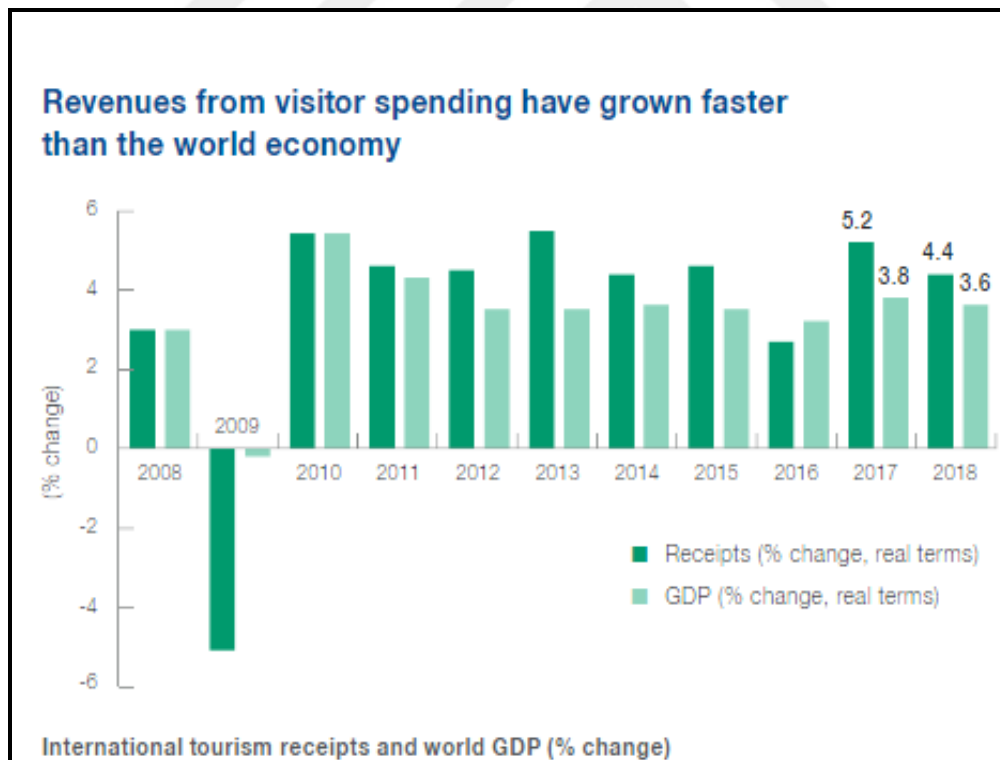
2.1.5 Tourism Statistics and Rankings

This section discusses worldwide tourism patterns, and monitors increases and decreases in tourism activity across countries and regions, among other indicators.

2.1.5.1 Receipts for international tourism and world GDP

“International visitor arrivals climbed by 5% in 2018 and reached the 1.4 billion mark,” according to Zurab Pololikashvili, Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). "Tourism-generated export income increased to USD 1.7 trillion" at the same time. This converts the sector into a true worldwide force for economic growth and development, resulting in more and better jobs as well as a boost to innovation and enterprise. (United Nations World Tourism Organization 2020b).

Figure 2.4: Revenues from international tourism and global GDP (% change)

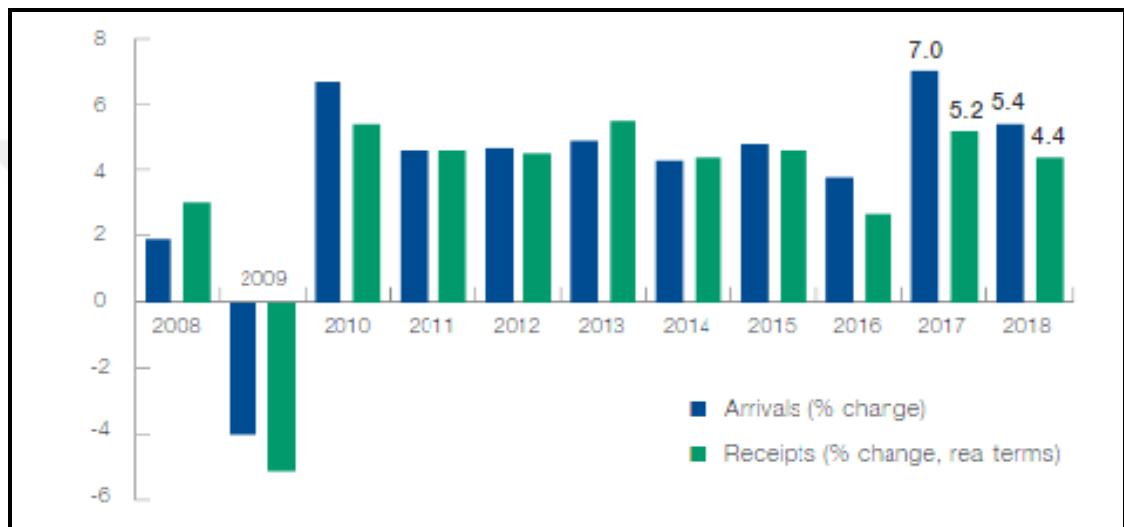


Source: [accessed July 2019] United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and International Monetary Fund (IMF).

2.1.5.2 Receipts of international tourist arrivals and tourism

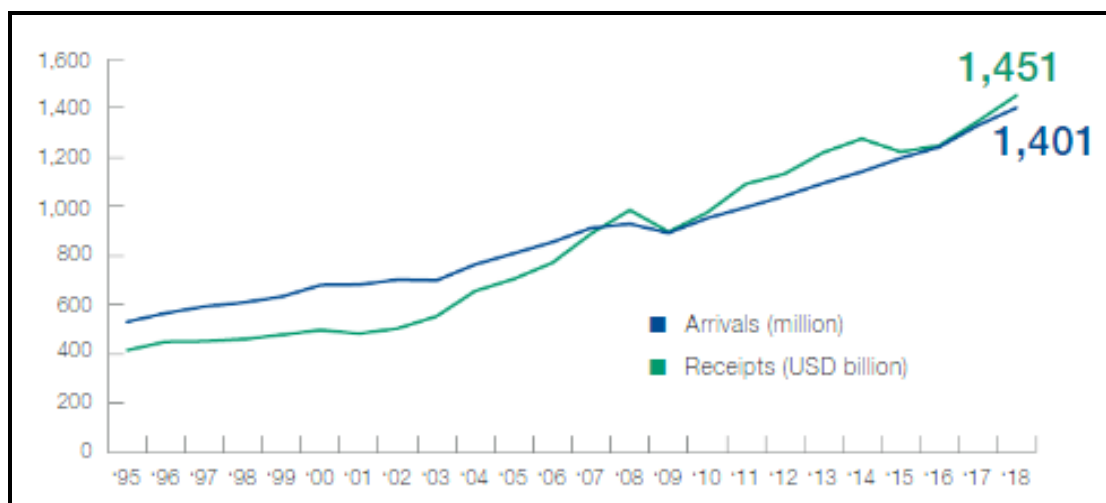
Despite periodic setbacks, tourism has grown steadily over time, illustrating the sector's strength and durability. The most significant changes can be seen in 2010 and 2017 years where the percentage of arrivals reached almost 7.0. The number of receipts stayed mostly stable throughout the years and in 2017 it constituted 5.2%.

Figure 2.5: Foreign Tourists Arrivals and Travel Receipts (Percentage Change)



Source: World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) [accessed July 2019].

Figure 2.6: Receipts for international tourism arrivals (million) and trade (US\$ Billion)

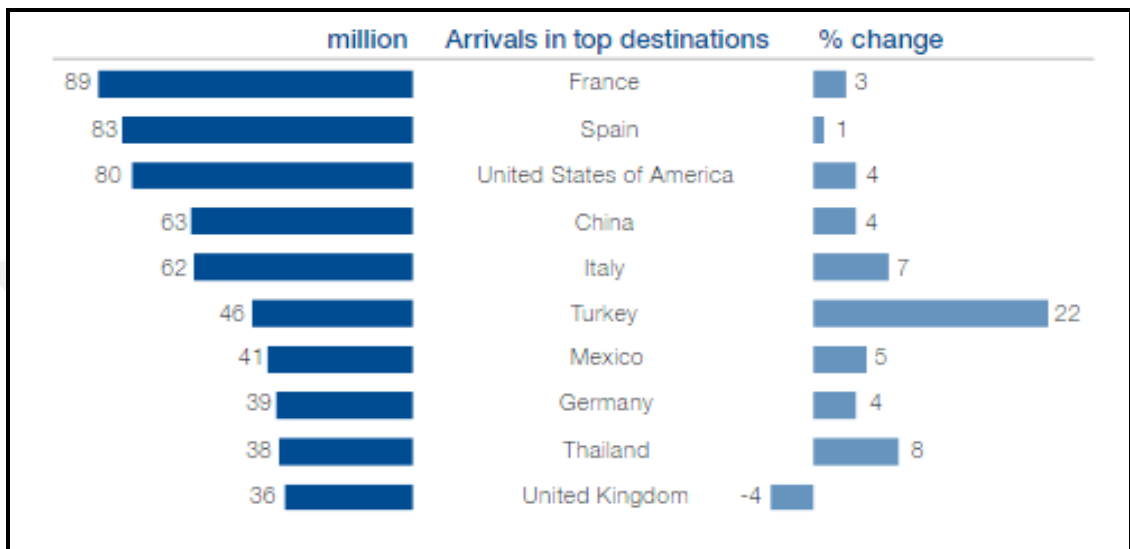


Source: World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) [accessed July 2019].

2.1.5.3 Top tourist destinations

In both rankings 8 out of 10 top destinations are included. The top 10 destinations earned 40 percent of arrivals worldwide.

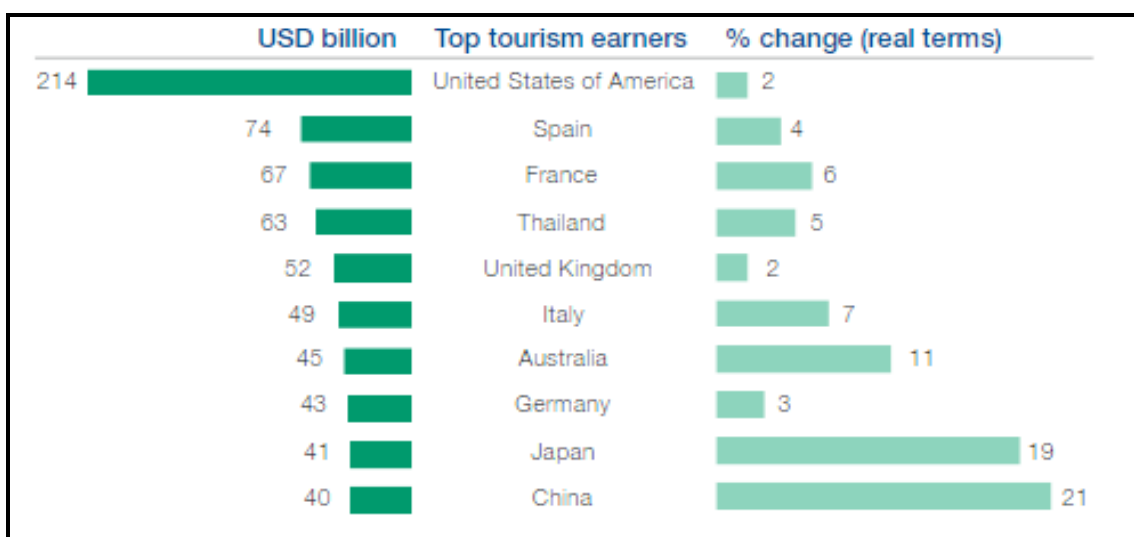
Figure 2.7: Top 10 International Tourist Destinations



Source: World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) [accessed Dec 2018]

The top 10 tourism earners constitute nearly 50 percent of total tourism receipts.

Figure 2.8: Top 10 International tourism receipts for destinations



Source: World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) [accessed Dec 2018].

2.1.5.4 Tourist arrivals in Turkey

Turkey had another record-breaking year in terms of tourism in 2019, with 51.7 million tourists and 34.5 billion dollars in revenue. According to figures from the Ministry, Turkey welcomed 45 million 58 thousand 286 international tourists in 2019, up 14.11 percent from the prior year. According to the figures disclosed by Turkey Statistical Authority (TSI), again based on the previous year, an increase of 0.98 percent to 6 million 688 thousand 912 foreign citizens arrived. Turkey's tourist earnings climbed by 17% to \$34.5 billion in 2019, with an average spending per tourist of \$666 dollars. The average cost per person per night was \$68.

Table 2.2: Tourism revenues

| TOURISM INCOME, DISTRIBUTION OF AVERAGE SPEND BY YEARS SHARE OF TOURISM REVENUES IN GDP | | | |
|--|----------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|
| YEARS | TOURISM INCOME | AVERAGE EXPENDITURE | SHARE OF TOURISM REVENUE IN GDP (%) |
| | (1000 \$) | (\$) | |
| 2016 | 22 107 440 | 705 | 2,6 |
| 2017 | 26 283 656 | 681 | 3,1 |
| 2018 | 29 512 926 | 647 | 3,8 |
| 2019 | 34 520 332 | 666 | |

Source: Turizm Geliri İstatistikleri, TURSAB. 2020b, [accessed 11 Mar 2020].

2.1.5.5 Number of foreign visitors in turkey by nationality

According to 2019 ministry statistics, Russian Federation grabbed first position with 17 thousand 657 guests in the table of nations sending the most tourists to Turkey, with a rise of 17.65 percent and 7 million.” Germany came second with an increase of 11.42 percent and 5 million 27 thousand 472 visitors; Bulgaria was third with an increase of

13.68 percent and 2 million 713 thousand 464 visitors. Britain and Iran followed Bulgaria, respectively.

Table 2.3: Foreign visitors according to nationalities

| Comparison of Foreign visitors arrived in Turkey from 2017 to 2019 according to nationalities (January-December) | | | | | | | | |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------------|-------|-------|---------------|-----------|
| Nationality | Years | | | National Share (%) | | | % Change Rate | |
| | 2017 | 2018 | 2019* | 2017 | 2018 | 2019* | 2018/2017 | 2019/2018 |
| Russian Fed. | 4 715 438 | 5 964 613 | 7 017 657 | 14,55 | 15,10 | 15,57 | 26,49 | 17,65 |
| Germany | 3 584 653 | 4 512 360 | 5 027 472 | 11,06 | 11,43 | 11,16 | 25,88 | 11,42 |
| Bulgaria | 1 852 867 | 2 386 885 | 2 713 464 | 5,72 | 6,04 | 6,02 | 28,82 | 13,68 |
| England (UK) | 1 658 715 | 2 254 871 | 2 562 064 | 5,12 | 5,71 | 5,69 | 35,94 | 13,62 |
| Iran | 2 501 948 | 2 001 744 | 2 102 890 | 7,72 | 5,07 | 4,67 | -19,99 | 5,05 |

Source: Milliyetlerine Gelen Yabancı Ziyaretçi İstatistikleri, TURSAB. 2020c, , [accessed 11 Mar 2020].

2.2 MARKETING IN TOURISM

For several cases, the marketing today is the same as it was 20 years ago. We need to understand our customers and build a service delivery strategy to offer a quality they are looking for at a price they would find fair. And do all of this while making a profit. Social media has given the consumer a strong voice; dashboards track feedback customers make on social networks about our product; millennials are replacing baby boomers as the most relevant travel group and their needs are very different from boomers (Kotler et al. p. 30).

Tourism, which can still be called a "traveling industry," is one of the fields where the marketing finds broad application. According to Zethaml and Bitner's research done in 2003 the purpose of tourism marketing is to manufacture and position goods to match a broader variety of tourism consumers. It will make the tourism trade exchange process easier.

Tourism marketing is the subsystem of the marketing services network. And by services, we mean all those things, since the product does not have a physical item, but

is a commodity consumed at the time of its development, which contributes to the creation of extra value that is invisible and intangible to the customer.

The tourism sector is a dynamic sector, as it is made up of products and services in various activities. Tourism product nowadays is typically a mix of lodging, food, animation. It is certain that the aim of tourism marketing is to collect and evaluate information based on which the tourism offer is built as an integrated tourism product in order to interact continuously with customers in order to remind them of existing and future offers. Both these practices are an important part of the marketing agenda, which helps to identify steps and methods to achieve those objectives. Tourism marketing has its own particularity which stems from the fact that the tourism product is a service (Ciriković 2014, p. 111).

2.2.1 Traditional Marketing Tools for Tourism

As reported by Onishi (2011) business cards, print ads in magazines or newspapers are considered as a traditional marketing tool. In addition, it also includes posters, advertisements on newspapers, banners, and brochures. In general, conventional marketing requires something other than digital platforms for the brand, service, or logo. Another conventional marketing method that is ignored is once people discover a meticulous trade through an arrangement or platform you eventually create a relationship with them.

Traditional marketing has a place and a purpose. Internal and independent sales forces, direct mail, sales calls, referrals, print media, trade exhibitions, radio, and television are all examples of traditional marketing tactics (Taherdoost and Jalaliyoon 2014 p.336). As stated in Kesić (2006)'s research Television via commercials is the most important conventional medium for advertising or promoting a product or service. The newspaper is the next advertising tool. A characteristic of national newspaper ads is that they create a positive picture of companies and goods. Newspapers are an advantage in terms of versatility for advertisers. The advertisement strategy can be spread over a suitable period, can be modified within a special supplement just before the newspaper is published etc (Roncevic et al. 2019 pp. 330-340).

The list of general advertising channels mentioned earlier provided some distinction ways to eliminate which tourism and hospitality organizations advertise their goods and services. The selection of types of media that can be beneficial for hospitality is: sales missions / workshop / exhibitions; print ads; direct mail / customer relations (CRM)/newsletters; brochure delivery; agent training programs, familiarization visits, lead generation research etc (McCabe 2008 p. 214).

2.2.1.1 Brochure

The travel brochure is one of the most relevant and commonly used among the multitude of promotional techniques available. Described as 'a booklet or brochure used in sales solicitations or promotional events,' these sales support materials need to do more than simply remind customers of a service's presence or importance. Consumers of tourism goods and services rely on information provided in brochures and other sales channels to assist in their decision-making on travelling.

Coltman (1989) in his book "Tourism Marketing" notes that potential customers must compare one destination or supplier's brochure with their competitors' brochure, and the one with the better brochure is likely to obtain the business. For many aspiring visitors, the brochure they are carrying represents the product or place they are considering purchasing (Wicks and Schuett 1991, p.301). Throughout one's life, one's destination image is formed from a variety of sources, including recommendations from friends and family, television shows, films, books, newspapers, guides, brochures, and advertising. Tourists are exposed to these influences and retain some important messages and pictures.

Santos in 1998 Sirakaya and Sonmez in 2000 explored those brochures play a key role in forming an induced picture. A brochure is a printed marketing piece designed to communicate with potential or present travellers. According to Getz and Sailor (1991)'s research, to get consumers to pick up and read a destination-specific brochure, aesthetically pleasing design and generating interest were required (Molina and Esteban 2006, p.1041).

2.2.1.2 Direct mail

The internet provides a cost-effective tool to create stronger consumer relationships than conventional marketing approaches such as direct advertising, cataloguing and telemarketing have been able to do (Moustakas et al. 2006 p. 38). Other major methods of online marketing, such as web banners and online directory advertising, provide nearly double the profit margin as email marketing tactics (Melville et al. 2008, pp. 1191–1199). Direct marketing is a vague concept, but it can be defined as all media operations, messages and responds that target individual clients or potential clients. The primary marketing objective of direct marketing strategies, by collecting personal information in a database, is to create and maintain direct relationships with clients. For tourism and hospitality organizations the main methods of direct marketing include direct response ads, direct mail, e-mail, inserts (McCabe 2008, pp. 252-253).

Direct mail can be used for cross- and up-selling, increasing the purchasing level of consumers, and encouraging consumers to respond and engage in a conversation. The theory is that the more frequently a customer buys or answers messages, and the more recent the transaction or response has been, the more loyal the customer is. Offers are also used by direct advertisers to create loyalty (Merisavo and Raulas 2004, p.499). Permission-based emails are widely utilized due to client concerns about unsolicited emails (often known as "spam"). In most circumstances, the recipient specifically requests access to take direct e-mails, and in other countries, this is a legal requirement (Worthy and Graham 2002, pp. 106-108).

Direct marketing Association in 2009 announced that the advent of the Internet has reduced the operational costs of direct marketing”. Therefore, only a response rate of 0.5 percent can often be considered adequate for a successful e-mail ad campaign (Guido et al. 2011, p. 993). In a direct marketing strategy, identifying the best opportunities – customers who are most likely to react to advertising campaigns – involves not only a profound sociodemographic study of customer records, but also “the creation of models that illustrate the profiles of those best prospects”.

Database marketing is another type of direct marketing applied to individual-level data sets through statistical analysis and knowledge models. The growth of database technology, the Internet and e-commerce, and the resulting customization of websites through one-to-one online marketing (Pepper and Rogers 2011) have made customer relationship management (CRM) extremely effective (Payne and Frow 2005, pp. 167-176).

2.2.1.3 Exhibitions and events

Events, exhibits and trade shows are rapidly becoming an essential component of the communications mix. Big tourism industry events, such as the ITB in Berlin and the World Travel Market (WTM) in London, are becoming a core element of the tourism B2B marketing process. In addition, these are not only the maintenance of travel agencies or DMOs, but the hotel chains and resorts are commonly represented because it is through these trade events that distribution agreements and package-tour deals can be made between the principal and the locations. The key aim of the exhibitions is to implement new products, seek out new contacts with a view to product growth, gather knowledge from rivals, learn about emerging trends and industry developments (McCabe 2008, pp. 250-251).

WTM London 2019, the meeting where ideas are born, experienced a 77 percent increase in ministerial involvement as well as an increase in WTM buyers' club members. WTM London is described as a forum for senior travel professionals to interact, discuss, and analyze the innovations that will determine the tourism industry's future. ExCeL London hosted a three-day festival that drew approximately 50,000 people from 182 nations. There were around 1.2 million company meetings and over 110 conference sessions held. All of this contributed significantly to the signing of contracts worth £3.75 billion in the travel sector (Global Hub 2020).

The Leading Travel Trade Show, ITB Berlin, serves as the major commercial platform for worldwide tourist offerings. Aside from the excellent level of attendee satisfaction (over 90%), the statistics speak for themselves: "6 Continents, over 180 Countries,

1,000 Qualified Top Buyers, 10,000 Exhibitors, over 113,500 Trade Visitors." This is the point at which supply, and demand are equal (ITB Berlin 2020).

2.2.2 Digital Marketing in Tourism

"Online promotion of things or brands" is referred to as "digital marketing." In recent days, the demand for digital marketing in hotels has increased, with examples including Social Media Marketing (SMM), which works with social networking sites, and Search Engine Optimization (SEO), which makes the website appear in results pages with advertisements on Google and online publications via search engine marketing (SEM), video marketing via YouTube, and websites. The newest digital marketing trend is to search for hotels online via computers and mobile devices with hotel websites, which offers up potential to increase local search on hotels by giving essential information, user profiles, citation management, and on web pages. (Parvez et al. pp. 288-290 in Parvez et al. 2018).

Search engine optimization (SEO), Search engine marketing (SEM) advertising on Google, and online publications compete with middlemen such as travel agencies and have radically transformed the marketing landscape and offered new routes for selling items. Because tour operators are one of the outlets that will deliver visitors to the hotel utilizing their advertising media and preferences in selecting their customer search by location and services depending on market competitive strength, all hotels should have them (Yang et al. 2015, pp. 46-55).

Hotels may sell their amenities accurately by presenting their "suites, restaurants, banquet hall, spa, gym, bar, coffee shop, etc." via internet videos from YouTube channels. It is a source for becoming clearer and more popular in social media websites with the best video of amenities on a hotel website, which would increase material for online visitors to watch and read, frequent visits, and a commitment to considerably enhanced website growth. It is also important to get a clear view of the hotel location and facilities (Wang and Kim 2017, pp. 15-26).

2.2.2.1 Digital marketing tools in tourism

Digital advertising is the best way to manage a site as much as possible. The following forms of online ads are classified according to the consumer effect principle: banner, contextual, targeted, and mobile.

Banner ads-text and graphic promotional materials shared on publicity website pages. Banner advertising is equivalent to advertisements in print media according to a variety of indicators, for example, information material, the existence of a text-graphic block. The appearance of a banner with a hyperlink, the prospect of an animated picture and a call to a mobile phone increases the effect of such ads significantly.

Contextual advertisement-web ads, the positioning of which is dependent on the quality of the promotional material in the context of Internet countries purchasing or selecting from many competing items, that is, at the final stages of consumer readiness.

Targeted advertising on social media platforms is an Internet advertisement placed based on the geographical, socio-demographic, behavioural and psychographic characteristics of advertising consumers. Used most frequently on social networks and allowing you to target users in small segments. Targeting is done according to user information received during registration.

Mobile advertising-an advertising message addressed to the user through a mobile phone communication channel. It can be placed either as a banner or as a text message. Mobile advertising today includes not only banners displayed on mobile phone browsers but advertising in web device applications as well. The main objective of online advertising is to raise awareness of the company's market offers, and also to provide traffic to the site. It is not, however, an important instrument for creating consumer loyalty (Kayumovich 2020, pp. 28-32).

Table 2.4: Digital Marketing Tools

| Digital Marketing Communication Options | |
|---|---|
| Website | Companies must design web sites that embody or express their purpose, history, products and vision. The key challenge is to design a site that is attractive at first sight and interesting enough to encourage repeat visits. Dedicated websites for mobile devices are on the increase. |
| Social Media | Companies are embracing social media because of its potential for engagement and collaboration with consumers. Social media advertising will yield relatively stronger results because of its ability to tightly target audience based on social media activity. |
| Mobile marketing | Mobile phone marketing will become increasingly important. Smart phone use in particular is growing amongst travelers. |
| Internet Specific Ads and videos | With user-generated content sites such as you tube. My space video and google video, consumers and advertisers can upload ads and videos to be shared virally by millions of people |
| Display Ads | Display ads are small, rectangular boxes containing text and perhaps a picture that companies pay to place on relevant web sites. The larger the audience, the more the placement costs. |
| Microsites | A microsite is a limited area on the Web managed and paid for by an external advertiser/ company. Microsites are individual Web pages or cluster of pages that function as supplements to a primary site |
| Search ads | Paid-search or pay-per-click ads represent 40% of all on-line ads. Thirty-five percent of all searches are reportedly for products or services. These arch terms serve as a proxy for the consumer's consumption interests and trigger relevant links to product or service offerings alongside search results from google, msn and yahoo! Advertisers pay only if people click on the links. |
| Online Communities | Many companies sponsor on-line communities whose members communicate through postings, instant messaging and chat discussions about special interests related to the company's products and brands. |
| Interstitials | Interstitials are advertisements, often with video or animation, that pop up between changes on a website, e.g., ads for Johnson & Johnson's Tylenol headache reliever would pop up on brokers' websites whenever the stock market fell by 100 points or more. |
| Blogs | Blogs are usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. Most good quality blogs are interactive; allowing visitors to leave comments and even messages each other. |
| E-mail | Email uses only a fraction of the cost of a direct mail campaign. |

Source: Digital Marketing In Tourism: The More Global, Pitana, G. & Pitanatri, P.D.S., 2016.

2.2.2.2 E-tourism

The Internet plays a vital role in facilitating the distribution of product and service information, particularly in the hotel industry. According to a Google study, travellers used the Internet as their primary source of information (about 80%) while planning holidays in 2013, and they also trusted online media the most. This proclivity derives from the fact that the Internet substantially simplifies the process of acquiring information. So, when people use an online booking system, 43% of them already know where they're going and what services they'll utilize. E-commerce is defined as the selling and marketing of goods and services via an electronic network, such as the

Internet. Electronic data transmission, delivery management, e-marketing (internet marketing), online purchasing, electronic data upgrades, automatic inventory of management systems used, and automated data collection are all part of the package. Electronic tourism (e-tourism) is a subset of e-commerce that brings together some of the fastest-evolving technologies, such as telecommunications and information technology, the hotel industry, and management, marketing, and strategic planning.

Consumer electronic tourism includes electronic information, e-booking (hotels, transportation, etc.) and electronic payment. E-tourism focuses on information exchange, but it also includes direct sales and the reduction of physical and temporal obstacles to e-commerce technologies. We could examine booking tactics in the hotel industry, such as using realistic booking systems and real-time reservation systems. Direct selling has a huge potential because it focuses on a variety of benefits for tourism providers, such as automation, the elimination of travel agency commissions, and the reduction of reserving costs through traditional online reservations while boosting booking quantity due to new Web access methods (PDAs, mobile phones, etc). (Watkins et al. 2018, pp. 40-45).

2.2.2.3 Social media

Cohen (2011) compiled a list of 30 possible social media definitions from a variety of perspectives. These definitions described some of the most important characteristics and characteristics of social media. They usually involve: “(1) online tools, applications, platforms, and media, and thus rely on information technology”; “(2) social media are peer-to-peer networking channels that enable businesses and the public to create, collaborate, and share virtual website content, attributes that bring significant and widespread changes in networking in both companies, communities, and individuals.” (Zeng and Gerritsen 2014, p 28).

Visitors have utilized forums and microblogs (e.g., Blogger and Twitter), internet forums (e.g. Facebook, RenRen, and TripAdvisor), content delivery systems (e.g. Flickr

and YouTube), and Web bookmarking to search, collaborate, post, and annotate travel reports and experiences. (Leung et al. 2013, p.4).

To attract, engage, and keep clients, tourism firms may now choose from a variety of marketing tactics. Advertisers may distinguish between sponsored (for example, display or search advertising), acquired (for example, a website, e-newsletters, or smartphone apps), and (e.g., word-of-mouth, buzz, or user-generated "viral" content). Platforms or websites for brand networking are social media platforms (for example, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google+, Instagram, or Pinterest). To be effective, social media, like most other strategies like local outreach and mainstream websites, must be carefully integrated into the company plan. Managers must be conscious of the numerous responsibilities at hand. They are interacting with the way individuals engage on multiple channels.

The conversation design of social networking facilitates and demands a conceptual change in brand discourse from hierarchy to collaboration. Although traditional advertisement is all about selling goods and services, social media is about connectivity and user interest (Wozniak et al. 2016, p. 2). So how do tourism advertisers utilize social media to involve customers in this modern phase of customer decision making? Social networking ads are constantly being used at the first "consider" point to push traffic to the tourism websites. Customer outreach to advertisers and other outlets of intelligence is far more likely to influence their subsequent preferences at the next "evaluation" point than marketers' attempts to persuade them.

The crucial point during the assessment phase is online reviews of hotels or cruise lines. Thanks to this, the company address bad feedback and minimize the risk, whereas good reviews provide cost-free, compelling advertising. Because the travel sector contributes for around one-third of all global e-commerce activity, tourism marketers feel that the purchase process is more likely to take place online. For example, most hotels provide room-booking functionality on their Facebook pages to maximize income. (Hudson and Thal 2013, pp. 156-160).

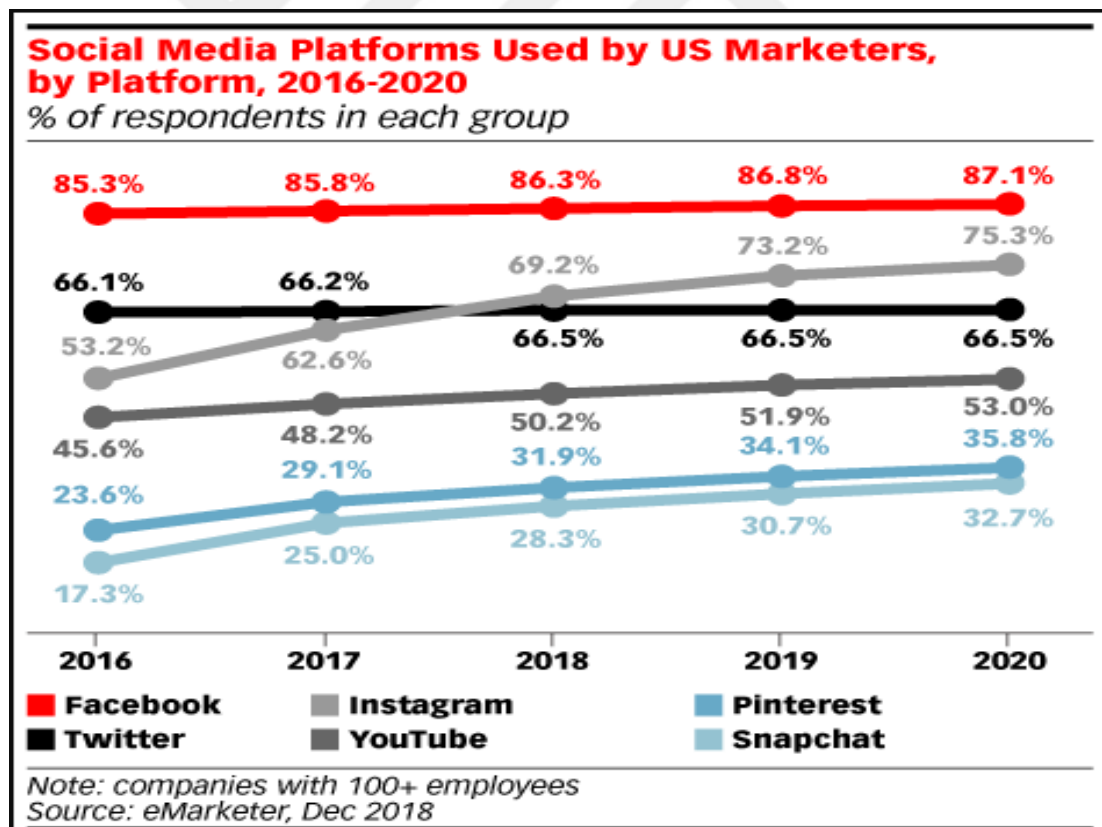
2.2.2.4 Facebook

The major purpose of social networking sites (SNSs) is to facilitate the formation of social connections, such as meeting friends and engaging in social groups, societies, and even small talk and commerce. In February 2004, Mark Zuckerberg, a Harvard University freshman at the time, established Facebook, which rapidly became the world's biggest community. Facebook has had 2.45 billion active monthly users during the third quarter of 2019, making it the world's largest social networking site. Around 80 percent (78.1 percent) of Facebook profiles were created by young individuals aged 18 to 54, with 55 percent of them being female (Jin 2015, p.502). Facebook is now seen as a market entry tool as well as a medium that has a significant influence on consumer wishes and public purchase decisions (Jayasuriya et al. 2018, p.4).

Social networking is a "hybrid aspect of the marketing mix" since it allows firms to engage directly with each other and with customers through their workers. Managers in social media need to understand how to influence market dialogues, which they may do by providing customers with networking channels like the Facebook-site company (Mangold and Faulds 2009, pp.357-365). Tourist complaints were determined to be a major concern for tourism business on the Internet, according to Buhalis and Law (2008). Managers will search for feedback sites and attempt to manage them effectively. Managers may also provide clients with plaintiffs like as Facebook, which makes dealing with concerns easier. The Facebook commercial is also titled "Word-of-Mouth." Customers can connect with one another via the company's Facebook page. When clients make a purchasing choice, word-of-mouth is regarded as the most useful source of information, and it is especially essential in the hotel and tourist industries since items are difficult to identify before consumption owing to their intangible nature." (Pesonen, 2011, pp. 3-4). Modern 'Web 2.0' Internet is distinguished by "review sites (e.g., Tripadvisor.com) and media platforms channels (e.g., Facebook.com, Twitter.com)" that ushered in a World Wide Web social network transformation, resulting in what has been called 'socialnomics,' or a social media economy.

Social media platforms enable Web users to construct online travel communities (VTCs), which help visitors get information, develop relationships, establish trust, and eventually make travel-related choices. Social networking platforms, which are often used by online travelers, promoting user-generated content (CGC) such as forums, photographs, videos, wikis, or reviews, signaling a shift away from companies that accept responsibility for Internet content and toward clients. (Mariani et al. 2016, pp. 321-322). 90 million company pages are supported by Facebook. 140 million companies use Facebook every month to interact with potential customers and workers, as well as interact with local communities (this status refers, however, to Facebook products, not just Facebook). According to eMarketer Facebook marketing statistics, over 85% of US marketers have utilized Facebook as a marketing tool since 2016, with that figure expected to climb to 87 percent by 2020.

Figure 2.1: US advertisers using different social media channels (%)

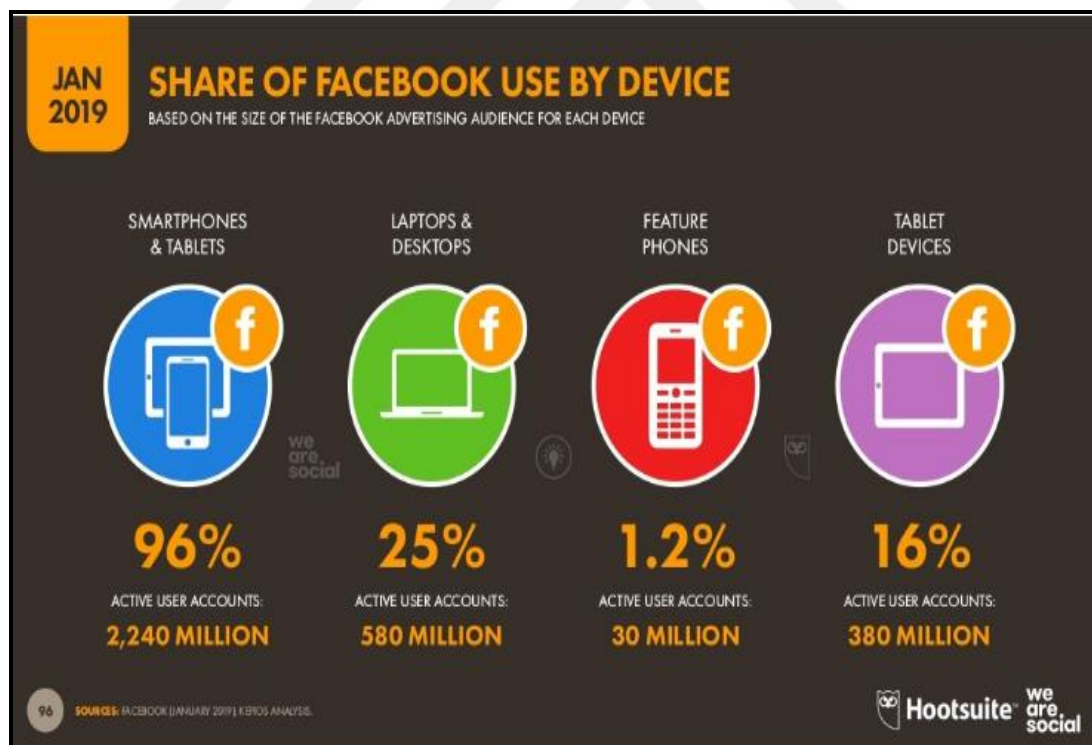


Source: Facebook Revenue and Usage Statistics (2020) Iqbal, M. [accessed 13 May 2020].

It is the most popular site, according to Facebook marketing data based on a poll of 4,800 marketers performed by Social Media Examiner. According to reports, 94 percent of marketers use the platform. We can see how well-established Facebook is as a marketing platform with just 73 percent of second-place Instagram logs and 59 percent of third-place Twitter logs. When it comes to B2C marketing, Facebook is used by 97 percent of the time; Instagram is already used by 78 percent of the time, so the gap has shrunk significantly. For B2B marketing, the margin is much smaller, with Facebook being the preferred site at 91 percent, 80 percent ahead of LinkedIn.⁴

As per eMarketer, the average time spent on Facebook by US users in 2020 will be 37 minutes (on all devices). This is down from 38 minutes in 2019, which is two minutes less than the prior projection released by eMarketer. In the third quarter of 2019, Facebook then became world's second most-used smartphone device, as well as the second most-downloaded.

Figure 2.10: Facebook appliance



Source: Global Digital Report, We Are Social [accessed 13 May 2020].

⁴ Social Media Examiner 2020

Since the beginning of 2019, 96 percent of Facebook users have accessed the app on a smartphone or tablet, making smartphones and tablets the most popular device for accessing Facebook (more specifically, 16 per cent of active users use tablet devices). With 25% of the user population utilizing the app on one of these larger devices, there is certainly some overlap with desktop / laptop users. Feature phones, which are low-cost options for developing nations, are used by 1.2 percent of Facebook users.

2.2.2.5 Instagram

In October of 2010, Instagram was released as a free smartphone application. It was created by Mike Krieger and Kevin Systrom. It just topped 700 million users, with an average of 95 million photos and videos uploaded each day. Nearly 40 billion photographs have been uploaded so far. Instagram's user base is rather youthful, with 90 percent of users under the age of 35. There are over 1.2 million Instagram users in Finland, with 70% of them utilizing the platform on a daily basis. In 2012, Facebook purchased Instagram (Terttunen 2017, p.13).

According to Chan in 2011, social networking platforms focusing on picture exchange are becoming increasingly effective as a strategy for Search Engine Optimization, and knowledge of Search Engine Optimization is growing. Smith said in 2018 that 65 percent of the world's top 100 businesses have Instagram profiles, and 57 percent of them are active and upload photographs or videos at least once a week. To assist companies, the Instagram team has created a blog called Instagram for business, which includes useful advice and best practices from firms who succeed with their Instagram marketing. They are now providing material for companies from their own book, The Instagram Handbook. The book contains the essential concepts of Instagram, as well as the top hashtags and examples from the 11 best Instagram companies. The eleven most successful companies on Instagram "These testimonies bring to life their diverse personalities and ideas through intriguing images and commentary on their varied communities," says one of them (Wallsbeck and Johansson 2014, p.16).

Offering great opportunities to its users like Youtube, Instagram enables users to share their moments with their followers with its photo sharing feature. In terms of marketing,

this platform, which allows users to promote products, services, and brands from their own accounts, also prepares the ground for companies to participate in this environment and to sell advertising and products, thus generating revenue for both users and companies (Hanan and Putit 2014, p.2).

Figure 2.11: Hashtag usage by hotels



Source: Rixos Hotel Instagram Page., 2020, [accessed 16 May 2020].

On Instagram, travel is a big thing. On Instagram, there are over 179 million posts with the hashtag # travel, and the number is steadily increasing. According to social media Today, 48% of Instagram users use the app to find a new destination, and 35% use it to find a new location. “Tourism marketers have traditionally depended on bloggers as opinion leaders who can successfully spread content to large audiences,” according to Gretzel et al. (2016), but should now focus on Instagram influencers. Tuckman (2012) stated that images have a huge impact on customer purchase behavior because they allow buyers to build a visual connection to a product before purchasing it. Video content is another unique opportunity for Instagram companies and places to communicate with and attract customers. (Terttunen 2017, p.28).

Hashtags are a very effective marketing tactic. They are the only way for the material to show up in search results, as well as for the business or location to be discovered. The right hashtag, or a combination of hashtags, will bring the brand or place to the attention of a wide, targeted audience, improving the chances of potential consumers being interested (Newberry 2020). Tourism is increasingly being driven by social media and networking platforms. According to another survey, more than 20% of all foreign tourists agree to use social media as a source of information, and social media has a significant influence on visitors' impressions of a destination. Lauren, a marketer with 465,000 Instagram followers, believes that Instagram is essential for the 'dreaming process' before traveling. (Smith 2018, pp. 172-174).

In the tourism industry, the Internet has changed both engaged customers' marketing behavior and marketers' touristic destinations. Hanan and Putit (2014) employ the same notion, where social media involvement is a guiding force for destination marketing, as do Manap and Adzharudin (2013), who underline the role of the Web in the growth of tourism destinations. Instagram, which began as a solely online photographic medium, has grown to become a powerful medium for advertisement, publicity, promotions, the transmission of ideas / commodities, and the easy, dependable, and exact supply of information resources.

The goal of internet photography in the tourist context is to establish a positive perception of the place among the audience. Users' images will be produced, discussed, and spread over social media, culminating in "inaudible" word of mouth (WOM). In other words, Instagram's online photography service, such as image sharing, is a sign of realism and the user experience of a tourist. Instagram users' engagement demonstrates a positive trend in developing a tourism destination's image. eWOM (electronic word of mouth) was used to create this brand, which consists of user comments on products and services posted on Instagram (Fatantia and Suyadnyab 2015, pp. 1089-1095).

2.2.2.6 Twitter

In the context of social media, data produced on platforms like as Facebook and Twitter, as well as tourism, TripAdvisor incorporates vast amounts of data (petabytes). The realm of publishing and content development includes broad journals, forums, discussion sites, photo archives, social networks, wikis, and bookmarking. As a result, there exist search engines that collect UGC from various social networking site. Companies may use these tools to track their reputation by looking at notions like Strength (the number of times the brand has been discussed), Feeling (whether the postings are positive, negative, or neutral), and Zeal (how frequently the brand is referenced). Revilla Hernández et al. (2016) defined reach as the number of consumers who mention the brand (Revilla Hernández et al. 2016, p.4).

With approximately 554,750,000 active registered users, Twitter, which was launched in October 2006, is the most popular microblogging site today. It's also one of the top ten most popular websites on the web. Users send short tweets of fewer than 140 characters, with each message averaging 11 words. Users have the option of making their communications private or allowing the whole Twitter cyberspace region to observe their accounts. Users can communicate with one other and retweet one other's tweets. The 'following' link is not reciprocal, unlike other online social networking sites. On Twitter.com, personal announcements such as daily activities with friends, family, and co-workers, information and current news, editorials, marketing, and dialogues, and viewpoints with interested investigators are common post subjects. Portland, Oregon,

was the first city in the United States to develop an official Twitter online visitor information center in 2008. According to Hays et al. (2013), organizations consider Twitter to be a novel, ground-breaking strategy to reaching, communicating with, and understanding the behavior of millions of customers worldwide (Zafiropoulos et al. 2014 pp. 88-92).

Public relations and communications professionals emphasize the value of social networking while emphasizing the likelihood of interacting directly with the public. It is argued that commitment to target audiences on social media platforms is necessary for the survival of businesses and companies. Corporations may communicate with these target groups on Twitter by retweets, utilizing hashtags and following other users. Thanks to that engagement and contact, the businesses can alter the understanding of a term "brand" in the minds of individuals and influence the thought and actions of individuals. Place branding and promotion programs for destinations are no different than their commercial peers in this way. The division between position administrators and public bodies as the primary creators between brand pictures and the public as customers is no longer feasible. Instead, place branding is a process of negotiation between different stakeholders and audiences. Therefore, correspondence relevant to the positioning of branding and destination marketing should be conducted in a "transparent, open and creative manner that seeks conversation." By fulfilling any of these four criteria, Twitter encourages the development of powerful destination labels and enhances the visibility of locations online (Sevin 2013, pp. 227-229).

Chan and Guillet (2011) revealed that Twitter and Facebook were the most popular web networks in the Hong Kong hotel business while researching social media usage. The company has mostly used the websites to provide discounted items and services, respond to visitor inquiries, and handle complaints. The sites were used to attract visitors and acquire commercial information to a lesser extent.

Another major social media platform used by national destination marketing organizations for marketing purposes is Twitter (DMOs). In the sphere of market analysis, Twitter data is seen more than other social networking sites. It's partly due to

Twitter's open data policy; Facebook messages are still unavailable owing to rigorous privacy restrictions, and other sites typically have smaller user bases.

Twitter is conducive to customer study due of its internal communication nature. Twitter, users can post messages up to 140 characters long on the microblogging site. Such brief messages, known colloquially as "tweets," capture the key context that users wish to express while excluding extraneous information. The hashtags' distinctive "#" feature allows users to highlight terms in their messages or identify other communications that include certain terms. Using the hashtags "RT@username >" or "@username >," tweets can be distributed (or "retweeted") to a common network of peers and acquaintances. Tweets sent to a specific registered user are denoted by the "@" mark. Twitter now has the benefit of gathering a diverse spectrum of real-time user feedback and opinions (Philander and Zhong 2016, p. 17).

2.2.2.7 Application of mobile internet technology for tourism

The tourism industry used the Internet for the first time on its launch and tourists could search for scenic spot information and book hotels or other services online. Mobile internet technology has been applied to tourism facilities via the mobile terminal, with the following aspects: Mobile Information Services, Location-Based Services, Virtual Guide Services, Social Apps Like Weibo/WeChat, Cell Phone Payment Programs. The main goal of the tourism industry is “to draw people's consideration so that a successful marketing campaign can be a catalyst for tourism growth and potential customers are considered essential objects that tourism managers observe”.

WeChat marketing, as a modern, “creative marketing model creates user relationship over time and space”. WeChat is an effective tourism marketing carrier in the following 5 separate phases. Visitors can select scenic spots that match themselves after reading about the travel arrangements of previous visitors travelling. The application will recommend tourist attractions, locations, tourist routes so they can easily prepare their travel itinerary.

Finally, travellers determine their itineraries by considering different picturesque sites, combining the traveling interactions of others with their own preferences and choices. Those suggested WeChat picturesque sites are also spread to some extent. The tourists will save time and energy by taking this technique. Even if visitors encounter difficulties when traveling, they might feel relieved because of similar experiences of others and the decrease of unneeded difficulties. Visitors' photos and reviews from all around the world, as well as their itineraries, are available to users (Xiao 2019, pp. 42–54).

2.3 WOM VS EWOM

Advances in internet technology, as well as its general availability, have drastically changed how clients select hotel accommodations. As a result, the hotel industry prioritizes online marketing management (Xie et al. 2011, pp. 178–183). The hotel industry provides two types of services. The first are fundamental products such as hospitality services, while the second are extra physical objects that enhance the customer experience, such as restaurants and fitness centers.

The hotel sector sells practice items, which means that purchasers can't determine the quality or consistency of the items before making a purchase. As a result, word-of-mouth (WOM) plays an important role in this industry (Litvin et al. 458–468). Consumers seek knowledge while making purchase decisions in order to minimize ambiguity and perceived risks. They use word of mouth (WOM) and electronic word of mouth (eWOM) in their selecting processes (Bronner and Hoog 2011, p.16).x

eWOM varies from conventional word-of-mouth (WOM) in numerous basic respects, according to Zeithaml, Bitner, and Gremler (2006). To begin, consumers frequently obtain word of mouth about a particular service provider from a small group of people (Xie et al. 2011, pp. 178-183). In the Internet context, however, hundreds or perhaps millions of clients from all walks of life can evaluate the service provider (Litvin et al. 2008, pp. 458–468). Customers, as a result, assess eWOM that contains both positive and negative (i.e., ambivalent) signals.

Second, WOM usually refers to people's views (e.g., friends and family), whereas eWOM refers to foreign statements. As a result, eWOM's history is not necessarily as clear as WOM's (Kelman and Hovland 1953, pp. 327–335). Several third-party online travel intermediaries allow reviewers to provide personal identifying information (PII) (such as name, resident status, gender, and visit/stay dates) in order to maintain anonymity.

Furthermore, it is critical for clients to speak vocally with the individual providing services in order to get accurate qualitative knowledge about the experience of a service provider. Consumers will be able to ascribe and judge the service provider more confidently with this knowledge (Weiner 2000, pp. 382–387). However, in the internet world, such detailed contextual knowledge is sometimes far more difficult to obtain. A typical internet customer provides quick comment on a service provider that lacks crucial contextual information about their usage.

eWOM, despite its decontextualization and anonymity, may appear foggy to purchasers. As a result, consumers' prior attitudes toward service providers (i.e., pre-decisional attitude) will have a significant influence on their understanding of eWOM and future purchase intention (Russo et al. 1998, pp. 438–452). WOM and eWOM are distinguished by four fundamental criteria. The first distinction is the source of information's trustworthiness. (Cheung and Thadani 2012 pp. 461–470; Hussain et al. 2017 pp. 96–102), since it might influence, for example, client attitudes toward goods or services (Veasna et al. 2013 pp. 511–526), particularly when acquiring high-risk tourism services. (Sotiriadis and Van Zyl pp. 103–124 in Sotiriadis and Van Zyl 2013). The anonymity of online communication may have a detrimental impact on their reliability. (Luo et al. 2013 pp. 92–102).

Consumers, on the other hand, are said to employ eWOM more while making risk-averse decisions, according to some academics (Hussain et al. 2017, pp. 92-102). Similarly, it appears that eWOM is more successful when the client who uses it has previously used it (Sotiriadis and Van Zyl 2013, pp.103-124). Traditional WOM information is exchanged in private, real-time face-to-face dialogs and exchanges,

which is another contrast between the two mediums. eWOM-shared information, on the other hand, is not private and is regularly used by people who have never met before. Additionally, remarks can be seen at different periods (Cheung and Thadani 2012, pp. 461–470). Another difference between the two mediums is that traditional WOM information is transmitted in private, real-time face-to-face dialogs and exchanges. On the other hand, eWOM-shared information is not private and is frequently utilized by persons who have never met before. Furthermore, remarks may be found at various times (Cheung and Thadani 2012, pp. 461–470).

2.3.1 Review Platforms in Hospitality

Today, with the development of technology, different aspects have emerged in the travel and hospitality industry regarding how and where to seek tips and product feedback. Customers have become more wary of businesses and third parties that provide accommodation services, and more conscious of planning their travels and vacation times (Jacobsen and Munar 2012, pp. 39–47). The significance of social media in the advertising process has drastically changed the way businesses interact with their customers, but most specifically, how consumers clearly share their views, their level of loyalty, or the nature of the services they offer (Leung et al. 2013, pp. 3–22). This marketing technique has been such an important part of advertising applications that it is almost impossible to see a business that does not benefit from this marketing technique today. In this context, online user-generated feedback, social networks, forums, blogs, or micro-blog sites form the backbone of businesses' marketing campaigns. Due to the tourist industry's wide reach and status as one of the forerunners in the service sector, these marketing strategies are extremely important. (Qi et al. 2010, pp. 285–296).

User-generated content (UGC) is also a very effective guide for the sales audience of hotels or restaurants. They were criticized for their quality and loss of material value (Smith et al. 2005, pp. 15–37). EWOM interaction or sharing informal experiences between people about products and services in this way, "where resources are thought to be free of commercial influence" (Litvin et al., 2008, p. 458), a popularly accessible,

effective, concise, convenient, personalized and the type of online material that provides accurate information. Based on this, word-of-mouth information sharing among individuals makes a great addition to marketing-generated content (MGC) for people who are often seen as biased and prefer other goods and brands. In this sense, the phrase "electronic word of mouth" is used to characterize this type of communication. any web material: Reviews, ratings, tips, information, feedback, guidance, and any other assistance provided and produced by personal observations and opinions by travel companions and employers, but not subject to customer control or influence (Jumin et al. 2011, pp. 187–206).

With all these developments, customer ratings for travel and tourism businesses have started to create crowdsourcing activities, which have a high impact for marketing activities (Sotiriadis and Van Zyl 2013, pp. 103–124). On the other hand, many businesses believe that effectively utilizing the electronic word of mouth technique (EWOM) through social media channels is a difficult task. (Hudson and Thal 2013, pp. 156–160). Whereas some of the hotel businesses give preference to the comments made from a customer satisfaction perspective, some see it as a service they provide only to their customers. Based on this, they have struggled to have favorable conditions for users to regularly share their views or recommend their property to other travelers. Rating sites like "Yelp, IgoUgo, and TripAdvisor," which link consumers and give a "culture" phenomena, are specialist sector niches that are not employed by enterprises that give a client portfolio for potential purchasers. Forum comments have become a sacred source of information for people seeking information, seeking advice, or helping others by sharing their views and experiences beyond providing services and supporting companies (Gligorijevic and Luck 2012, pp. 25–40).

Personalized hospitality experiences content created by the user is valuable to potential customers searching the internet in terms of specific locations (Munar, 2012, pp.101–120). Social networks featuring eWOM details exist on the first few pages of search engines, according to Xiang and Gretzel. During online searches, the results of terms typed in my search engines account for a major portion of my search engine listings. As a result of the unique ranking algorithms employed, they are "In terms of the size of

their site, the current nature and relevancy of their material, and the amount of interconnection with other websites on the Internet, this is quite essential. Google is a search engine " (ibid). Xiang and Gretzel discovered search engine listings of online communities (websites such as IgoUgo and Thorn Tree - Lonely Planet), customer experience sharing and rating sites (e.g., TripAdvisor and Zagat), bloggers and blogging platforms (e.g., Blogspot) because of their research (Xiang and Gretzel 2010, pp.179–188). has shown that it governs (Xiang and Gretzel 2010, pp.1799).

In a report on the use of social media to coordinate vacations, Para-Lopez said that users greatly benefit from organizing their trips using this method, thus gaining a deeper understanding of the location where they plan to travel, learn to cost their travel cheaper, share common interests and tastes. He stated that they create a feeling of belonging. For this reason, using social media while planning and preparing for travel adds another dimension to the use of social media in this field, as it is fun for readers when using user-generated content (UGC) production compared to marketing-based content (MGC). This becomes an important aspect of increasing the frequency of online visits, as the prominence of the content on websites shows that it can lead to more site visits and correspondingly higher sales (Lopez 2011, pp. 640–654).

2.3.1.1 Tripadvisor

Blogs, which have the ability to engage people in collaborative activities and information exchange, have become a valuable source of information in the tourist business, as well as in other fields. (Werthner and Ricci 2004; Lin and Huang 2006). The increase in online information exchange about travels has enabled tourists to evaluate many options regarding the hotels they plan to stay in the regions they plan to visit. In this context, as blogs undertake tasks such as collecting information, then using and comparing this information, they influence the tourist business, which is impacted more than other industries. (Yuan, et al. 2016; Jansson, 2018).

Travel blog sites, can have a significant impact on the tourist sector with advanced technology, provide important clues to consumers in the process of making a choice,

thanks to the target comments that include the strengths and weaknesses of the hotels. The increase in the number of people with touristic activities every year and the intensity of information in the tourism sector make it almost necessary to create reliable blog sites. In this direction, the emergence of TripAdvisor and similar blog sites, which are active in the sphere of tourism are critical in analysing visitor preferences and are commonly utilized by many individuals nowadays. The TripAdvisor blog site, which has a very high power to influence potential customers with the comments and evaluations made, has a very common usage area in terms of popularity among blog sites active in the field of tourism. Through the comments made on advanced travel blog sites such as TripAdvisor, besides sharing touristic experiences and guiding potential customers before the purchasing decision process, it also gives businesses and managers a better understanding of the dynamics in the industry (Cenni and Goethals 2017).

TripAdvisor, located in the United States, was founded in 2000 and is now one of the world's largest and most popular travel websites. (Law 2006). Aiming to publish content created by users for accommodation and travel plans holistically, this site is a platform where approximately 7.7 million registered touristic businesses are involved, more than 661 million evaluations, an average of 456 million people per month benefit, and millions of consumers do research on their planned travels. became like that. Providing the opportunity to review and analyse consumer reviews without making online reservations, TripAdvisor has evolved into one of the most sophisticated travel blog sites, with hundreds of hotels, attractions, historical sites, towns, restaurants, and traveller images (Law, 2006). TripAdvisor's approach is based on the gathering, analysis, sharing, and usage of data among tourism players in this context. The fundamental goal of this platform is to build competitive power and supply and demand technology infrastructure based on the tourist sector, to improve its functioning, to produce collaboratively produced advantages, and to give value in new ways. (Nilashi et al. 2018).

Today, blog sites such as TripAdvisor, which are used by more than 80% of travelers, offer opportunities such as review and evaluation for businesses in the tourism sector, determining choices by evaluating alternatives for potential customers, and transferring

purchased after-service experiences. Studies conducted in this context show that 77.9% of potential customers. The shares of other consumers impact the section of potential customers seeking for information on online travel blog sites, and these shares are effective in deciding hotel choices. (Mazzarol et al. 2007).

Figure 2.12: Key Features of TripAdvisor 's Website

The image shows a screenshot of the TripAdvisor website for the Hampton Inn & Suites Miami/Downtown-Coratown hotel. The page is annotated with red boxes and labels pointing to various key features:

- Saving & Sharing:** Located at the top left, it includes a search bar and navigation links.
- Popularity Index:** A box highlighting the hotel's ranking: "Ranked #1 of 131 hotels in Miami" with 340 reviews and a 96% GreenLeaders Platinum level.
- Business Listing:** A box pointing to the "Special Offer: Book now and save 13%" banner.
- Green Leaders Program:** A box highlighting the "Certificate of Excellence 2013" and "GreenLeaders Platinum level" badges.
- Candid Traveler Photos & Videos:** A box pointing to the "Professional photos" and "243 traveler photos" section.
- Metasearch:** A box pointing to the "Book on" buttons for Booking.com, Expedia, and Orbitz.
- Reviews at a Glance:** A box highlighting the "940 reviews from our community" and the "Write a Review" button.
- Travel Reviews:** A box pointing to a specific review titled "Great Location for Pre-Cruise Stay" with a 5-star rating.
- Reviewer Profile:** A box pointing to the profile of the reviewer, Eduardo C., who is the General Manager of the hotel.
- Related Hotel Recommendation:** A box pointing to the "Related hotels..." section, which lists other hotels in the area.
- Facebook Integration:** A box pointing to the "12 friends have been to Miami & nearby hotels" section.
- Sponsorship & Display Ad:** A box pointing to the "VISA" logo at the bottom of the page.

Source: The Contribution-Utilization-Matrix, Egger et al., 2016, p. 245

2.3.1.2 Trivago

Rolf Schrömgens, Peter Vinnemeier, and Stephan Stubner, three university classmates, created Trivago in 2005 in Düsseldorf, Germany. The platform's first iteration, like many other start-ups, was born in a garage. In 2006, Stephan decided to pursue a career as a professor, and Malte Siewert agreed to join the founding team. The current executive team includes CEO Axel Hefer, CFO Matthias Tillmann, CTO James Carter, COO Johannes Thomas, and CPO Anja Honnefelder. Trivago has risen from a €1.4 million seed round to become one of Europe's most striking unicorns, with a market valuation of almost €8 billion. It began as a website that was only available in Germany and was founded by three gentlemen in their garage. It employs approximately 1,200 employees and works in 55 markets throughout the world.⁵

Trivago earns money largely through a "cost-per-click" (CPC) model, in which an advertiser gets compensated when a user clicks on an advertised rate and is sent to the advertiser's website, where the client may complete the reservation. When visitors search for and select their perfect trivago hotel, they are led to book it with one of our sponsors. Trivago is a fast and accurate search engine that compares over 3.0 million hotels and other types of lodging in over 190 countries, including over 1.8 million alternative lodging units such as vacation rentals and private homes. Because we have a search website, users do not book directly on our platform.⁶

As a search engine for hotels, Trivago was the first of its kind in Germany 13 years ago. Based on this meta search some points are arise: "hotel prices with 55 markets served around the world and prices compared to more than 250 booking sites and more than 1 million hotels". While searching hotel reservation sites, Trivago 's hotel search tool offers information on costs, photos, availability, hotel reviews and all other related details. The booking process will be completed on the partner 's website where the users will be guided after choosing the hotel they want. Trivago's business model is based on advertising partners that use the cost-per-click (CPC) model. CPC is an Internet advertisement model used to guide traffic to websites in which, when the ad is clicked,

⁵ Trivago 2020a

⁶ Trivago 2020b

an advertiser pays a publisher. Hoteliers and suppliers list their rates during the booking stage, and publish their services on the Trivago website, paying for the clicks received from Trivago customers (Siroya 2018, p.44). Through paying for the clicks obtained from trivago users, hotel chains, online travel agencies and hoteliers advertise themselves on trivago website. In short, partners create different bid rates for their hotels which then influence how their offerings will be placed as users search for a hotel. This also affects the growth or decrease in traffic for a particular hotel. It is achieved with the aid of a program named trivago intelligence (Babahmetovic 2018, p.2).

Table 2.5: The Trivago N.V.'S Earnings Report For The First Quarter Of 2020

| | Three months ended March 31, | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------|------------|
| | 2020 | 2019 | Δ Y/Y |
| Total revenue | 139.8 | 209.0 | (33)% |
| Qualified Referrals (in millions) | 93.9 | 129.3 | (27)% |
| Revenue per Qualified Referral (in €) | 1.46 | 1.59 | (8)% |
| Operating income/(loss) | (215.3) | 13.4 | n.m. |
| Net income/(loss) | (214.3) | 7.8 | n.m. |
| Return on Advertising Spend | 133.3% | 136.6% | (3.3) ppts |
| Adjusted EBITDA ⁽¹⁾ | (0.6) | 21.4 | n.m. |

n.m. not meaningful
Note: We have reclassified certain amounts related to our prior period results to conform to our current period presentation.

Source: Trivago 1st Quarter News Release Details, Trivago.,2020c, [accessed24 May 2020].

Trivago had offered access to over 4.5 million hotels and other forms of lodging in over 190 countries as of March 31, 2020, including over 3.3 million alternative housing units such as vacation rentals and flats. Trivago's search engine is at the heart of our user experience, and it's available in 54 languages through 54 customized websites and applications. (Trivago 2020d).

2.3.1.3 Booking.com

Booking.com began as a small Dutch company in 1996 and has since evolved to become one of the largest digital travel companies in the world. Booking.com's purpose, as part of Booking Holdings Inc., is to make it simple for anybody to explore the world (NASDAQ: BKNG). By investing in technology that helps eliminate travel friction,

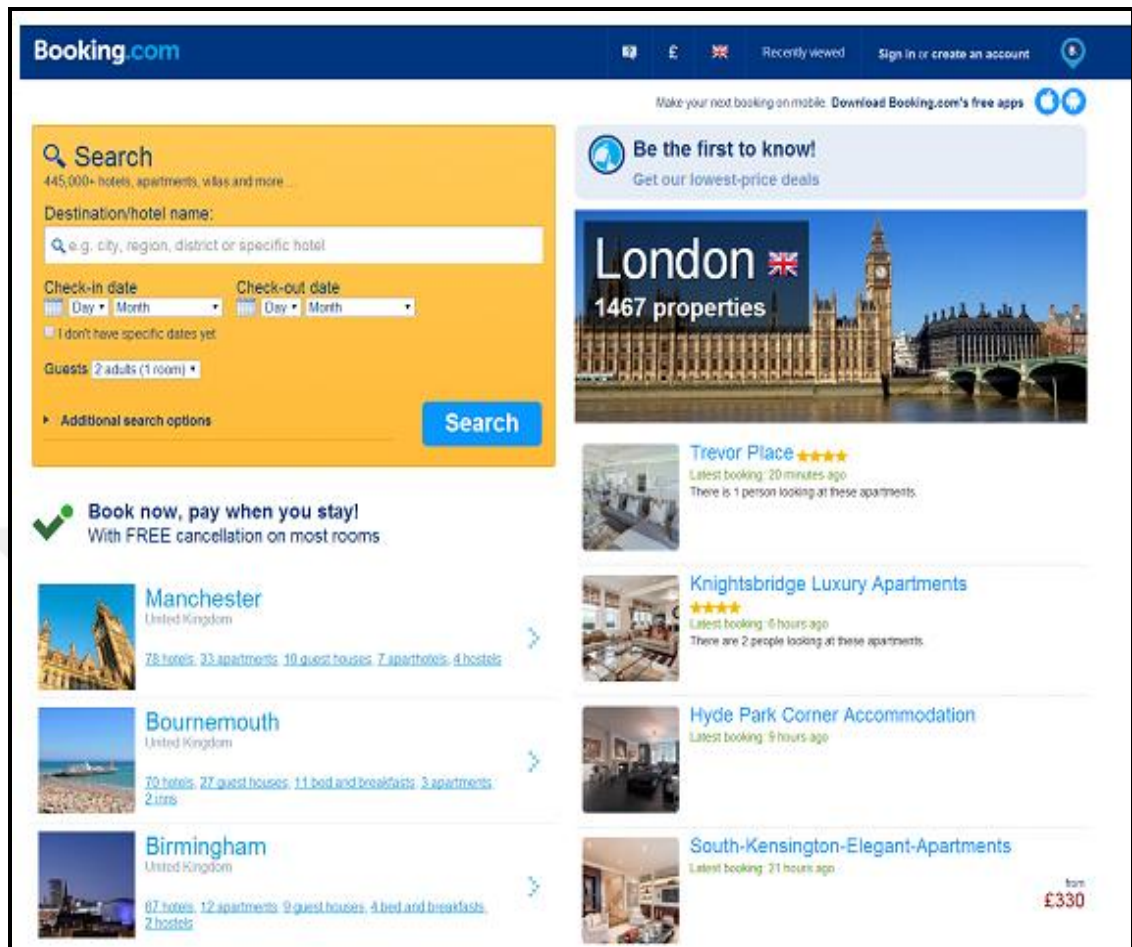
Booking.com links millions of tourists with excellent experiences, a variety of transportation options, and excellent places to stay—from homes to hotels and more.

As one of the world's fastest-growing travel marketplaces for established brands and small businesses, Booking.com enables properties all over the world to reach a global audience and expand their businesses. Booking.com, which is available in 43 languages, has over 28 million reported listings of lodging, including over 6.2 million listings of houses, flats, and other unique places to stay alone. Whatever you want to do or go, Booking.com makes it simple for you and offers 24-hour customer service. (Booking.com 2020b).

Some of the advantages of using booking.com are: 1) Business-friendly hotel rooms are easier to find than on other travel sites that concentrate on personal travel, 2) Consumers can search EU bus and train timetables and buy tickets, 3) Book your dinner via OpenTable, 4) Booking.com has a highly rated mobile application. However, there are also some disadvantages such as: 1) Booking.com has no "Mystery Deals" offer like Priceline, 2) Prices on Booking.com are almost the same as those for hotels and rental cars (Yet 2017).

Here you can see the homepage of booking.com. Booking.com dedicates a full section on the right-hand side of the site to highlight recent bookings from other travellers. As you can see in the online experience, the show of social evidence is a highly popular strategy used by Booking.com and it begins with the homepage.

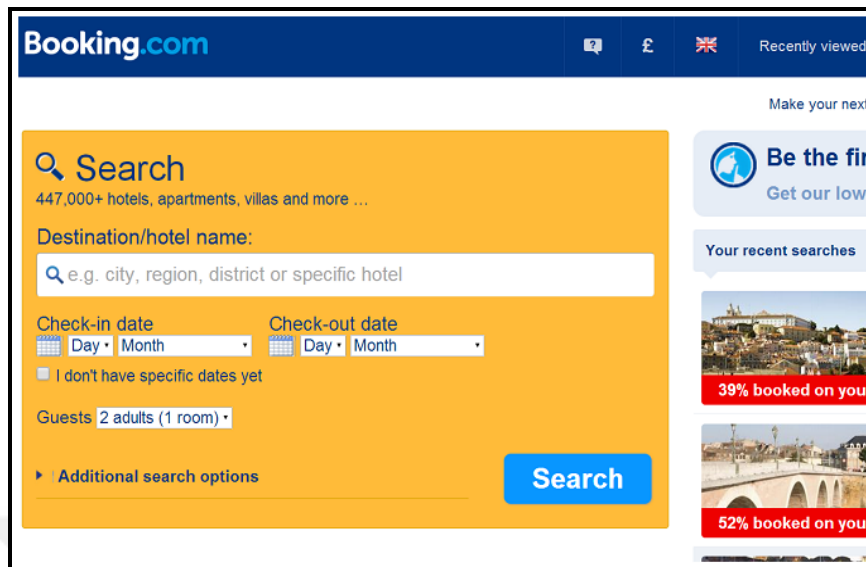
Figure 2.13: Social evidence of most recent bookings -1



Source: Is Booking.com the most persuasive website in the world? Rouke, P., 2014.

Booking.com provides users with clarity of what they are here to do. One thing is completely obvious, you are here to check for hotels when you arrive on Booking.com's homepage. From the minute visitors arrive on this website, the large, prominent, and extremely straightforward search box shouts "start here."

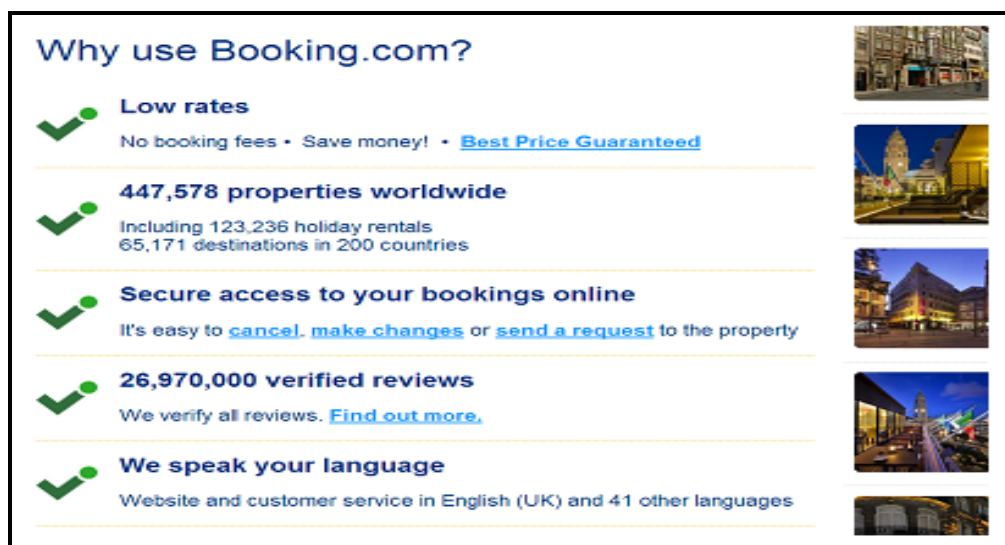
Figure 2.14: Social evidence of most recent bookings -2



Source: Is Booking.com the most persuasive website in the world. Rouke, P., 2014.

Booking.com has a full section dedicated to its important benefits, which is even headlined with the phrase "Why use Booking.com?" Apart from displaying one significant USP beneath the search facility, Booking.com has a full section dedicated to its important benefits, which is even headlined with the phrase "Why use Booking.com?" Looking at the list of features, it appears that the platform addresses all the primary issues that passengers would have.

Figure 2.15: The reasons of using booking.com



Source: Is Booking.com the most persuasive website in the world? Rouke, P., 2014.

As users progress through the website, it becomes evident that Booking.com has put a great amount of effort into gathering customer feedback on a hotel-by-hotel basis. In fact, it might include the largest collection of customer feedback ever seen by customers. Aside from comments from eBay vendors. This is excellent information, but Booking.com also recognizes the need of providing visitors with unbiased review scores, in this instance from the review centre.

Figure 2.16: Recognition of the credibility deriving from external review sources



Source: Is Booking.com the most persuasive website in the world, Rouke, P., 2014.

2.3.1.4 HolidayCheck

In 1999, Markus Schott and a few friends started HolidayCheck AG, as the concept behind it emerged from a personal experience. Schott was about to book an online vacation and missed out on honest details, other than what the brochure could give him. He found some personal hotel reviews on a private Canadian website, trusted the feedback he received and enjoyed a wonderful vacation. Born on the idea. At the time it was the hobby of a student with no commercial intentions. HolidayCheck started getting about three reviews daily. The servers broke down after RTL television, one of Germany's largest TV stations, reported on HolidayCheck 's website in 2003, introducing the content as being extremely helpful. Indeed, people cared about the result of HolidayCheck. HolidayCheck began expanding to meet the new, higher demands. Today HolidayCheck runs its own online travel agency with 54 workers, 74 freelancers

and volunteers, these figures rise steadily. It is also the leading forum for German-speaking hotel analysis. 500-1500 hotel reviews are submitted daily, depending on season (Jockwer and Russ-Mohl 2008, p.146).

The value-adding operation of HolidayCheck is the selection, arrangement, and monitoring of the quality of incoming comments, photographs, videos, tips, posts and reports (content management). The business then connects these to travel packages and, sells vacations for various tour operators, earning their commissions. HolidayCheck provides free, credible, user-generated information about travel destination to give tourists a better option for a suitable holiday. The company profits from the sale of vacations to the hotels being reviewed. The vast database of currently more than 660,000 hotel reviews worldwide, 240,000 holiday photos, 25,000 travel tips and 740,000 forum entries are HolidayCheck's pride and competitive advantage over other German-speaking travel agencies (Jockwer and Russ-Mohl 2008, pp.147-148).

The most important distinction between the reviews from HolidayCheck.com and the leading rivals (such as TripAdvisor) is the detailed profile page accessible to all users. The profile pages show the sex, age range, travel style of the reviewers (i.e., single traveler, family traveler, etc.) plus a related history of their other reviews, a star rating system and even an opportunity to ask them extra questions.

Figure 2.17: HolidayCheck.com Profiles Sample

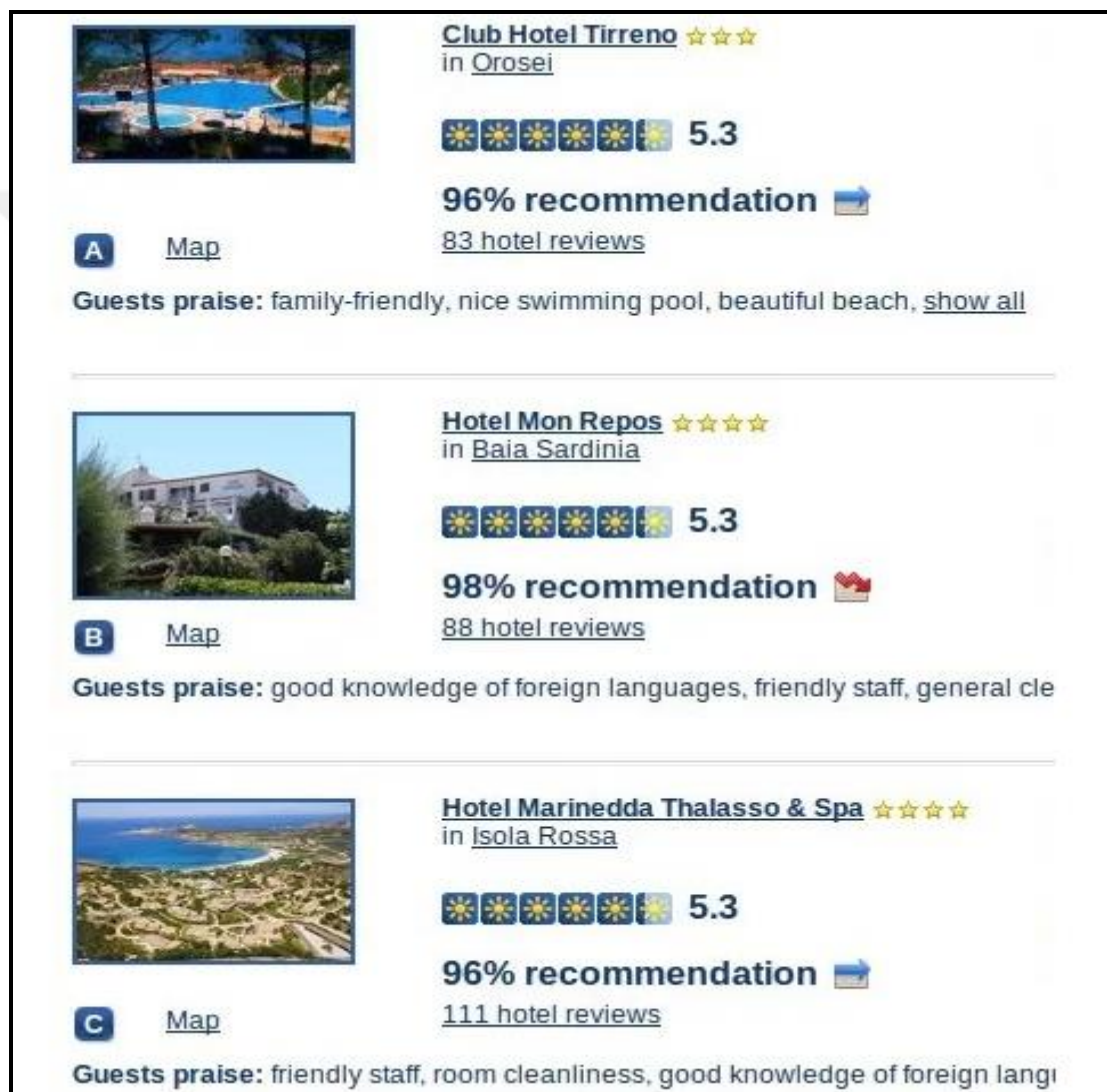


Source: HolidayCheck Quality Travel Review, Travelnemo, 2020.

Travelers will pick feedback conveniently from among those most closely matching their own travel profile. For example, if you are a family traveling with small children, knowing which hotels offer the best choices for children will be very useful.

For example, you can even detect a trend among customer reviews in this overview (below) of vacations in Sardinia.

Figure 2.18: Trends inside consumer ratings



Source: HolidayCheck Quality Travel Review, Travelnemo, 2020.

Other content the reviewers share includes photography and video. Such options give users a closer look at hotel properties and are impartial compared to hotel photography that is officially approved.

The Giardino Mountain Resort in St. Moritz (Swiss Alps) is an example here.

Figure 2.19: Multimedia Content Analysis-Photos and Videos



Source: HolidayCheck Quality Travel Review, Travelnemo, 2020.

And with a single click, users can read the actual reviews along with feedback, translation information and booking evidence.

As is typically the case for this kind of website, users can book a hotel or resort directly on HotelCheck.com as soon as they select the best choice. Price comparisons across popular hotel sites such as Expedia.com, Booking.com, and Hotels.com are a last useful tool supplied by this hotel review site. (Travelnemo 2020).

2.3.1.5 Expedia

Launched by Microsoft Network (MSN) in October 1996, Expedia has rapidly gained prominence when it comes to visiting frequency and booking volume. Expedia allows users to handle almost everything on their own, from researching suitable places to planning a comprehensive itinerary and making necessary bookings. Expedia's services may be categorized into the following categories.

- i. Reservations - This is the primary source of income for airline, hotel, and automobile reservations. The user must fill out the registration form for the essential information, just like with other web-based reservations. When booking a hotel stay, a person must enter information such as their location, check-in and check-out hours, and room choices. Expedia has a clever method of remembering data that a user has already provided and can fill in a few fields in the registration form for you automatically.
- ii. Vacation and Cruise Packages - Vacation and cruise packages are classified into several types. Resort, family, and skiing packages are examples of such packages. Expedia, on the other hand, does not handle the package procedures. The agents that offer the packages are frequently linked to detailed data and real booking inquiries. Expedia's vacation wizard and cruise assistant are still available to assist customers in finding appropriate vacation packages. After collecting travel choices from the user, the wizard will do a search and provide information on appropriate packages.
- iii. My Travel - Users may design their own page and itinerary with this function. Personal data, such as a user's name, phone number, and address, can be changed. He or she can also express personal preferences, such as whether they want to stay in a smoking or non-smoking room or travel in business class. The recorded information will be used as default values when this user creates appointments in the future.
- iv. Travel locations, hobbies, and interests - A user may choose a location and then browse the information page for that location. The information provided often includes anything from a general description of tourist sites, history, culture, and festivals to transportation, accommodations, gastronomy, and visa requirements.

Some of the locations include video samples as well. At the bottom of each page, there are links to travel, hotel, and vehicle reservations.

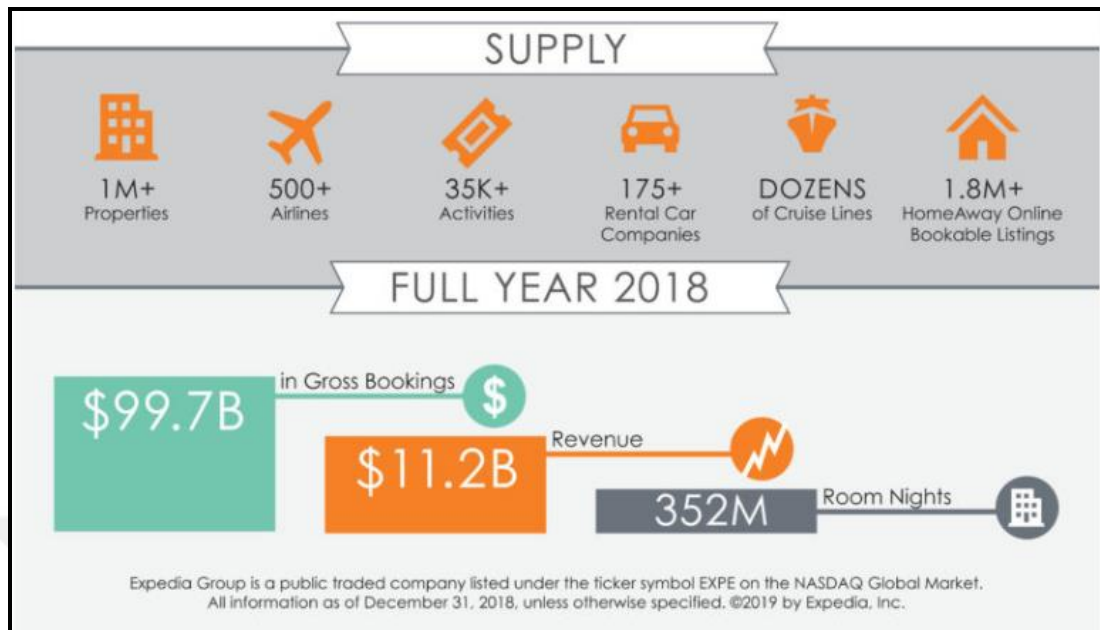
- v. Expedia Maps - There are two aspects to this component: Location Finder and Driving Directions. By entering in the name of the location, a user can utilize the Place Finder to find it. After that, a relevant map will show on the screen, with viewers having the option to zoom in for more detailed information.
- vi. Other Services — Expedia also provides other travel-related services. Currency conversion rates, promotional package offers, and weather briefings are examples of these extra features. (Law and Chen 2001, pp. 83–87).

Figure 2.20: Expedia Overview-1



Source: Expedia Group Overview, Expedia Group, 2020.

Figure 2.21: Expedia Overview-2



Source: Expedia Group Overview, Expedia Group, 2020.

2.3.1.6 Zoover

Zoover is a web website in Netherlands. Zoover has evolved from an attic workplace to a multinational organization since its establishment in 2005. While the Dutch-speaking customers is Zoover's domestic market, it also has sites from other 25 countries. Zoover is the most-visited holiday platform in the Benelux with 150 million visitors per year. Zoover contains over 3.2 million comments of over 400,000 hotel accommodations in over 45,000 destinations around the world. Zoover is the online platform that brings consumer and market together in the holiday and leisure sector. Millions of visitors consult Zoover each month for reviews and the best vacation deals.

The platform helps visitors find what they are looking for, the most interesting country or that charming town with this wonderful hotel or amazing museum. The focus inside Zoover has shifted from international to national in recent years. Zoover is focusing on Dutch-speaking holidaymakers living in the Netherlands and Belgium since the start of 2019. Visitors of the zoover want certainty. When choosing their holiday trip, they make comparisons online by looking at the views of others. 90 per cent of holidaymakers check comments before they book a trip. 60 per cent of visitors said they

pay special attention to the responses of their owners. The best way to convince that you value the opinions of your guests is to reply to reviews (Zoover Official Web Site 2020).

Figure 2.22: Ratings in Zoover

Source: Zoover Official Web Site [accessed 6 Jun 2020].

Figure 2.23: Reviews in Zoover

Source: Zoover Official Web Site [accessed 6 Jun 2020].

2.3.1.7 Venere

Venere.com was a website that focused on booking hotels online. The collection contained various styles of lodging. At the beginning (1994), this website offers online travel agency under the company of Venere Net Srl, for Rome, Italy. It was purchased by Expedia Group in 2008. Venere.com was founded by four partners in 1994, and the first beta version of the hotel reservation engine was released in 1995. Their initial marketing efforts were hotels in Rome and Florence, which were created in 1995. The first reservation was made in June of 1995. In 2001, Venere.com became Venere Net SPA, a joint stock company. They immediately established overseas offices in London and Paris (Venere UK LTD and Venere France SARL, respectively).⁷

Advent International, a worldwide private equity firm, bought a 60% stake in Venere Net in 2007. Expedia Inc. bought Venere.com in its entirety in 2008. In 2008, Venere.com bought Worldby.com, an Italian online hotel booking service (Reuters Events 2008).

Venere.com was acquired by Hotels.com on December 1, 2016. (Another Expedia brand). After this date, the Venere.com app was no longer functioning, and users were directed to download the existing Hotels.com app and create an account there instead (May 2017).

2.3.2 eWOM and Booking Intention

A group of customers creates eWOM by researching a variety of product aspects in order to offer feedback to others on the desired product. As a result, as part of their product decision-making or preference, prospective purchasers may join a community of past consumers to acquire information before making a purchase. Consumer awareness and purchase decisions have traditionally been influenced by word of mouth (Brown et al., 2007), and it appears that more customers are now willing to rely on eWOM as their major source of product information. (Sparks and Browning 2011, pp. 3-4).

⁷ Expedia 2008.

The hotel sector (Xie et al. 2011 pp. 178–183) relies mostly on the use of Internet marketing. The services given by the hotel sector include fundamental items (hosting services) as well as extra physical items, such as eating and spa facilities, which increase client experience. Customers are unable to assess the product's features or consistency before purchasing, which is a problem in the hotel sector. As a result, word-of-mouth (WOM) is extremely important in this market (Litvin et al. 2007, pp. 458–468).

Consumers demand more external evidence to help them make purchase decisions throughout the assessment process since the service is intangible and inseparable. Consumers rely substantially on non-commercial websites for all sources of information, which influences their booking decisions by reducing perceived risk and ambiguity (Mauri and Minazzi 2013 pp. 99–107). Intention to purchase refers to a customer's deliberate decision or intent to purchase a service or product. The customer's desire to purchase hotel rooms is referred to as the reason for booking, and this process is impacted by a range of factors, including eWoM. (Spears and Singh 2004 pp. 53–66). Assume you are planning a short trip to another city and need to book a hotel. You consider how to decide about where to remain since you don't comprehend the purpose. You might ask coworkers, go to a travel agent, or use Google to find out more information. All of these tactics have one thing in common: while making decisions, individuals always take the opinion of others. It is well known that client purchasing decisions are influenced by word of mouth, both positive and negative. Hennig-Thurau et al., (2004) emphasized the necessity and value of electronic word of mouth (eWOM) research since consumers may now share positive or negative observations and judgments about their use with anybody who is interested. These reviews may be used by potential customers to promote or detract from a brand, ultimately determining the company's trustworthiness.

Customers are prepared to search for and assess goods based on a combination of corporate and consumer data, and services such as transportation, lodging, computers, telephones, and banking are now accessible, which is especially important for service-

type commodities. (Sparks and Browning, pp. 1310-1323 in Sparks and Browning 2011).

Customers' buying decisions will be influenced by both negative and positive eWoM (Sparks and Browning 2011, pp. 1310–1323). Because of good online remarks, hotel reservations will increase (Ye et al. 2009, pp. 180–182). Furthermore, there is a substantial negative link between negative online comments and online hotel booking intents (Zhao et al. 2015, pp. 1343–1364). According to Huang et al. (2013), market perception and developing confidence boost the demand premium for online product details (Nieto-Garca et al. 2020).

2.3.2.1 Scarcity

When opportunities are less accessible, we find them more appealing (Robinson et al. 2016, pp. 961–965). People prefer scarce goods over similar things because, according to commodity theory, possessing rare commodities provides a sense of personal distinctiveness or uniqueness (Brock 1968, pp. 243–275). According to response theory, if a person's freedom is threatened or harmed, he or she will have a psychological reaction, which is a motivational process aimed at preserving a person's freedom of conduct (Clee & Wicklund 1980. pp. 389–405).

In other words, “restricted availability or perceived scarcity of a product may indicate a risk to or lack of personal independence, and thus may trigger physiological reactions that contribute to heightened attention and fascination with limited product availability” (Ditto & Jemmott 1989, pp. 16–26). "The scarcity of advertising communications" was studied recently, and it was determined that "the presence of scarcity in advertising messaging promotes customers' attentive attention." Suri et al. pp. 89-100, 2007.

Scarcity signals also enhance product choice and willingness to pay (Mittone & Savadori 2009, pp. 453–468). Nonetheless, online travel agency advertising agencies use phrases like "limited time only," "only while supplies last," and "or even one left at this price" in marketing campaigns, anticipating that as hotel rooms become scarcer,

customers will be able to understand a higher value for them and will have a higher purchase intent.

2.3.2.2 Popularity

The popularity of services and goods is stated as phrases or icons showing more customer demand among various internet persuasion strategies (Jeong & Kwon 2012, pp. 83–99). Owing to the restricted physical interactions of customers, reputation as a price indicator is critical in the online shopping process (Lee & Kozar 2006, pp. 1383–1401).

The bandwagon effect (also called herd behavior) has clarified an individual's propensity to mimic others. Since Banerjee (1992) used the idea of “herd behaviour” to show how individuals respond to others “behaviour”. Finally, researchers concluded that “individuals appear to disregard their own expertise and replicate the acts of others” (elen & Kariv 2004, pp. 72–86).

It has been determined that the perceived informativeness about the products and the perceived popularity of the products in positive eWOM messages positively affect the purchase intention.

Customers frequently follow the herd rather than gathering facts to make a final decision (Banerjee 1992, pp. 797–817). The popularity argument promotes product quality perception by generating a mental process in which customers consider nice things since they have previously been purchased by others (Jeong & Kwon 2012, pp. 83–99). Consumers also rely on “other people's assessments of a certain product as gauges of product quality when making decisions” (Park & Lessig 1977, pp. 102–110). This claim is like that of a common product, and it is supposed to lessen danger in the event of an emergency.

This means that consumers continue to favour common goods due to that popularity means “a form of social cue” and tends to “minimize perceived risk following the social

cue” (DeSarbo et al. 2002, pp. 91-100). Internet popularity has been considered “a crucial form of persuasion”. Therefore, it drives future product demand (Zhang et al. 2010, pp. 694-700).

2.3.2.3 Consumer Ratings

Factors such as eWOM characteristics, critics, product or services, customer or merchant characteristics, future sales, motivation, high price and rating have been the main subject of behavioural studies. Especially the level of assistance of wide-ranging ratings and ratings has been the subject of both behavioural and predictive studies. Along with current research eWOM and product properties have a stronger effect on the predictive model than the causal model. Generally, external structures are affected by customers' characteristics such as perception, personality and expertise (Sirakaya and Woodside 2005, pp. 815–832; Cezar and Ögüt 2016 pp. 286–304).

Trust is defined as behavioural intention. In a research that the rating valences in eWOM affect the price premium between the seller and the buyer as well as the buyer's trust in the seller. In addition, negative eWOM valencies affect the trust in the seller more negatively than positive valence (Chiou and Cheng 2003).

The attitude and perception of the consumer about the product or service varies significantly with the information scans made online. For this reason, eWOM systems have turned into systems that are adopted by consumers and companies and contain valuable information and experience. However, the number of studies on the effects of eWOM systems and online commenting and rating tools on consumer online purchase intention and behaviour is very limited, especially in e-commerce websites (Cheong and Morrison 2008, pp. 38–49; Ye et al. 2009, pp. 180–182).

Masiero and Nicolau (in press) reported that the customer ratings by using real market data were the key factor in the choice of travelers (Masiero and Nicolau pp. 671–678). Sparks and Browning (2011) established a positive causal link between rating scores and future traveller booking intentions in an empirical investigation (pp. 1310–1323).

A recent research by Öğüt and Taş found similar findings. Depending on these rationales, favourable customer ratings (i.e., strong user ratings) boost the booking intentions of future travellers (Öğüt and Taş 2012, pp. 197–214).



3. AN INVESTIGATION OF THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON HOTEL BOOKING INTENTIONS

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

The major goal of this research is to see how eWOM affects online customers' purchase intent on e-commerce websites that sell technology equipment.

Data analysis approaches were employed in the study to assess the participants' inclination, and data was obtained using a survey approach. Using altered independent variables, simple regression modeling was done to assess the correctness of the assumptions. Hypotheses were constructed and tested in the study based on this.

Rating valence of review, quantity of reviews, usefulness of review, review expertise, chronology of reviews, and comprehensiveness of review criteria were calculated based on the results of the literature review eWOM. In order to answer the study questions, four elements were analyzed. The number of reviews, comment content, review dependability, and comment timeliness are all elements to consider.

For researching research questions, the hypotheses were developed below.

H1: The evaluation's worth influences hotel internet reservations.

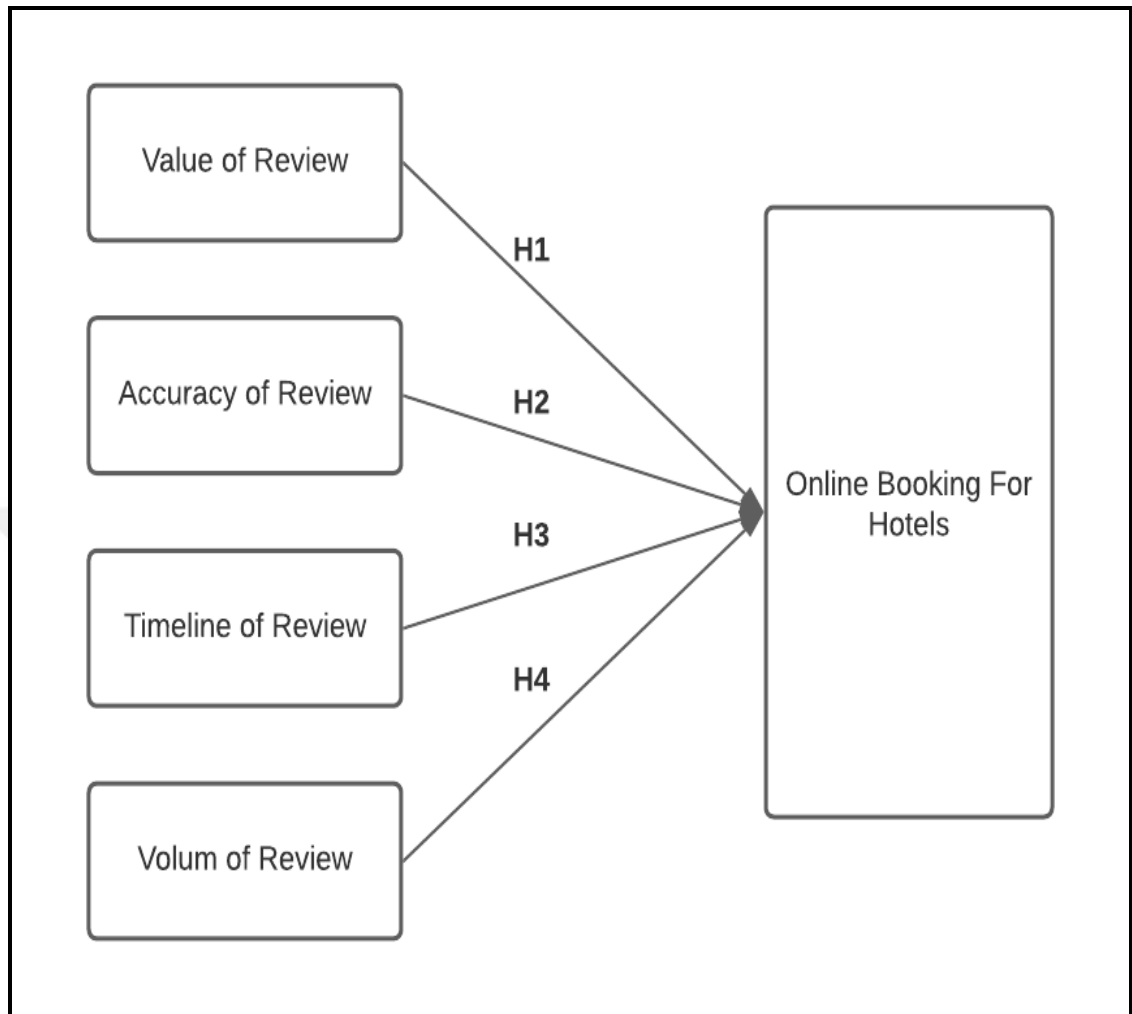
H2: Hotel internet reservations are influenced by the accuracy of reviews.

H3: Newer reviews have a stronger influence on hotel internet bookings.

H4: A large quantity of internet reviews has a greater influence on hotel reservations.

Figure 3.1 depicts the research model as a whole.

Figure 3.1: Design and assumptions of research



3.2 PROCEDURES

In this section, the procedures that is followed to complete empirical part of this research is explained in detail at each subtitle.

3.2.1 Data Collection Instruments

International articles on the scales used in the questionnaire have been used, and the number of sources and expressions used based on the scale are shared in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Scales specifications

| Variable | Number of Times | Resource |
|---------------------|------------------------|--|
| Usefulness | 4 | Park and Lee (2009) Papathanassis and Knolle (2011) |
| Review of Expertise | 3 | Dou et al.(2012): |
| Timeline | 3 | Bailey and Pearson (1983) |
| Volume | 3 | Duanet al.(2008) |
| Valence | 7 | Sparks and Browning (2011) Vermeulen and Seegers (2009) |
| Comprehensiveness | 3 | Sullivan (1999) Cheunget al.(2008) |
| Purchase Intention | 3 | Yeet al.(2009) |

3.2.2 Procedures for Data Collection

A 5-point Likert style online survey was employed to collect data for this study, and a total of 306 respondents were reached. The link to the survey form was distributed to the appropriate people via social media platforms and e-mail throughout the internet survey application procedure. An online survey was created using the Google Forms tool.

The questionnaire form is divided into two sections. The participants' personal information, such as gender, age, and education, was collected in the first half, and the items on the scale were answered in the second half.

3.2.3 Data Analysis Procedures

The survey data that is used in this study was controlled for careless participants. The answers that are not matched with the criteria were eliminated.

After elimination of not answered survey questions responded, the data count was decreased to 250. According to Kline (2014), the minimum count of sample data should be 200 to get meaningful results.

After format corrections of data, sample data was inserted in the SPSS 23.0 (Statistical Package for Social Science) program. Since the scales used in the empirical study of this thesis are ready-made scales taken from international articles, their reliability and accuracy have been verified by the studies they were taken. In this thesis, however, Cronbach's alpha was utilized to assess the scales' reliability.

Normality Assumption was checked for all scales for deciding which type of methods, parametric or non-parametric, will be used when analysing the data.

Correlation tests were applied between scales to investigate whether they have a relationship.

Regression models were mainly used to analyse each hypothesis.

3.2.4 Reliability

Cronbach's alpha is used to assess dependability. Cronbach's alpha values for each scale are included in Table 3.2, along with the meaning of each Cronbach's alpha score. The cronbach's alpha scores can be evaluated as follows, according to Gliem & Gliem (2003:87).

“>.9 – Excellent, >.8 – Good, >.7 – Acceptable, >.6 – Doubtful, >.5 – Poor, and >.5 – Unacceptable.”

Table 3.2: Results of each scale's reliability analysis

| Scales | Number of Questions | Cronbach's Alpha | Result |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| Applicability of Online Reviews | 4 | 0.65 | Acceptable |
| Expertise of Reviewers | 3 | 0.76 | Good |
| Reviewing Timeline | 3 | 0.66 | Acceptable |
| The Number of Reviews | 3 | 0.76 | Good |
| The Value of Reviews | 7 | 0.77 | Good |
| Reviews' Comprehensiveness | 3 | 0.56 | Weak |
| Reviews' Comprehensiveness | 3 | 0.50 | Weak |

The results show that alpha scores of Usefulness and Timeline of Reviews are in acceptable range while Reviewer Expertise, alpha scores of Volumes of Reviews and Valence of Reviews are in good range. On the other hand, Comprehensiveness of Reviews and Purchase Intention have weak reliability.

3.2.5 Limitations

This study is limited to 306 people to whom the questionnaire was directed. Basic limitations and assumptions in survey studies are also valid for this study.

4. FINDINGS

4.1 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS

Descriptive information about participants such as age, education, travel frequencies etc... are given in detail below.

First of all, participants' gender distribution is illustrated in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Gender distribution of survey respondents

| | Group | N | % |
|---------------|-------------------|----------|----------|
| Gender | Female | 179 | 71.6 |
| | Male | 66 | 26.4 |
| | Prefer not to say | 5 | 2.0 |

More than half of the participants are female. Therefore, the results of the survey will be reflected by the women hotel booking intention.

If it looked at the age of the participants, it can be seen from the Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Survey Participants' Age Distribution

| | Group | N | % |
|------------|--------------|----------|----------|
| Age | 18- 24 | 101 | 40.4 |
| | 25- 34 | 89 | 35.6 |
| | Under 18 | 24 | 9.6 |
| | 35-44 | 17 | 6.8 |
| | 55 and over | 12 | 4.8 |
| | 45-54 | 7 | 2.8 |

According to the results, the number of participants is concentrated in three age groups: 18 - 24, 25 - 34 and under 18. The participants who are more than 34 years old constitute a minority in the research.

Marital status of participants is shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Survey participants' marital status

| | Group | N | % |
|----------------|--------------|----------|----------|
| Marital Status | Single | 187 | 74.8 |
| | Married | 55 | 22.0 |
| | Divorced | 6 | 2.4 |
| | Widowed | 2 | 0.8 |

Most of the participants are single. Single and married participants reflected 96% of the survey.

Participants' education level is another descriptive variable. The descriptive statistics about education level of the survey participants is reported in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Participants' levels of education

| | Group | N | % |
|-----------|---------------|----------|----------|
| Education | Bachelor | 108 | 43.2 |
| | Graduate/PHD | 67 | 26.8 |
| | Undergraduate | 46 | 18.4 |
| | Highschool | 26 | 10.4 |
| | Primary | 3 | 1.2 |

According to the results, approximately half of the persons who participate in this study have a bachelor's degree (43.2%). After bachelor, most people have a graduate degree (26.8%) among participants. High school and primary school students are sometimes thing. Therefore, it can be said that the results will be more meaningful for the persons who have at least an undergraduate degree.

In addition to personality information, purpose and frequency of travels are included in demographic information of participants. If it wants to see what the general purpose of travel of participants is, it can be seen from Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: The purpose of survey participants' travel

| | Group | N | % |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|----------|----------|
| Purpose of Travel | For pleasure (leisure / tourism) | 170 | 68 |
| | Family visits | 54 | 21.6 |
| | For business | 21 | 8.4 |
| | Both Business & Pleasure | 1 | 0.4 |
| | Both business and tourism | 1 | 0.4 |
| | Education | 1 | 0.4 |
| | For health control | 1 | 0.4 |
| | Was studying abroad & for pleasure | 1 | 0.4 |

When the results are evaluated, more than half of the participants travel for leisure/ tourism (%68). After this purpose, family visit came as the second group with 21.6 percent. Business based travels are the third common purpose among participants. All in all, it can be summed up as most traveler's travel for tourism and family visits.

Table 4.6 shows how many time participants travel.

Table 4.6: Travel frequency of survey participants

| | Group | N | % |
|------------------|----------------------------|----------|----------|
| Travel Frequency | Once or twice a year | 163 | 65.2 |
| | Three to four times a year | 50 | 20.0 |
| | Five to six times a year | 20 | 8.0 |
| | Over than six times a year | 17 | 6.8 |

The results show that more than half of the participants (65.2%) are travel at least 1 time a year.

How many participants are checking the review sites before booking a hotel is illustrated in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Participants' use of review sites before making a reservation

| | Group | N | % |
|---|--------------|----------|----------|
| Checking the review sites before booking hotel | Yes | 193 | 77.2 |
| | Maybe | 41 | 16.4 |
| | No | 16 | 6.4 |

Most of the participants check what people say about the hotel before booking. This can be evaluated as the survey was filled by the right sample parallel with the aim of the study.

Lastly, when it is asked that what the most visited online review site for hotel booking to participants, frequencies of given answers are presented in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8: Most visited hotel review sites among participants

| | Group | N | % |
|---------------------------|---|----------|----------|
| Most Visited Review Sites | Booking | 82 | 32.8 |
| | TripAdvisor | 53 | 21.2 |
| | Google reviews | 36 | 14.4 |
| | Trivago | 31 | 12.4 |
| | Airbnb reviews | 16 | 6.4 |
| | Facebook | 14 | 5.6 |
| | Expedia (Orbitz, Hotels.com, Travelocity) | 8 | 3.2 |
| | Foursquare | 3 | 1.2 |
| | Both Booking and Airbnb | 2 | 0.4 |
| | ETS | 1 | 0.4 |
| | HOTELS SITE | 1 | 0.4 |
| | I don't stay at hotels | 1 | 0.4 |
| | Maibly booking but also Airbnb if I'm renting an apartment, mainly for holidays in my own country | 1 | 0.4 |
| | None | 1 | 0.4 |

Most popular review websites for hotel booking among participants are Booking, TripAdvisor, Google reviews, Trivago, respectively.

4.2 NORMALITY ANALYSIS OF SUB SCALES

Before starting analysis of hypotheses, it must be checked whether the used dataset is normally distributed or not. Therefore, in this section, parallel with hypotheses, normal distribution assumptions of scales were tested, and it is evaluated based on skewness and kurtosis values of scales.

For most psychometric applications, a kurtosis value between ± 1.0 and 2.0 is ideal, however depending on the application, a value between ± 2.0 and 1.0 is also acceptable (George and Mallery, 2012). Skewness and Kurtosis levels of scales are shown in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9: Skewness and Kurtosis scale levels

| | Skewness | Kurtosis |
|--------------------|----------|----------|
| Usefulness | 0.35 | 3.02 |
| Reviewer expertise | 0.00 | 3.47 |
| Timeline | -0.51 | 3.96 |
| Volume | -0.24 | 2.50 |
| Valence | 0.06 | 2.63 |
| Comprehensiveness | -0.08 | 2.94 |
| Purchase Intention | 0.09 | 2.91 |

The findings show that scale skewness values are between ± 2.0 ; however, scale kurtosis values are not between ± 2.0 . As a result, normality assumption cannot be satisfied by this data and therefore, it is attentional to use nonparametric tests while hypotheses are tested.

4.3 CORRELATION BETWEEN SCALES

In this section, correlation relationship between scales is examined. The Pearson - Spearman correlation test was applied due to an unnormalized distribution of dataset. The outcomes are displayed in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10: Correlation relationship matrix of scales

| | Usefulness | Reviewer expertise | Timeline | Volume | Valence | Comprehe nsiveness | Purchase Intention |
|--------------------|------------|--------------------|----------|--------|---------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Usefulness | 1 | | | | | | |
| Reviewer expertise | 0.46* | 1 | | | | | |
| Timeline | 0.34* | 0.31* | 1 | | | | |
| Volume | 0.33* | 0.24* | 0.48* | 1 | | | |
| Valence | 0.31* | 0.43* | 0.39* | 0.46* | 1 | | |
| Comprehe nsiveness | 0.35* | 0.34* | 0.45* | 0.48* | 0.47* | 1 | |
| Purchase Intention | 0.23* | 0.39* | 0.34* | 0.43* | 0.4* | 0.39* | 1 |

* indicates %99 confidence interval ($p < 0.01$)

According to the results, all correlation coefficients are statistically significant and positive. The correlation relationship between volume and reviewer expertise ($r = 0.24$) as well as usefulness and purchase intention ($r = 0.23$) are classified as very weak. Whereas the correlation relationship among other variables, except these two groups, are positive and classified as weak.

4.4 FINDINGS ABOUT HYPOTHESES

The purpose of this section of the research is to put the thesis hypothesis to the test. Subsections were examined for each hypothesis. Regression analysis was done to assess the significance and influence of independent variables on dependent variables, and the findings were given in each subsection. Hypotheses are evaluated in terms of acceptance status at the end of this chapter.

4.4.1 Finding The Effect on Value of Evaluation on Hotel Online Booking

In the Table 4.11, the regression result of the value of evaluation on hotel online booking.

Table 4.11: Regression model of value of evaluation on online hotel booking

| Dependent Variable | Independent Variable | B | Stand. Error | T-Statistics | P-Value |
|--------------------|----------------------|------|--------------|--------------|---------|
| Purchase | <i>Constant</i> | 6.10 | 0.73 | 8.37 | 0.000 |
| Intention | Valence | 0.19 | 0.02 | 6.95 | 0.000 |
| R-Squared | 0.16 | | | | |
| F-Statistics | 48.34 | | | | |
| P-Value | 0.000 | | | | |

The findings reveal that the valence of the rating has a statistically significant influence on online hotel booking intention (p-value < 0.001). The model is statistically significant (p-value <0.001). Valence has a favourable influence on consumer purchase intent, according to the regression model. In other words, a one-unit change in the value of evaluation results in a 0.19-unit rise in online hotel bookings.

4.4.2 Measuring the Impact of Review Accuracy on Hotel Online Booking

Finding the effect of accuracy of reviews on online hotel booking, it is determined to make a simple regression model whose dependent variable is purchase intention and independent variable is usefulness of reviews. The reason behind choosing usefulness of review as an independent variable is that this scale has direct and indirect items that evaluate the value of each comment in terms of users. The results of the regression model are presented in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12: Accuracy of online hotel booking reviews regression model

| Dependent Variable | Independent Variable | Coefficient | Stand. Error | T-Statistics | P-Value |
|--------------------|----------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|---------|
| Purchase Intention | Constant | 6.86 | 0.65 | 10.46 | 0.000 |
| | Usefulness of Review | 0.38 | 0.05 | 6.60 | 0.000 |
| R-Squared | 0.14 | | | | |
| F-Statistics | 43.56 | | | | |
| P-Value | 0.000 | | | | |

The model is statistically significant at the 99 percent confidence interval ($p < 0.001$), according to the results. The model demonstrates that the usefulness of reviews has a favourable and statistically significant ($p < 0.001$) influence on consumer online hotel bookings. According to the research, a 1% improvement in review accuracy leads to a 0.38 percent ($\beta=0.38$) increase in purchase intent when booking hotels online.

4.4.3 Finding The Effect of Relatively New Reviews of Reviews on Hotel Online Booking

To evaluate the effect of reviews' timeline on online booking of hotels, timeline scale was taken as independent variable to explain purchase intention of online hotel booking. The regression model result was shared in Table 4.13.

Table 4.13: The effect of relatively new reviews on online hotel booking: a regression model

| Dependent Variable | Independent Variable | Coefficient | Stand. Error | T-Statistics | P-Value |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Purchase Intention | Constant | 7.34 | 0.66 | 11.08 | 0.000 |
| | timeline of review | 0.32 | 0.05 | 5.78 | 0.000 |
| R-Squared | 0.11 | | | | |
| F-Statistics | 33.44 | | | | |
| P-Value | 0.000 | | | | |

According to Table 4.15, The regression model's significance is statically important. ($p < 0.001$) in overall. Furthermore, the timeline of review is statistically significant ($p < 0.001$) to explain purchase intention. Results can be evaluated as when the date of review is more up to date, the purchase intention is increased by 0.32 unit. In other words, relatively new reviews have more effect than old reviews.

4.4.4 Identifying the Influence of a Large Number of Reviews on Hotel Online Booking

For examining the big number of reviews on online booking hotel intention, regression methodology was used. To determine the effect of a big number of reviews, “volume” scale was used in the model as a non-dependent variable. The model coefficients were shared in Table 4.14.

Table 4.14: Regression model of effect of volume of reviews on online hotel booking

| Dependent Variable | Independent Variable | Coefficient | Stand. Error | T-Statistics | P-Value |
|--------------------|----------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|---------|
| | Constant | 6.47 | 0.64 | 9.99 | 0.000 |
| Purchase Intention | Volume of Review | 0.39 | 0.05 | 7.48 | 0.000 |
| R-Squared | 0.18 | | | | |
| F-Statistics | 55.31 | | | | |
| P-Value | 0.000 | | | | |

The total model is statistically significant, according to the findings. ($p < 0.001$, $F = 55.31$, $R = 0.18$). Volume of reviews is statistically significant as well ($p < 0.001$) in the model. According to the model, volume affects the purchase intention of customers positively. It means that when the volume of review increases by one unit, it causes an increase in purchase intention by 0.39 units. This result also can be evaluated as a big number of reviews have a more powerful effect on hotel online bookings.

4.5 EVALUATION OF HYPOTHESIS

In the previous chapters, all hypothesis testing results were shared. All regression models which were made for hypothesis testing were significant overall (all model-based p -values < 0.001). On the other hand, each regression R -square value is very low. This means that, although effect of an explanatory variable (independent variable) was statistically significant on dependent variable, the independent variable's power is low for explanation changes of dependent variables. All in all, the hypotheses results were given in Table 4.15.

Table 4.15: Hypotheses Results

| Hypotheses | Results |
|---|----------------|
| H1: The evaluation's worth influences hotel internet reservations. | Supported |
| H2: The accuracy of reviews influences hotel internet bookings. | Supported |
| H3: Recent reviews have a greater influence on hotel internet bookings. | Supported |
| H4: A large quantity of internet reviews has a greater influence on hotel bookings. | Supported |

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS FOR RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Consumers are confronted with a great amount of information about products and services because of improvements in digital technology. In this context, eWOM, which serves as a valuable source of information for customers in the online world, assists them in their purchase decisions. (Jimenez and Mendoza 2013; Kostyra et al. 2016). However, depending on the qualities of the individual getting the information, the impact of eWOM on consumers vary. In this context, the Regulatory Focus Theory, which is considered in the context of personal characteristics, attracts the attention of consumer researchers in marketing science since it is a strong predictor of how consumers respond to marketing communication and how they make decisions. According to the theory, people are divided into two different motivational orientations, namely, the focus on promotion and prevention (Higgins 1997).

When the research is examined, both good and negative eWOMs have an impact on customers. However, negative information has a stronger effect compared to positive information (Lee and Lee 2009; Xue and Zhou 2010; Lee and Koo 2012). Expressing that consumer are more interested in negative information than positive; this situation is explained by the concept of negativity effect in the literature (Lee and Cranage 2007; Beneke 2016). In general context, research in the field of Marketing revealed that AAP (WOM) is a powerful communication tool that affects consumer purchasing decisions and behaviors (Arndt 1967; Mangold et al. 1999; Wilson and Peterson 1989). However, in this study, rather than being positive or negative, the analysis was made with the currency, usefulness, accuracy and volume of the comments. It is thought that it will contribute to the literature with this aspect. In this context, our current study aimed to examine its effects on purchasing intention and eWOM transmission by focusing only on eWOM rather than positive and negative evaluations taken with Regulatory Focus Theory in the literature. In line with this goal, the following 4 hypotheses have been established in our study.

As a result of the analysis of the first hypothesis of the study, it was concluded that the comments with high usefulness levels were associated with the purchase intention. This result is like most studies in the literature. In an experimental study with 274 university students, Xie et al. (2011) investigated how the availability of Personal Identification Information by online reviews influences the unstable online hotel remarks of customers and their inclination to book hotels. Consequently, the existence of Personal Identification Information was discovered to have a beneficial effect on the perceived credibility of online comments. For this reason, because of the questions asked in the questionnaire of our study, the confidentiality of the interpreter (the knowledge that he has stayed before) affects the purchasing quality. Similarly, Dickinger (2011) also states that although the user-generated content shows high reliability and accuracy, it will not be very informative, and in fact, it is more effective to include comprehensive information in the content that may be effective in purchasing. From a different point of view, Sparks et al. (2013) found out with the survey method that the majority of the tourists think that the specific comments conveyed by the consumers are more useful and reliable and drew attention to the level of benefit of the comments. Cheung et al. (2008) examined the effect of opinion quality and source reliability on information usefulness and its ability to adopt knowledge. As a consequence, they discovered that the utility of information influences the consumer's decision to accept information from online communities.

The second hypothesis of the study is that the reliability of the interpretations affects the purchasing decision. According to this, information obtained from a reliable and effective source of information before consumers make a reservation, also affects their purchasing decisions. Gretzel and Yoo (2008, p.36) found in their study that those who read travel reviews held these comments superior to marketing activities in terms of reliability. Lee et al. (2011) also examines the online reputation system on TripAdvisor in his study. Profile's people who have made useful comments in online travel communities. In the end, it reveals that people who make useful comments are more travellers and actively transmit comments. Therefore, these people are experts in their field, and it also coincides with the reliability criteria in our study. If the comment or suggestion is perceived as less reliable, the impact will be less and the message recipient

trying to avoid potential risks will not be likely to take the comment or suggestion into account (Cheung and Thadani 2012, p.12).

The third hypothesis of the study suggested that the number of comments affects the purchasing decision and was supported by the related analysis. Similarly, according to Melian-Gonzalez et al. (2013), the more hotel reviews there are, the more favourable the reviews are, and this might influence purchasing. Filieri and McLeay (2013) utilize a survey of 578 visitors to show that the Amount of Information has a favourable influence on purchase intent.

As a consequence of the examination of the last hypothesis, it has been determined that current interpretation and assessment has an impact on purchase intent. Similarly, Racherla et al. (2013) looked at 3197 online reviews and found that Comment History had a significant impact on purchase decisions. The research by Park et al. (2007) looked at how the amount and quality of user evaluations impact purchase intent. The quality of online evaluations had a beneficial influence on customers' purchasing intentions, according to a study involving 352 volunteer university students, and as the quantity of reviews climbed, so did the buying intention.

5.2 CONCLUSION

With the developments in information technologies in recent years, WOM communication has been transferred to digital platforms and emerged as eWOM. When considered in terms of the tourism sector, the eWOM effect, which has become widespread on digital platforms, now covers a much wider audience. In particular, the circulation of negative comments on these platforms creates both advantages and disadvantages for businesses. For this reason, in this study, first, the comments and evaluations of Turkish and foreign tourists staying at the hotels were examined based on the marketing mix elements and the effect on the intention to make a reservation was tried to be measured.

Thanks to digital communication technologies and the platforms that link them, consumer concerns are now heard and noticed not only by a few people, but by

enormous masses throughout the world. This has a significant influence on businesses. In this way, eWOM contributes to a poor view of brands and businesses. It's also a crucial sort of communication that influences customer attitudes and behaviors. Companies should encourage them to distribute good eWOMs for their products and services by identifying social influencers and market experts, rather than encouraging the spread of negative eWOM communication.

Throughout the study, various studies were examined on what the factors affecting E-WOM are, and as a result, 4 hypotheses were tested to reveal the relationship with purchase intention. Accordingly, the first hypothesis was developed and analysed within the framework of the use benefit within the framework of the Technology Acceptance Model, which explains the relationship between the user's perception and acceptance of information technologies based on perceived usage benefit. As a result, the effect of useful user comments on the purchase intention was revealed. The perceived usefulness of an online review or review has high validity in measuring how users rate a review or review.

Secondly, the reliability of the interpretation has been tested and its relationship with the purchase has been analysed. E-WOM reliability is defined as to what extent the consumer perceives a recommendation or evaluation as believable, true, or factual. Source reliability is an important factor to consider when consumers are evaluating electronic word of mouth contact information. In the third and fourth hypothesis, it was found that the amount and timeliness of the interpretation affect purchasing in accordance with the literature.

As a result, the usefulness, reliability, quantity, and timeliness of the information, which is as important as the positive or negative review in eWom, has been examined within the framework of this study and it has been revealed that it affects the purchase intention. Considering the high effect of purchase intention on purchasing success, the effect of user comments has also been analysed and revealed. Businesses should also consider these comments in the specified categories while analysing their situation and setting goals.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

The study's findings, particularly the significance of social networking sites, particularly blogs, should be recognized by hoteliers and company owners in the industry. The fact that business visitors who have previously used hotel amenities and services have played a significant part in the purchase decision process by using internet platforms to communicate their previous experiences in great detail, which can be accessed by new consumers. Because the comments and opinions of existing customers who share their experiences have an impact on the stages of determining alternatives, evaluating alternatives, and making a purchasing decision, these comments and opinions are used to identify the missing or under-developed aspects of businesses and to ensure customer satisfaction by prioritizing these points. It aids in strengthening the criterion or criteria that are determined to be inadequate by taking efforts toward obtaining new clients. On digital platforms such as social networking sites and blogs, there is also a two-way active flow of information. It provides many benefits such as establishing trust and recognition for businesses, improving brand perception, having a wide customer information network, and reaching feedback to develop new products or services, and realizing restructuring processes thanks to these feedbacks. These as well as the location, the resort facilities, that they have natural beauty and historical background, transportation facilities, hotels, and areas of leisure and because of the region mostly preferred by prominent and tourists in Turkey in terms of alternatives offered for each of the selected these four regions The architectural structure of the hotels determined for Accordingly, the importance of shaping according to customer preferences arises.

The tourism sector, whose basic product is the service, has its own dynamics due to the immunity of the product and its variables such as non-storage, ownership, and concurrency. The tourism product, which consists of the services offered in the sector, is basically based on travel experience, which increases the importance of advice in marketing. The fact that the product does not have a chance to be tested before it is purchased and that it is consumed when it is produced also highlights the experiences and recommendations of others before purchasing. EWOM, or electronic word-of-mouth marketing, is a type of advise marketing that has become an increasingly essential marketing communication tool for tourist firms. Although travel experiences

differ from individual to individual, based on general satisfaction, and the quality and content differ from customer to customer, day by day, today, before purchasing the tourist product, he researches the product on the internet and benefits from the experiences of others. Because these experiences are much more valuable than advertisements, as they are completely voluntary, as they do not take place in that media by purchasing space / time by paying the advertiser. Consumers share their experiences with others using social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, as well as apps like foursquare and mechanist, as well as websites like www.sikayetvar.com, www.sikayetim.com, www.otelpuan.com, and other travel blogs. As brands can establish close bonds with their consumers through e-WOM, it is inevitable that negativities about their products will spread in a short time. Social networks are also a place to settle accounts with the business for dissatisfied customers. However, if businesses can move quickly and do not take their eyes off the social networks and the internet, there are also opportunities to turn this negativity into positive in a short time. They also have the chance to turn dissatisfied customers into satisfied and happy customers. It is important that business managers play a role as an incentive for the reflection of the quality service they have to offer to be seen on online tourism forums. For these comments to affect the holiday purchasing choice of potential customers, care should be taken to provide a level of service that will provide satisfaction at every point of the holiday experience. It was self-evident that the client who was pleased with the service received would participate in the WOM event.

The survey of this study was delivered to 306 people through social networks, but 250 efficient survey results were obtained. Therefore, the results do not generalize. In future studies, analysis can be made again by increasing the number of samples and the model can be developed by adding different factor dimensions of the e-Wom to the model.

Managers would be better off utilizing eWOMs for products and services rather than fearing or ignoring them. In this way, the findings of our research can help marketers and practitioners in the tourist business. The deciding influence of eWOM, which includes performance risk, should be considered, particularly in terms of purchasing intention. As a result, performance-based adjustments in tourist businesses are likely to

have a favorable impact on sales and bookings. This step in the strategy creation process will be important for corporations and marketing managers to analyze.

The study's findings shed light on the link between online reviewer ratings and a hotel's market ranking among other establishments. Because these two factors have such a close link, property level decision makers or general managers must pay attention to these online reviews and solve any problems expressed by customers in order to improve their properties' consumer ratings. This regular monitoring of internet reviews will aid them in identifying areas of difficulty and opportunity. As a result, they will be able to use this data into future strategy development to maintain a competitive edge. According to the findings, consumer feedback might be integrated with that of specialists and internal sources to acquire a better knowledge of the customer experience and how to maintain positive patterns while minimizing negative ones. Based on the findings of this study, hotels' activities in monitoring and responding to comments may have an influence on their overall rating in the future, which may have an influence on the money they may collect from online transactions. This data may be used by revenue managers to make price decisions, create microsites to target certain visitors, and choose distribution methods. According to the findings, higher TripAdvisor rankings can open up more options to charge a premium and maximize income, boosting the revenue management methods of hotels. When compared to hotels with lower scores, those with better client ratings and more favourable evaluations attract higher prices. As a result, revenue managers may want to consider include their hotel ratings as another piece of data when developing a pricing plan.

The most significant limitation of this study is being conducted during pandemic. Covid-19 had and is still having a great influence on tourism as well as other sectors. Based on our literature research and theoretical foundations, we are confining the analysis to the presented hypothesis solely for this study to keep it more relevant and meaningful. Future study will be able to break down the data by distribution channel, loyalty association, hotel category, and other factors. Furthermore, research can broaden their data by looking at other review sites, such as Yelp.

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