Conference Proceedings

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Seattle, Washington, USA

School of Hospitality Business Management
College of Business
WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

Editor
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Preface

These proceedings contain the papers or abstracts (author's choice) of presentations at the 18th Annual Graduate Education and Graduate Student Research Conference in Hospitality and Tourism, held in Seattle, Washington, January 3-5, 2013. As the conference has grown over the years, the number of submissions has increased. This year, we received a record number of submissions totaling 301. Of the 301 submissions, 79 were accepted as stand-up presentations and 195 were accepted as poster presentations.

The success of this year's conference is accredited to many individuals and organizations. First, I would like to acknowledge the sponsoring schools and our corporate sponsors. Many of them have been long-term supporters of the graduate conference. Without their annual support, the conference would not be possible. Next, a sincere thank you goes to the track chairs who diligently managed a large quantity of papers in their respective areas. Although EasyChair has several merits, many of us still experienced a steep learning curve as we became familiar with the system. With track chairs' efforts and guidance, the paper review process was completed smoothly. I thank the 225 reviewers who spent their generous time critiquing papers to provide constructive comments for the authors.

In addition, this year we doubled the number of best paper awards thanks to the increased sponsorship from journal publishers. Coca-Cola, as the major industry sponsor, also established its own best paper award with a special interest topic. A total of six best papers with different areas of emphasis were chosen to be recognized at the awards ceremony. The founding chair of this graduate conference, Dr. Kaye Chon, this year's conference chair, Dr. Nancy Swanger, all involved journal editors, and Dr. Dennis Reynolds, who managed the Coca-Cola track, served on the best paper selection committee.

I also would like to personally thank Ms. Zihui Ma, my editorial assistant who worked tirelessly in editing these proceedings and the School of Hospitality Business Management at Washington State University for providing support during the entire process. I learned a great deal about what it takes to host a successful conference.

Congratulations to those student authors whose papers were accepted; you can be very proud of your work.

Enjoy the conference and best wishes!

Hyun Jeong "Jenny" Kim, PhD
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How Much Does Lowest Price Guarantee Policy Cost from the Perspective of Monte Carlo Option Pricing

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Abstract

This study applies Monte Carlo option pricing technique to valuate lowest price guarantee policy and demonstrates the reserves that companies needed to hedge their risk exposure when adopting this policy. This article presents the conceptual framework of price dynamic following Geometric Brownian Motion, option payoff features and price simulation based on Monte Carol method. Then it exhibits the numerical examples by using data from orbitz.com. The results indicate that for every $100 sales, $19.17 should be reserved for the possible claims due to the price guarantee policy offered by Orbitz.com. Additionally, the authors discuss how the results from Monte Carol option pricing model, a financial derivative pricing tool, can be applied to valuate policy risks in travel industry.

Keywords

Dynamic pricing, Lowest price guarantee, Policy risks, Geometric Brownian Motion, Monte Carlo option pricing

Determinants of Restaurants' Risk Evaluation in the U.S. Bond Market

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Abstract

This study investigates what characteristics of restaurant firms affect risk evaluation, focusing on the debt-holders' point of view. The results of ordered logit regression analysis and fixed effect panel regression analysis, employed with the data during the period from 1987 to 2011, indicate that a firm's credit rating measured by Standard & Poor's is significantly related with the ratio of advertising expense to sales, a firm's size, leverage, Tobin's Q, and degree of franchising. The finding will be helpful information for managers and investors as well as researchers in the restaurant industry.

Keywords

Firm's risk, Debt-holder's risk, Restaurant industry

Predicting Aggregate Monthly Restaurant Sales Using Macro-economic Variables

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Abstract

In order to create a parsimonious model with maximum utility, we focused on macroeconomic variables to predict aggregate monthly restaurant sales. Building on prior research, we identified 28 preliminary variables. Cross correlation function and granger causality tests narrowed down the variables to 10 and specified their respective lags. Multicollinearity diagnosis followed by backward regression analysis produced a final model with six variables, with five of them significantly predicting restaurant sales. PPI: Meats_t, Inflation $\text{Expectations}_{t-2}$, Population_{t-3}, Change in M1 Money Stock_t, and Precipitation_t comprised the finalized model, which explained 97.4% variability in sales. In addition, these predictors were highly significant ($p < .001$) predicting 97.1 % variability in full service and 96.4% variability in limited service restaurant sales.

Keywords

Restaurant sales, macroeconomic variables, forecasting, predictor.

Factors Influencing Dividend Decision in the Airline Industry

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Abstract

Airline industry is suffering from high financial distress and dividend decisions are one of the most important corporate financial decisions. Hence, this study aims to investigate the attributes to influence dividend decision in the airline industry. Agency theory and tax-adjusted theory can explain dividend policy decisions Prior studies pointed out that information asymmetry discourages external funding from investors. In order to alleviate information asymmetry, dividend plays an important signaling role. Moreover, tax adjusted theory argued that investors who are under a high tax rate prefer a low dividend payout ratio. Kim & Gu (2009) points out panel data analysis as a suggestion for the future study. Since the dependent variable is a binary variable and the data has the panel data format, time-series logistic regression was employed. Consequently, the purpose of this study is to identify the dividends decision making features in airline industry. Liquidity and firm size reveal the positive coefficient, whereas financial leverage shows negative coefficient.

Keywords

Airline, dividends, logistic regression

Examining Dividend Change of Hospitality Firms

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Abstract

There has been limited research on dividend payout of hospitality firms. This study aimed to examine whether profitability, investment opportunities, firm size, firm life-cycle state and dividend payout of past year influence change in dividends of hospitality firms. The longitudinal hierarchical linear modeling analysis of this study shows that more mature hospitality firms increase their dividends more fastly, and hospitality firms with more dividends in past year are more likely to decrease dividends; while profitability, investment opportunities and firm size did not impact dividend change of hospitality firms.

Keywords

Dividend change, hospitality firms, profitability, investment opportunities, firm size, firm life-cycle state, dividend payout of past year.

Trade-off Analysis of the Degrees of Operating and Financial Leverage in the U.S. Lodging Industry

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Abstract

Lodging firms bear higher operating risk than other manufacturing and service firms. Because of a greater proportion of fixed assets for lodging operations, the optimization of operating and financial risk is very critical to lodging firms. Thus this study examined, in the context of U.S. lodging industry, the trade-off relationship between operating and financial leverage and how the two types of leverage affect a firms' risk. The conclusion which can be drawn from this study are these: (1) there is no inverse relationship between degree of operating leverage (DOL) and degree of financial leverage (DFL), (2) each four groups of lodging firm divided by DOL and DFL has diverse risk features stemming from firms' characteristics such as business or finance.

Keywords

Degree of operating leverage, degree of financial leverage, business risk, lodging firms.

Investigating Children's Role in Family Dining-out Choices: A Study of Casual Dining Restaurants in Taiwan

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Abstract

This study investigates the influence of children over parents in the selection of family dining-out options. To further understand the connection between children's influence on family dining-out consumption and practical behaviors, we studied children's role in relation to family communication patterns. Additionally, children's demographic characteristics were also examined as predictors influencing family dining-out choices. The empirical assessment of this research was casted in the context of casual dining restaurants, a very popular form of dining out choices for families. Taiwanese family consumers were the case in point. Our study should offer practical implications for owners of food-service facilities in the development of family-friendly menus and services and in the development of future responsible marketing strategies.

Keywords

Children's roles, dining-out, casual-dining restaurants, communication patterns.

Introduction

Families on average spend 49 % of their food budget dining out, which is a significantly larger proportion than a decade ago (national restaurant association [nra], 2011). Increases in family dining-out budgets and aggregating concerns about healthy diets have made it essential to further examine family consumers. Due to flexible menu items, efficient service, child-friendly environments, and nutritional food selections, casual dining facilities and family restaurants have increasingly gained popularity in asian countries. On the other hand, there has been increasing concerns of parents with regard of children's health and nutrition intake, especially when restaurant dining has become a regular part of families' life style (knight, worosz, & todd, 2009). Nowadays, parents pay increasing attention to what their children eat. It is against this background that this research intended to investigate the family dining out phenomenon. More specifically, this research aimed at dissecting children's role in family dining out choices and decisions.

How families make consumptive decisions have been a popular research topic for decades. Children's increasing influence on family expenditures have made them effective targets of marketing personnel. Demographic shifts, evolving family structures, and changing social values all elevate children's status as decision makers within households. This study investigates the influence of children over parents in the selection of family dining-out options. The empirical assessment of this research was casted in the context of casual dining restaurants to investigate taiwanese family consumers. To further understand the connection between children's influence on family dining-out consumption and practical behaviors, this study explores the theoretical domains by linking family consumptive decision-making with family communication patterns. This approach can effectively provide a holistic view to compare different degrees of influences among family members in family dining-out decision-making. Besides, children's demographic characteristics were also examined as predictors influencing family dining-out choices.

Background Literature

In the area of consumer behavior research, family decision-making has been a pivotal topic for more than half century. Early studies on family decision-making covered the influence of the husband and wife dyad, rather than the influence of children (Rose, Bush, & Kahle, 1998). However, fundamental societal structure changes, such as the proliferation of dual-income families and decreasing numbers of children in a single family, begun in the 80s have allowed children to become much more influential in making direct and indirect decisions within households. Children were found to exhibit decent bargaining skills and exert mediocre influence on family consumption (Flurry, 2007).

In order to study children's role on food-service decision-making, it is essential to further investigate the roles of family members in making dining-out choices. This is because different family communication patterns were found to affect children's food intake and eating decisions (Mclntosh, Kubena, Tolle, Dean, Kim, Jan, & Anding, 2011). Because parents are the principal socialization agents for children, examining the relationship of dominant family communication patterns between parents and children is instrumental to further understanding children's influence within households (Caruana & Vassallo, 2003). Subsequently, socio-oriented and concept-oriented communication patterns were developed by previous researchers (McLeod & Chaffee, 1972). Parents with socio-oriented communication patterns tend to repress discussion or inhibit the expression of children's ideas toward consumption. On the other hand, parents with concept-oriented communication patterns attempt to stimulate and develop children's views (McLeod & Chaffee, 1972). According to the variable level of the two communication patterns, a four-category typology matrix of family communication patterns was developed (McLeod & Chaffee, 1972). This matrix included low socio-orientation and low concept-orientation (laissez-faire), low socio-orientation and high concept-orientation (pluralistic), high socio-orientation and low concept-orientation (protective), and high socio-orientation and high concept-orientation (consensual). Due to diverse cultural backgrounds, different dominant family communication patterns were found to exist in different countries (Caruana & Vassallo, 2003; Rose et al., 1998). Children's roles in Taiwan have been increasingly transformed because of the shift from a traditional society to an international globalized society. Currently, conversation-oriented communication styles are more pervasive than conformity-oriented styles in Chinese culture (Zhang, 2007). Owing to the closeness of geographic location and cultural origin, Taiwanese share most of their cultural backgrounds with Chinese. To this end, pluralistic was hypothesized to be the dominant communication pattern in Taiwan.

Children were also found to have differing levels of influence based upon various demographic characteristics. For instance, children's ages, genders, ethnicity, and parental employment status were examined by previous research (Flurry, 2007). Children in dual-income families were considered to be more influential in family decision-making (Labrecque & Ricard, 2001). Older children were also regarded as more influential than their younger counterparts (Beatty & Talpade, 1994). Research has found no consistent results with regards to influence by gender. Some studies noted that females have more influence (Tansuhaj & Foxman, 1996), while others suggested that male children have relatively more influence (Flurry, 2007). No significant difference was found between genders by other studies (Martensen & Gronholdt, 2008). As a result, we hypothesize older children and children raised in dual-income families will have more influence, but there will be no significant difference between male and female children.

Methodology

In the summer of 2012, surveys about family dining-out decision-making were administered in a mid-sized Italian-style family restaurant in Hsinchu City, Taiwan. Menu items of the restaurant were generally single-order items. With the capacity of fifty seats, average check for a single customer was around 10 USD. One of the parents was randomly chosen as respondent to fill out the questionnaire by an on-site researcher. Among the 260 questionnaires completed, 252 families with children under age of 18 were usable. Respondents were asked to complete the demographic information about the oldest child accompanying them to the restaurant and to assess the influence level between different family members for 7 decision-making stages, which included questions pertaining to who (1) brought up the idea of dining-out, (2) conducted the information search, (3) decided the type of restaurant, (4) decided to eat at the specific restaurant, (5) decided how much money to spend, (6) decided when to dine out, and (7) decided the order. The current 7-stage scale was adapted from Stafford, Ganesh, and Luckett's (1996) scale, and five-point Likert scale was utilized (Stafford, Ganesh, & Luckett, 1996). Subsequently, respondents were asked to fill out the communication scale, which was rephrased by the original 13-question scale (Rose et al., 1998). Independent t-tests and analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to test whether there were significant differences on individual influences of dining-out between family members. Scheffe tests were utilized to do the post hoc comparisons when significant differences occurred. Factor analysis and ANOVA were then used to determine whether there were differences on influence of dining-out in each decision-making stage of children among different communication patterns.

Results

Concerning respondents' demographic information, the age range of parents were mostly between 36 and 40 years old (26.6%), followed by 31 and 35 years old (23%). Regarding parental employment status, 158 families (62.7%) were dual-income and 94 families (37.3%) were single-income. As for educational level, 142 (56.3%) families' parents' education level was university level and 54 (21.4%) were above graduate-school level. With respect of the oldest child accompanying to the restaurant, 148 (58.7%) of sample families were accompanied by child older than 9 years old, and other 104 families (41.3%) were accompanied by child younger than 8 years old. Besides, 142 (56.3 %) of the sample children were male, and 110 (43.7 %) were female.

By comparing the influence scores of fathers, mothers, and children in 7 decision-making stages, mothers were shown to have the greatest influence in every stage. According to Table 1, ANOVAs indicated significant differences among the influence scores of family members in each of the seven decision-making stages. Post hoc Scheffe test indicated only in the stage of "decided how much money to spend" were mothers' influence (mean = 4.18) equivalent to fathers' (mean = 4.09). Children's influences were the lowest in "brought up the idea of dining-out (mean = 3.14)," "information search (mean = 2.61)," and "decided when to dine out (mean = 2.86)".

Decision-making stages	Mean influence scores			
	Child	Mother	Father	F-value
Brought up the idea of dining-out	3.14^{c} (1.36)	4.11^{a} (0.94)	3.57^{b} (1.17)	43.50**
Information search	2.61^{c} (1.41)	4.27^{a} (0.92)	3.31^{b} (1.34)	112.95**
Decided the type of the restaurant	3.32^{b} (1.24)	4.33^{a} (0.77)	3.43^{b} (1.14)	66.30**
Decided the specific restaurant	3.24^{b} (1.32)	4.45^{a} (0.78)	3.46^{b} (1.12)	87.19**
Decided how much money to spend	2.24^{b} (1.19)	4.18^{a} (0.90)	4.09^{a} (1.03)	271.86**
Decided when to dine out	2.86^{c} (1.21)	4.15^{a} (0.92)	3.91^{b} (1.04)	104.64**
Decided the order	3.64^{b} (1.29)	4.49^{a} (0.71)	3.76^{b} (1.08)	47.73**

Table 1. Influence of Family Members across Decision-making Stages

**F value significant at alpha ≦ 0.05. Mean scores with same superscripts are not significantly different according to Scheffe post hoc tests.

As for the influence of children's age, children's ages were divided into two age groups – under elementary school (0 – 8 years old) and above the first grade of elementary school (9-18 years old). Children in the age group of 9 to 18 were found to possess significantly more influence than children in the age group of 0 to 8 in every decision-making stage. Besides, children were also found to have significantly more influence in dual-income families than in single-income families. Finally, no significant differences on dining-out influence were found between children of different genders.

Subsequently, family communication patterns were measured by the adapted scale consisted of 13 questions to measure the concept-oriented and socio-oriented dimensions of parents' communication patterns within households (Rose et al., 1998). The scale was rephrased by wording related to the current research and also measured on a 5-point Likert scale. Principal component factor analysis was performed on the scale with Varimax rotation. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value (KMO = 0.86) and Bartlett test of sphericity ($\chi^2 = 1565.26$, $df = 78$, $p < 0.001$) showed this scale was appropriate for factor analysis. Based on conventional practice, factor loadings above .45 were kept. Two factors were extracted, which included concept-orientation (8 question items, Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.896$) and socio-orientation (5 question items, Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.747$). Additionally, four family communication patterns were developed by the mean splits on both dimensions (Rose, et al., 1998; Zhang, 2007). Therefore, the participants' scores above the sample mean on concept-orientation but below the sample mean on socio-orientation were assigned into the category of pluralistic family type. The scores above the sample mean on socio-orientation but below the sample mean on concept-orientation were placed into the category of protective family type. The scores below the sample mean on both concept- and socio-orientation were placed into the category of laissez-faire family type. Lastly, the scores above the sample mean on both concept- and socio- orientation were then assigned in the category of consensual family type. In this research, concept-orientation (mean = 3.70, SD = 0.80) was found to produce higher scores than socio-orientation (mean = 2.80, SD = 0.72). Paired t-test indicated that the difference between mean scores of concept- and socio-orientation was significant ($t = 14.973$, $df = 247$, $p < 0.001$). Data showed that in the case of Taiwanese families, pluralistic family (N = 81, 33%) was the most common communication pattern, followed by laissez-faire (N = 62, 25%), consensual (N = 61, 24%), and protective (N = 44, 18%).

Finally, ANOVA was used to test whether there exists significant differences of children's influence among different communication patterns in each dining-out decision-making stage. Scheffe tests were performed to do the post hoc comparisons when ANOVA resulted in a significant difference among communication patterns. ANOVAs indicated there were significant differences among influence scores of four communication patterns in all decision-making stages. Children were found to be more influential in high concept-oriented (pluralistic and consensual) families than in high socio-oriented (protective and laissez-faire) families.

Decision-making stages	Mean influence scores				
	Laissez-faire	Protective	Pluralistic	Consensual	F-value
Brought up the idea of dining-out	2.38^b (1.11)	2.53^b (1.30)	3.81^a (1.09)	3.49^a (1.39)	21.52**
Information search	1.66^b (0.75)	1.98^b (0.91)	3.46^a (1.41)	2.97^a (1.41)	32.32**
Decided the type of the restaurant	2.44^b (1.04)	2.56^b (1.03)	4.04^a (0.93)	3.82^a (1.06)	41.98**
Decided the specific restaurant	2.36^b (1.11)	2.35^b (1.02)	4.09^a (0.94)	3.67^a (1.14)	45.40**
Decided how much money to spend	1.56^b (0.79)	2.09^b (1.09)	2.70^a (1.11)	2.49^a (1.36)	13.65**
Decided when to dine out	2.23^b (0.90)	2.37^b (1.22)	3.38^a (1.12)	3.16^a (1.23)	16.43**
Decided the order	2.92^b (1.23)	2.98^b (1.32)	4.34^a (0.89)	4.02^a (1.13)	26.06**

Table 2. Children's Influence of Different Communication Patterns in Dining-out Decision-making

**F value significant at alpha ≦ 0.05. Mean scores with same superscripts are not significantly different according to post hoc tests.

Conclusion

The influence of children in the family dining-out decision-making process is a relevant and timely topic for both academics and practitioners. Marketers should be aware that mothers are the principal decision-makers concerning family dining out selections within current Taiwanese households. Though children are not major dominators of family dining-out decision-making in the current research, their influence mean scores are not extremely lower than their parents', especially in regard to fathers' mean scores. Children are moderately influential in the decision-making stages of deciding the type of the restaurant, the specific restaurant, and the order of the meal. These three stages are pivotal for restaurant marketers to formulate practical marketing strategies to develop and maintain effective profits. Moreover, the family communication pattern in Taiwan is dominated by a high-concept-oriented pluralistic pattern, which is characterized by horizontal interactions, rather than hierarchical structures, between parents and children. Combined with the result that children in concept-oriented families have much more influences than those in socio-oriented families, we can find children in Taiwan have more "say" in family decision-making while dining out. Therefore, when conducting marketing strategies in Taiwan, food-service facilities owners should emphasize mothers, but with consideration for the importance of children's.

Some practical implications and suggestions are provided to marketers in the industry. First, since mothers are the major dominators in the stage of *information search* and *decided the specific restaurant*, restaurant marketing personnel have to develop effective ways to attract mothers' attentions, such as advertising intriguing information about restaurants on mother-friendly mass media or furnishing the interior design of restaurant with mother-oriented preferences. Second, children were considered more influential in deciding *the type of the restaurant, the specific restaurant* and *the order of the meal* than in other decision-making stages. Hence, an integral market investigation should be performed drastically by marketers to understand children's preferences of certain types of foods or facilities. However, according to the results of current study, overly focusing on younger children or children of certain gender will not be effective.

This preliminary study in Taiwan offers initial perspectives as to children's roles in the decision-making process within the context of family communication patterns. In future studies, there is a need to further sample from different locations and diverse food-service concepts to test whether children's roles will change by different type of facilities.

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Impacts of Calorie Information on Consumers' Decisions at the Point of Purchase in Fast Food Restaurants

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Abstract

The U. S. Food and Drug Administration is preparing the implementation of new menu labeling regulations for the food service industry. However, effectiveness of these regulations is unclear since previous studies found mixed results. This study tested how providing calorie information influences customers' menu decisions at the point of purchase in fast food restaurants, using 2 (calorie information: absent versus present) X 2 (current weight: normal versus overweight/obese) experiment design. Results showed that respondents selected items with fewer calories when calorie information was available than when there was no calorie information shown. Respondents selected their main menu items and beverages regardless of calorie information disclosure. However, providing calorie information influences their choices of side menu items. Moreover, the total amount of money spent was decreased when calorie information was provided.

Keywords

Calorie information disclosure, fast food restaurants, menu labeling regulations, menu selection

College Students' Healthy Eating Behavior: The Effects of Nutrition Information and the Moderating Role of Gender

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Abstract

Utilizing variant "sample menus," this study examined the impact of providing information to consumers about calorie content and recommended daily calorie intake. The research hypotheses were tested using a 2 (presence vs. absence of calorie information)* 2 (presence vs. absence of recommended daily calorie intake) between-subject design. The findings indicated that information about calorie content and respondents' subjective nutritional knowledge had significant impact on their decisions, but that the relationships between predictors and the dependent variable were different for male and female groups. The findings support the evidence that foodservice operators should be required to post calorie information on their menu boards in order to improve the effectiveness of the menu labeling.

Keywords

Calorie information, recommended daily calorie intake, subjective nutritional knowledge.

Do Looks Really Matter? The Effects of Perceived Visible Characteristics of Customers on Servers' Tipping Expectations

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Abstract

Assuming that tipping size varies according to customers' characteristics and that servers judge tipping size by looking at customers' visible characteristics, this study identifies the differences in servers' tipping size expectations and their intentions to give quality service depending on customers' race, gender and type of attire. This study used a survey which included 16 customers' photographs and a repeated-measures ANOVA was conducted for the analysis. The results of this study suggest that there are significant differences and interactions in servers' tipping size expectations and intentions to give quality service according to customers' race, gender and type of attire. The findings from this study are expected to contribute to the development of guidelines for training servers as one of the tools in human resource management.

Keywords

Customers' visible characteristics, servers' tipping size expectations, servers' intentions to give quality service.

Food Allergy Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices, Training and Training Needs of University Foodservice Employees

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Abstract

The incidence of food allergies among children and teens is increasing. College and university dining operations must have proper measures in place to prevent incidences of food allergies as this demographic prepares to enter higher education settings. The purpose of this study was to examine food allergy knowledge, attitudes, practices, training, and training needs of employees working in university dining. Results showed statistically significant differences in employee knowledge, attitudes, practices, training received, and perceived training needs between student and non-student employees. Attitudes towards food allergies had a significant influence on food allergy practices.

Keywords

Food allergy, Foodservice, Training, University dining.

Nutrition Label Formatting: Exploring Customer Perceptions and Behaviors

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Abstract

In response to the increasing U.S. obesity rates, legislators have begun to mandate that chain restaurants have nutrition information available. While other studies have addressed various aspects of nutrition information labeling in restaurants, there has been little research into the efficacy of the various forms of delivery of restaurant nutrition information. The results of this study indicate that menu nutrition formatting has little impact on customer behavior. This study found that when nutrition information was influential in the decision making process, consumers chose a food item with an average 30% less calories. Consumers who did not change their food selection based on nutrition information still indicated they found the information valuable and appreciated its availability.

Keywords

Nutrition Labeling, Foodservice, Restaurant, Nutrition Policy, Food Consumption, Consumer Behavior

Introduction

The prevalence of obesity has increased over the past several decades (Flegal, Carroll, Ogden, & Curtin, 2010). The number of Americans' meals eaten away from home is often seen as the primary contributor to the obesity epidemic; Americans spend 48% of their food dollar eating out (National Restaurant Association, 2006). Due to Americans' penchant for dining away from home, the foodservice industry's influence on dietary habits is an important factor for consideration in the obesity problem.

Nutrition labeling in restaurants has been shown to help consumers make healthier food decisions; however, nutrition information is often not displayed in a user-friendly manner so it is often not used by patrons (Glanz, Hewitt, & Rudd, 1992). Also, restaurant consumers believed that nutrition information would have hindered their dining enjoyment by making them feel guilty and interfering with the food choice they wanted to make (Fitzpatrick, Chapman, & Barr, 1997). There has been resistance in providing nutrition information from foodservice companies, who believe displaying nutrition information will have a negative effect on their annual sales volume (Almanza, Nelson, & Chai, 1997).

The topic of nutrition labeling on restaurant menus has been thoroughly debated by the restaurant industry, consumer interest groups, public health groups, and the government. With the passage of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) menu labeling regulation, much of this debate is moot. The more important question is how to increase the efficacy of restaurant nutrition information.

Literature Review

Nutritional labeling for packaged foods was mandated by the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act ("NLEA," 1990), which was signed into law by President George H. W. Bush. The nutrition facts panel contains information regarding the amount of calories, fat, protein and other nutrients within the food. The net result of the NLEA was expected to be healthier American diets, leading to reduced risks for obesity related diseases such diabetes and cancer; however, these expectations did not come to fruition (Burton, Biswas, & Netemeyer, 1994; Moorman, 1996). Unlike packaged foods, foods purchased in restaurants are usually not labeled with nutritional information.

Kozup, Creyer, and Burton (2003) reported that when consumers compare a healthy food choice against an unhealthy food choice, they have more positive attitudes and greater purchase intentions for the healthier item. Consumers seem to understand that healthier foods have benefits to their wellness (e.g., they perceive healthier foods to lower the risk of heart disease and stroke). However, when nutrition information is not provided, Burton and Creyer (2004) found that most consumers do not understand the nutritional impact contained in a restaurant meal; consumers are not aware of the high levels of fat, saturated fat and cholesterol contained in restaurant food. Binkley (2003) found that the average person consumes 87 more calories (approximately 5% more) on days in which they dine away from home than on days when they do not. Although the foodservice industry is not solely responsible for the obesity epidemic in the United States, it is a contributing factor, and increasing the usage of nutrition information by restaurant patrons can help in reducing obesity rates. When asked, consumers have said they would use information provided by nutrition labels in making food-purchasing decisions (Kolodinsky, Green, Michahelles, & Harvey-Berino, 2008; Kozup et al., 2003). Despite this report, Roberto, Agnew, and Brownell (2009) observed that only 6 (0.1%) of 4,311 fast-food restaurant patrons accessed nutrition information. A disconnect seems to exist between consumers' intentions and behaviors in terms of nutrition information.

The purpose of this study was twofold: (a) to determine if menu formatting influences consumers' perception of nutrition information and (b) to evaluate how much customers value nutrition information and whether they would change their food selection after accessing nutrition information. Given pending governmental mandates, the overarching goal of this study is to contribute to the body of knowledge addressing the larger problem of increasing the efficacy of nutrition labeling in restaurants.

Methodology

In order to evaluate consumers' perception of nutrition information and whether or not they would act on available information, the study was conducted in two parts: treatment and survey. To determine whether consumers had a preference towards a specific format of nutrition labeling, customers were exposed to two types of nutrition information formatting. A written questionnaire was developed to determine the perceptions of consumers' attitudes toward of nutrition information.

Design, Procedures And Study Participants

In this study, customers at a quick service restaurant were exposed to nutrition information before placing their order and were approached immediately following their purchase decision with an invitation to participate in the survey. The nutrition information was printed in a brochure and was available when the customers were deciding which food item to purchase. The survey consisted of questions regarding the value of the nutrition information and whether customers changed their purchase decision based on the available nutrition information.

Upon entering the restaurant and lining up to order, customers were presented with a large poster containing the restaurant's menu. The nutrition information brochures were placed on a large table beneath the menu with a conspicuous sign to draw customers' attention to the brochures. Consumers could choose whether or not they wanted to look at the nutrition information. Subsequently, consumers moved through the queue past the menu poster and nutrition information until they reached the cashier to place their order. While waiting for the cashier, customers faced the restaurant's digital menu boards. This sequence (i.e., primary menu exposure, nutrition exposure, and secondary menu exposure) was intended to provide customers with an opportunity to change their behavior (menu selection) as a result of exposure to the nutrition information (treatment).

After the ordering process was completed, consumers were invited to complete a short, online survey while they waited for their food to be prepared. The survey was presented in electronic format and offered to the consumer on an Apple iPad. Participants for the study came entirely from one restaurant over the course of two summer weeks during the restaurant's lunch hours, 11:00am to 1:00pm. The restaurant is located on a collage campus. Due to the time of year, there were many repeat customers and thus the pool of participants was limited.

The nutrition information was presented to customers in two different formats. The first brochure was formatted to match the FDA food label format as seen in Figure 1. The second brochure was presented in a tabular format commonly seen in QSR operations as seen in Figure 2. In both formats, the nutrition information provided was identical. Each nutrition brochure was presented until there were an approximately equal number of participants for each type of format.

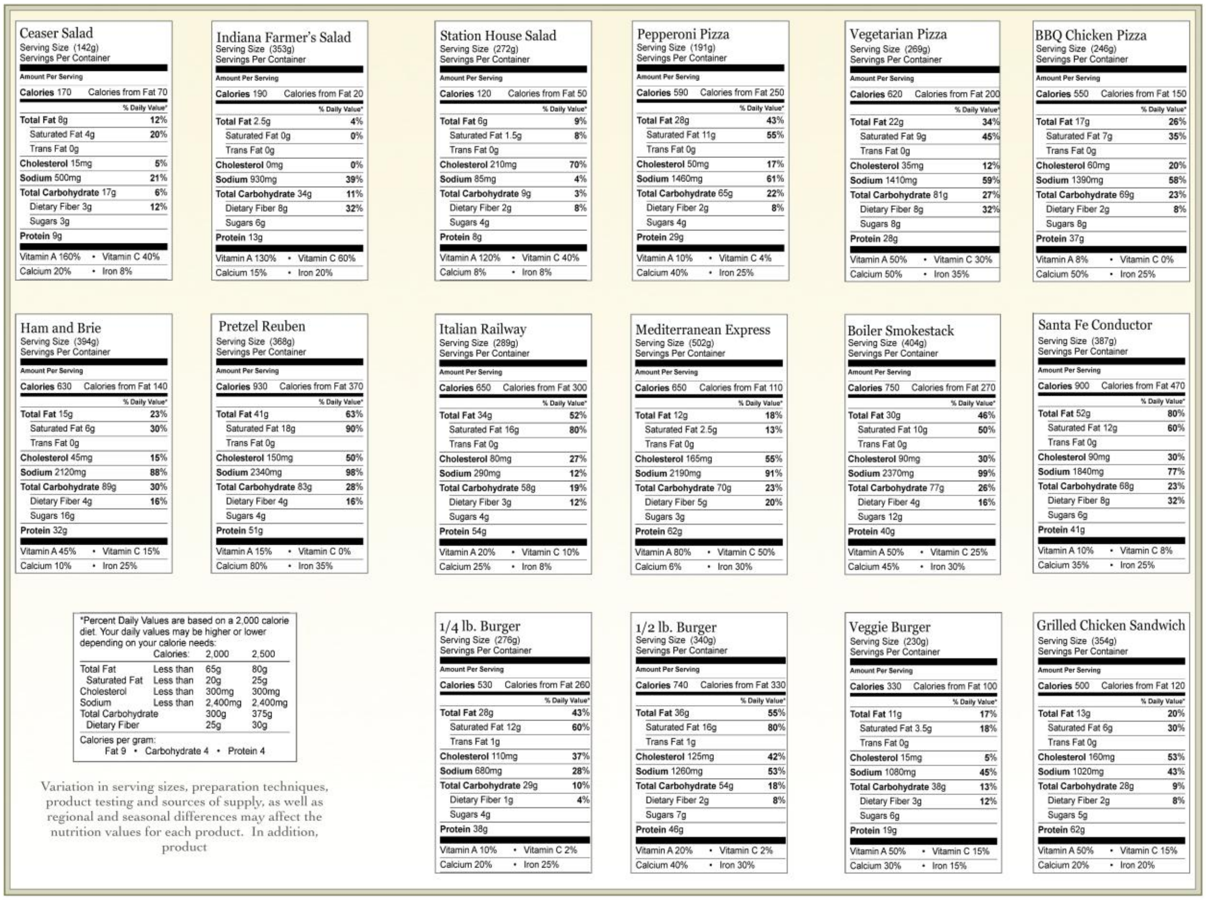

Figure 1. FDA Label Format

HTM Bistro Nutrition Information							
	Calories	Calories From Fat	Total Fat	Cholesterol	Sodium	Total Carbohydrates	Protein
Caesar Salad	170	70	8g	15mg	500mg	17g	9g
Indiana Farmers Salad	190	20	2.5g	0mg	930mg	34g	13g
Station House Salad	120	50	6g	210mg	85mg	9g	8g
Barbecue Chicken Flatbread	550	150	17g	60mg	1390mg	69g	37g
Mediterranean Flatbread	620	200	22g	35mg	1410mg	81g	28g
Pepperoni Pizza	590	250	28g	50mg	1460mg	65g	29g
Toasted Boiler Smokestack	750	270	30g	90mg	2370mg	77g	40g
Santa Fe Conductor	900	470	52g	90mg	1840mg	68g	41g
Mediterranean Express	650	110	12g	165mg	2190mg	70g	62g
Italian Railway	650	300	34g	80mg	290mg	58g	54g
Pretzel Reuben	930	370	41g	150mg	2340mg	83g	51g
Ham and Brie	630	140	15g	45g	2120mg	89g	32g
Charbroiled 1/4 Burger	530	260	28g	110mg	680mg	29g	38g
Charbroiled 1/2 Burger	740	330	36g	125mg	1260mg	54g	46g
Grilled Chicken Breast	500	120	13g	160mg	1020mg	28g	62g
3-Grain Veggie Burger	330	100	11g	15mg	1080mg	38g	19g

Figure 2. Tabular Format

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS statistics 20, Release Version 20.0.0.1 (SPSS, Inc., 2011, Chicago, IL, www.spss.com). T-tests were used to determine significance between the different types of nutrition labeling formats. The T-test determined whether one response was given at a significantly higher rate for a particular group on each questions.

Results

A total of 116 people participated in the survey portion of the study. Of these, 60 participants were exposed to nutrition information presented in a label format, while the remaining 56 participants were exposed to nutrition information presented in a tabular format. While respondents occasionally chose not to respond to select questions on the survey instrument, all 116 responses were usable. In terms of gender, 55 (48%) of respondents were male, 59 (52%) were female and 2 respondents declined to answer. The age ranged from 18 to 74 years, with an average age of 36.6 ± 13.6.

One of the questions this study posed was whether format would influence the consumers' perception of nutrition information importance and their likelihood of usage. In order to examine this question, Levene's test of variances was conducted between the two groups of respondents on each item (see Table 1). There were no items on which the groups differed significantly ($p < 0.05$). For this reason, in the following analyses the two groups were treated as one. Although the format in which nutrition information was presented was not significant, the majority of the participants indicated a preference for placing the nutrition information directly on the menu (see Table 2).

Table 1

Comparison between Label Formatted Data and Tabular Formatted Data

Question	t	df	p
The nutrition information was helpful.	-.656	114	.513
Nutrition information was clearly presented	-.971	114	.334
Appreciate having nutrition information	.695	112	.448
Do not want to know nutrition information	.400	114	.690
Appreciate cashier mentioning the healthy items	1.767	114	.080
Offended by casher mentioning healthy items	.047	114	.961

Note: Significant at $p < 0.05$ level

Table 2

Consumer's Preference for Nutrition Information Presentation

Method	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Brochure	26	22.4	22.4
Website/ QR Code	8	6.9	29.3
Table Tent	9	7.8	37.1
On the Menu	72	62.1	99.1
Other: Do not want to see	1	.9	100

Note: N=116

In order to determine people's attitude toward nutrition information, three questions were asked: (a) I found the nutrition information helpful, (b) How often do you dine out and specifically do NOT want to know about the menu items' nutritional values?, and (c) I appreciate having nutrition information available when I dine out. These questions were presented in a five point Likert scale with 1 meaning never and 5 meaning always (see Table 3).

Table 3

Consumer's Preference for Nutrition Information Presentation

Method	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Brochure	26	22.4	22.4
Website/ QR Code	8	6.9	29.3
Table Tent	9	7.8	37.1
On the Menu	72	62.1	99.1
Other: Do not want to see	1	.9	100

Note: N=116

Lastly, this study attempted to determine whether consumers would change their purchasing decision if nutrition information were available. Of the 116 participants, 21 (18%) reported that they changed their menu choice. The average energy content of the original menu choice was 672.85 calories, whereas the revised menu choice averaged 417.61 calories, a difference of 255.23 calories. Consumers who used the nutrition information reduced their caloric intake by about 38%. Consumers who changed their menu choice based on nutrition indicated that they appreciated having nutrition information significantly more (p = .023) than consumers who did not change their menu choice. When asked their preferred method of reducing calories on a menu, 57% (n = 66) of participants chose "Have different options on the menu (i.e, a grilled chicken instead of a fried chicken)" to reduce their caloric intake, compared to 27.2% of participants who chose having a smaller portion of food and 15.8% who chose to have a regular portion of food with calories reduced through ingredient substitution (e.g., using sugar substitutes or low fat ingredients).

Discussion And Conclusions

Legislation is beginning to mandate the availability of nutrition information in restaurants. On March 23, 2010, President Obama signed the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (2010) into law. Section 4205 of this act requires restaurants with 20 or more locations to list calorie content information for standard menu items on restaurant menus and menu boards. In order for these legislative efforts to become successful, researchers must explore how to increase the usage of nutrition information by consumers. This study suggests that neither the label nor the tabular nutrition information format influences a consumer's usage or perception of nutrition information. Although label formatting was not found to be a significant variable in this study, when asked where they would like to see the nutrition information displayed, consumers expressed a preference to have the nutrition information displayed alongside the item directly on the menu. The majority of consumers when given the choice would prefer to have low-calorie choices on the menu rather than lowering the caloric content of food by changing the portion size or using fat and sugar substitutes.

Unsurprisingly, consumers who used the nutrition information were more likely appreciate the availability of nutrition information. However, surprisingly, the majority of consumers who indicated that they found the nutrition information helpful and would appreciate having nutrition information available when dining out did *not* use the nutrition information to change their menu selection. There is a disconnect between the broadly expressed preference for having nutrition information available and the relatively low number of consumers who changed their menu selection based upon the nutrition information. This disconnect can be attributed one or more of the following: (a) alternative food choices were not "attractive" enough to change their food decision, (b) they accept the cognitive dissonance (i.e., consumers know that proper portion size is important for their health, but they continue to order 32 oz sodas with their meals) or (c) their interest in having nutrition information available is be superficial.

Limitations associated with this study provide directions for future research. First, this study is not generalizable to all restaurants as it was conducted at one quick service restaurant during lunch. Therefore, future research should examine different types of operations during different meal periods. Second, only two types of nutrition label formats were used, and the formats were not directly compared. Last, future research should focus on how to challenge cognitive dissonance in terms of food choice.

Encouraging Consumers To Act On Nutrition Information More Frequently Requires Action On Of All Three Alternatives. First, Restaurants Must Make It Less "Painful" To Choose Healthier Choices By Providing A Good Value Proposition For Consumers Who Chose A Healthy Meal (E.G., Reasonable Price, Filling And Tasty Alternatives). Second, Cognitive Dissonance Issues Can By Addressed By Educating Consumers As To The True Consequences Of Having A Poor Diet (E.G., It Causes Heart Disease And High Blood Pressure) And Simultaneously Providing Healthy Alternatives That Are Value Priced And Perceived By Consumers As Viable Options To Regular Selections. Lastly, Educational Efforts May Counteract Consumers' Superficiality; However, It Should Be Noted That This May Not Be The Case For Everyone.

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Analysis of a Non-Linear Effect of Service Attributes on Return Intentions and Willingness to Pay in Restaurants

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Abstract

Previous studies have shown a positive linear impact of ambiance, food and service quality on return intention and word-of-mouth in restaurant environment.. The main objective of this study was to question linearity and to examine the curvilinear effect of restaurant quality on the customers' behavioral intention. It was shown that quality/behavioral intention relationship is not the same for different restaurant segments. The results indicate that a type of restaurant moderates the relationship between level of ambiance and service quality and behavioral intention. Ambiance quality had a curvilinear effect on return intention/word-of-mouth in upscale restaurants and a linear effect in quick-service ones. Service quality had a curvilinear effect on return intention/word-of-mouth in quick-service restaurants and a linear effect in upscale ones.

Keywords

Ambiance, Food and Service Quality, Quick-Service and Upscale Restaurants, Return intention, Word-of-Mouth

Effects of Healthful Foods and Nutrition Information on Consumer Empowerment and Perceived Corporate Social Responsibility with Health-Consciousness as a Moderator for Restaurants

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Abstract

The restaurant industry tries to meet consumer's demands for healthy-eating and to follow menu-labeling legislation. This study aims to develop a theoretical frame representing customer's perceptions of restaurants providing nutrition information and healthful foods, incorporating consumer empowerment and perceived corporate social responsibility along with health-consciousness as a moderator. The study conducted a between-subject experimental design with a survey questionnaire. With nutrition information and healthful foods, customers tend to feel more empowered, perceive that the restaurant is socially responsible, and consequently have high willingness to visit the restaurants. In addition, high health-conscious people reacted more to healthful foods than low health-conscious people. When facing the dilemma of profitability vs. social responsibility, restaurateurs may accomplish the both goals by providing healthy-eating initiatives.

Keywords

Healthful foods, nutrition information, consumer empowerment, perceived corporate social responsibility, willingness to select the restaurants, health-consciousness.

Health Benefits of Agritourism: the Role of Local Food and Cuisine

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Abstract

As an important component of tourism experience, local food and cuisine in rural destinations in China has become increasingly attractive to many urban residents, due to their growing concerns about the food safety issue. Agritourism becomes a trend that allows consumers to enjoy health food and healthy lifestyle. This study aims to investigate Chinese tourists' perceived health benefits of agritourism. The role of local food and cuisine in their perceived health benefits is discovered. Based on the focus group and in-depth interviews with 15 respondents, the present study observes Chinese tourists' activities in agriculture farms, explores their motivation to visit agriculture farms, and analyzes their perceived benefits of agritourism with the focus on the role of local food and cuisine.

Keywords

Agritourism, local food and cuisine, Chinese tourists' perceived health benefits

Tourists' Quality of Life based on Motivation, Perceived Value of Destination Experience, and Satisfaction

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Abstract

The primary objective of this research is to develop and test a model to understand tourists' quality of life. Specifically, this study examines how tourism experience affects tourists' overall quality of life. The relevant constructs of travel motivation, perceived value, and satisfaction with destination experience are assessed as the critical drivers of measuring tourists' quality of life. The data for this study were collected through a self-administrated online questionnaire method. A total of 300 respondents participated in the survey. The properties of the four research constructs were tested with a LISREL 8.8 students version. The results indicate that motivation positively affects perceived value, and perceived value influences satisfaction which in turn affects quality of life. Quality of life can serve as a new consequence of travel behavior, thus it helps better understand the role of travel behavior consequences as outcomes.

Keywords

Motivation, perceived value of destination experience, satisfaction, and quality of Life.

An Examination of Slow Tourist Behavior: Motivation, Personal Values, Psychological Well-Being, and Revisit intention

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Abstract

The purpose of the study is to understand slow tourist behavior by exploring tourists' motivation, personal values, psychological well-being, and revisit intention. The study demonstrates the theoretical and empirical evidence on the causal relationships among the four constructs. Using a sample drawn from tourists in South Korea, 'enjoying natural environment and escaping from daily life', 'pursuing intimacy', 'pursuing differentiated travel', and 'pursuing meditation' were classified as slow tourist motivation. Second, 'fun and enjoyment in life' and 'excitement' serve as the highest underlying personal values. Moreover, in order to investigate the relevant relationships among the four constructs, a structural equation modeling approach was used. The results indicate that motivation and personal values are linked to psychological well-being. Revisit intention was affected more by motivation rather than psychological well-being and personal values.

Keywords

Slow tourism, Motivation, Personal values, Psychological well-being, and Revisit intention

What Does Implicit Cognition Tell Us About Destination Image? Application of Single-Target Implicit Association Tests (ST-IAT)

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Abstract

The study attempts to assess people's implicit and explicit cognition toward destination image in a psychological method. Eight-one American undergraduate students (male: 40 and female: 41) were recruited from a University in a Midwest region of the U.S. to serve as participants in both a self-report survey and the Single-Target Implicit Association Test (ST-IAT). The results of this study show that American respondents may have different image cognition toward the target destination (England) in terms of implicit and explicit measures. Furthermore, implicit image measures are correlated with salient consequent variables, while not with explicit image measures, concluding that implicit and explicit image cognition are independent in the tourism context. More specific results, implications, and limitations are suggested in the present study.

Keywords

Destination image, implicit image cognition, Single-target Implicit Association Test (ST-IAT), D-scores

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Optimizing Theme Park Capacity through Spatial Design: A Case Study of Wuhu Fantawild Adventure in China

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Abstract

Spatial design within a theme park substantially affects tourist distribution, and hence inappropriate spatial design may restrict a theme park's carrying capacity. A case study on Wuhu Fantawild Adventure, China explored how the attraction layout and path design impacted tourist density and tourist flow of the park. The results showed that for capacity optimization of a theme park, spatial design should base on an overall consideration of the attraction type, target customers, construction feature, facility capacity, floor area, experience value, and waiting and participation time of each attraction, tourists' attraction choice behavior, and influences of attraction locations and path patterns on tourist density and tourist flow.

Keywords

Theme park, spatial design, carrying capacity, tourist density, tourist flow, circular path.

An Empirical Study on Adventure Tourism Management: A Balance between Risk and Thrill in China

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Abstract

Adventure tourism used to be referred as "The Game for the Brave ". In recent years, the number of participants is increasing at an alarming rate. Adventure tourism has become a fashion. This paper first summarizes two dilemma characteristics of adventure tourism, and proposes two cores for adventure tourist management in correspondence, and then builds a theoretical optimum target curve. Based on operators and tourists survey and questionnaire, the study makes an analysis of risk factors and proposes a visualized risk radar chart and explores the characteristics of the adventure tourists in to seek the effective management tools.

Keywords

Adventure tourism, risk management, experience management

Introduction

Adventure tourism used to be referred as "The Game for the Brave ". In recent years, the number of participants is increasing at an alarming rate in China. Adventure tourism has become a fashion. Buckley (2006) considers adventure tourism as guided commercial tours, where the principal attraction is an outdoor activity that relies on features of the natural terrain, generally requires specialized equipment, and is exciting for the tour clients. The core of adventure tourism contains two layers: the pursuit of excitement and the guarantee of security. (Cater,2006; Walle,1997).As can be drawn from the definition and practice, high degree of risk and participation are two distinct features of adventure tourism. This study aims to discuss the relationship between the two cores of adventure tourism and discuss the risk and experience management respectively based on a quantitative analysis.

Methodology

The two characteristics and cores of adventure tourism are reciprocally interacted. The risk stimulation should be under certain controllable range and the thrill should be above the satisfaction anticipation of tourists. This paper first tries to discuss a theoretical target curve model as an optimum management objective tool to achieve a balance.

According to the Australia and New Zealand risk management standard: AS/NZS4360, The purpose for risk analysis is separation of acceptable risk and unacceptable risk to provide data for risk assessment and treatment. The risk analysis includes the possibility of incidents and the consequences and impact factors.

In order to establish a risk assessment model, the study draws out the potential risk factors based on literature reviews and past interviews. The conceptual models of risk factors for adventure tourism (Page et al, 2005; Bentley et al, 2010) are adapted. The factors were divided into four categories. The previous questionnaire include: ten tourist-oriented factors; nine organization-oriented factors, five equipment-oriented factors and nine environment-oriented factors. After ruling out the factors which are not selected by the operators, final result could indicate the risk possibility in adventure tourism.

The consequences of adventure tourism activities are scored from 0-10 to indicate the potential loss of accident. The higher the score, the higher potential loss. Suppose a factor is marked 10 points, meaning the consequence may be catastrophic and vice versa.

Date Collection

As for the supply side, Because the adventure operators and guides have most frequent contacts with adventure tourists and have comprehensive understandings of current situation, 23 operators and guides from island adventure destination in Hainan province were invited to fill in the questionnaire and tick the factors liable to cause risk in reality, and then 15 operators or experienced guides who are experienced in diving are invited to score the subdivision factors of snorkeling activities. The average score was taken as the final value.

As for the demand side, the author also made three rounds of sample surveys about adventure tourists. In the first round, through interviews with operators, tourists and tourism bureaus in Beijing, Liaoning, Xinjiang, Tibet and Guangdong Provinces in China, the demographic characteristics of adventure tourists are discovered. Generally speaking, adventure tourists are most likely to have high income, great pressure, robust body, love for nature, willingness to join in the exciting activities, crazy about challenges, full of curiosity, in pursuit of individuality and a strong self-awareness. In the second round, the empirical data was collected via questionnaire, a random survey of 136 adventure tourists has been conducted in Beijing, China. By adoption of various analysis methods, such as frequency analysis, cross-over analysis, non-sequence table chi-square test, the author analyzed the cognition and behavior of adventure tourists as well as the differences between the genders. And next the empirical data was collected via questionnaire and the case study in Hainan shows some more specific behavior differences between genders, ages and experience. Among which, the second round is most informative for experience management.

Findings

According to the supply side survey, tourist and environmental-oriented factors are two of the most critical categories in the adventure tourism risk inducement. Organization factors are ranked the third, while the equipment risk is relatively low compared with others. Tourists do not comply with guidelines (60.9%), adverse or changing weather conditions (56.5%), skills and abilities of the visitors (52.2 %), poor terrain (39.1%), familiarity with environment and poor field conditions (26.1%) are among the top five in all risk factors. Also the four dimension risk evaluation can be vividly displayed in a risk management radar chart. The model could provide more accurate positioning and visitor management recommendations. Prevention and early warning of risk is far more important than rescue itself. Thus operators should design a contingency plan relevant to risk factors and appoint someone to investigate and confirm the overall status and potential risk, including tourists, environment, organization and equipment.

As from the demand perspective, the land-based activities such as mountaineering (13.3%), camping (10.6%), hiking (6.2%), water-base activities such as rafting (7.5%), and surfing (7.1%) are ranked as the most attractive, which are also the most popular at present and with good potential in the future. Due to the consumption capacity limits and the lagging supporting infrastructure, the aerial activities are still strange to the public.

Tibet (18.9%), Xinjiang (16.7 %), Hainan (16.0%), Yunnan (14.9%) are among the favorite tourist destinations of adventure tourists in China. These destinations are boast with abundant natural and cultural tourism resources. Tourists are resource-oriented when making choices, so the areas with special geological conditions like Tibet and Xinjiang, has the inherent advantages of the development of adventure tourism.

The primary motivation of adventure tourists is to enjoy the scenery and nature, accounting for 24.8% and 97.1%, which is corresponding with the resource-oriented adventure tourism destination choices. Exercise and challenge and fulfill oneself are ranked as the second and the third important factors, accounting for 16.8% and 16.1% respectively. The statistics of travel motivation reflects the development stage of domestic adventure tourism, which is still in soft adventure phase, so the concerns about tourists are still relax , but some tourists have cultivated some hard adventure tourism motivations.

The main channels for visitors to obtain information of adventure tourism activities are invitation of friends and forum or website, respectively 37.8% and 29.7%, which sum up to 67.5%. On the whole, the participation is mainly spontaneous, lack of organization and regulation. Network (34.8 %) and friend recommendation (25.9 %) are the primary channels for visitors to acquire information about adventure tourism. That coincides with the information access statistic. But tourists prefer to get more information through the internet while rely more on the recommendation of friends.

The results of Chi-square test show firstly male and female both prefer to travel with their friends and relatives, followed by joining the club or association, few register for the conventional travel agency. That may due to a supply and demand contradiction as most travel agencies do not provide adventure tourism and often target at high-end market. Secondly, both consider quality as the most important consideration, paying relatively less attention to brand and price. Thirdly, time limitations and safety considerations are the key hinder factors. Money is also an important factor.

The main differences between male and female are as follows. Firstly, male prefer hiking, rock climbing, surfing, paragliding, cycling and boating etc. Female prefer mountain climbing, camping, hiking and rafting etc. Female preferences are mainly concentrated in relatively common activities while male has more extensive selection. Secondly, female value safety and convenience while male value freedom and convenience. Female attach great importance to safety, while male pay more attention to freedom. Convenience and easy are both key factors. Female are more economical. On the whole, the consideration of male are more scattered.

Conclusions And Limitations

Based on the risk and thrill paradox in adventure tourism, this study first attempts to establish an theoretical optimum target curve , then explore the risk management and experience management in light with a supply and demand survey. The risk assessment process and radar chart could help evaluate risk in adventure activities. The quantitative study of the demand characteristics of the adventure tourists help understand adventure tourists and provide the basis for experience management design. Adventure tourism and visitor management are both relatively new research field and lack of cross-over study. Adventure tourism in China is not as mature as those in developed countries, so it is important to define the stage of adventure tourism and probe into the characteristics of adventure visitors for reference and strike a balance between safety and satisfaction.

However, this paper focuses more on respective discussion of the two aspects. The optimum target was still a theoretical framework, thus in-depth discussion concerning the internal metric relationship of risk and experience should be further conducted. The major limitation of the study is the sampling. Because administration department for adventure tourism in China is still not clear, and there is no public risk database and lack of official statistics, so it is not easy for a precise assessment. The risk radar model is mainly an attempt for sketchy assessment. Due to the questionnaire sample limitations, the first-hand research failed to cross analyze the variables disparity in education, income, occupation or experience. The cognitive and behavioral characteristics are very complicated, thus more follow-up studies could be done to find how the variables affects the satisfaction of adventure tourists.

Acknowledgement

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Seas of Influence: Isomorphism and Tourism in Oceania

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Abstract

Considerable ambiguity exists regarding whether developing destinations should strive to remain distinct, or appear familiar by adopting models and practices that have worked for other successful destinations. This study adopts an institutional isomorphism approach to examine conceptual issues regarding homogenization mechanisms in tourism and hospitality, and empirically tests the performance implications of mimetic isomorphism in developing island states. Data envelopment analysis is used to place destinations on a best-practice frontier based on mimetic inputs and performance outputs, and identifies mimetic variables that can enable improved performance. It is envisaged that this study can facilitate more nuanced insights regarding 'best practice' models in tourism and hospitality research, and also help support efficient allocation of scarce resources for practitioners in developing destinations.

Keywords

Developing destinations, institutional theory, isomorphism, Oceania, tourism.

A Model of Tourist Experience

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Abstract

Tourism experience is an increasing important issue in modern society. Based on qualitative data collected from in-depth interviews in China, this study explored the major component of tourist experience. Four themes were identified: personal conditions, arrangement, destination attributes, and personal satisfaction. A model of tourist experience was developed to delineate the interrelationships among the four constructs.

Keywords

Tourist, experience, China

Introduction

Tourism is part of experience economy and the experience plays an increasingly important role in economic and social life in the age of postmodernity (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). The study of tourist experience has seen a fair amount of action since the 1970s and this resulted in the constant growth of the literature on the topic during the last three decades. A wide range of topics have been covered including the typology of tourist experience (Cohen, 1976), and authenticity (Hughes, 1995; Li, 2000; MacCannell, 1973; Moscardo & Pearce, 1986; Wang, 1999). Different approaches were adopted including phenomenology (Cohen, 1976; (Li, 2000), and postmodernism (MacCannell, 1973; Quan & Wang, 2004; Wang, 1999). Despite the amount of inquiries into this topic, empirical studies were only conducted by a handful of researchers and many of them used data collected from a particular destination. For example, Prentice, Witt, and Hamer (1998) examined the tourist experience in a heritage park. Some researchers attempted to build a solid model of tourism experience. For instance, Morgan and Xu adjusted a model from Kapferer's (1998) and showed a relatively comprehensive model to illustrate key facets in tourism experience. Also, a model of tourism experience transition model built by Li (2000) to illustrate the different stages of tourism experience process. However, both of the two models are not sufficient to demonstrate the interrelationship of the tourism experience.

Contributing enormously to the body of knowledge of experience, existing literature was not able to provide a holistic and objective understanding by avoiding the influence from different types of attractions and destination. The current study was therefore designed to address this gap. More specifically, the study aims to achieve two research objectives: identify the major component of tourist experience, and to delineate the interrelationship among them.

Research Method

On each page, your material (not including the header and footer) should fit within a rectangle of 18 x 23.5 cm (7 x 9.25 in.), centered on a US letter page, beginning 1.9 cm (.75 in.) from the top of the page. Please adhere to the US letter size only (hopefully Word or other word processors can help you with it). If you cannot do so, please contact the Program Review Chair for assistance. All final publications will be formatted and displayed in US letter size. Right margins should be justified, not ragged. Beware, especially when using this template on a Macintosh, Word may change these dimensions in unexpected ways.

For the purpose of this study, the use of in-depth interview was deemed as the most appropriate methodology. To build a positive rapport and encourage participation, the interviews were conducted in a congenial environment. The interviews were conducted by experienced researchers based on a pre-prepared research agenda that was distributed to the participants before the interviews. The participants were informed of the purpose of the study and were assured of confidentiality. The interviews were conducted in Chinese. A total of 12 interviews were conducted before reaching information saturation. Each interview took approximately 30 minutes. Summaries of the interviews were transcribed from digital sound records.

The analysis and interpretation of the transcripts were based on the grounded theory approach, which "uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived grounded theory about a phenomenon" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). These procedures included the concurrent collection and analysis of data, the enhancement of theoretical sensitivity, three phases of coding, and the constant comparison of data chunks and emerging interpretations. The data were analyzed by two researchers separately to ensure the validity and reliability. Results of the analysis were categorized into four themes: personal condition, arrangement, destination attributes, and personal satisfaction.

Tourist Experience

Personal condition

Seven respondents mentioned their accompanies should be involved in their travel experience. Most of these interviewees prefer to travel with their friends or someone who could play and talk well with them. None of the interviewee mentioned they would like to go with their parents or relatives.

Sufficient time is an important factor to achieve the dream experience and make it possible for a relaxing style travel under a loose schedule. For interviewee 4, destination and accompany were not important, but she wish to have unlimited time to allow her enjoy the holiday in a relaxing way. Interviewee 5 said a week is good enough for a holiday.

Although most of the interviewees did not mention sufficient money to travel, there is still a respondent (interviewee 10) said that if he had plenty of money, he would not worry about how to solve his personal "financial crisis" for the next month. Thus, he could put down the financial burden and truly relax and enjoy the trip.

Seven respondents indicated that preparation is really important, especially for preparing the general routines and gathering local information. For general routine, most of the people who mentioned the importance of preparation feel that having some fundamental information about attractions is needed; at least they need to know where they are willing to go.

Local information helps tourists to familiarize with the local situation and to gain more deeply understanding on the destination. A college girl (interviewee 12) who liked in-depth travel is willing to know all the relevant information she could find. Apart from preparing tourism information, a female with young kid (interviewee 1) also needed to have a well mental and physical preparation before she go to travel.

Arrangement

Arrangement is not fix but flexible for the interviewees. They could re-arrange their routine for many reasons, such as having a new decision after discussing with their accompanies or getting new information about a more attractive place from the media, local people or other travelers.

Six of the interviewees prefer independent travel rather than traveling with tour. However, one of them also said independent travel does not mean traveling by oneself. It is better to travel with friends. The reason is that they pursue a relaxing and leisure way to travel and to have enough time to explore local culture. Rather than watching the attraction superficially with tour, some of them like to deeply experience local environment (including culture, custom etc.). For example, a 23-college-female (interviewee 12) said:

When I have enough time to travel, I would like to deeply feeling and understand at a deeper level on the destination. When I recalled the experience, there is still an authentic and deep impressive feeling. I think this is my dream experience.

Interviewees have different opinions about whether their leisure travel should be included in their business travel. Interviewee 12 pointed that every year she had many opportunities for business travel, she felt good if she could take advantage of business travel and stay longer in that destination for a leisure travel. However, interviewee11 had an opposite opinion. She did not like to travel for a purpose, because that would make her feel stressful and would not allow her to have a real relaxing feeling. She preferred to travel at leisure and could explore something.

Destination attributes

Destination attributes are used for measuring tourist's perception of a destination. Tourists comprehensively consider most or all of the attributes when they visit a particular destination. The attributes will effect on their choice of the destination. A particular aspect of the destination could not make a preferred experience. The respondents dreamed of a destination which integrates many aspects such as scenery, culture, food, accommodation and local people at their desired level.

Although interviewee 4 thought that the attraction is not important, eight interviewees want to go to a destination with distinctive scenery. Among the different type of attractions, most of people prefer nature scenery. The nature scenery like Maldives would make people feel relaxed.

Accommodation and food are essential in travel experience. Quan and Wang (2004) points out that the tourism experience as a whole includes peak experience and supporting experience such as eating and sleeping. If the supporting experiences "goes sour", the whole experience would be "more or less spoiled", even though tourists have wonderful peak experiences. The interviewees do not have many specific descriptive statements. Interviewee 3 mentioned that she would like to live in a 5 star hotel and the accommodation should not be far away from the attraction and a college male (interviewee 5) also hoped the price in the destination is not too expensive that he could eat whatever he likes at most time.

Nice and hospitable local people are also critical elements in their experience. Interviewees not only want to see the destination superficially, they would like have an in-depth travel to understand and experience the local culture and environment. They wished that in their travel experience, the local people could be hospitable at least they were not savage or cheating. Safety was also considered in their travels.

Language may become a barrier for people to travel especially when for those who prefer independent travel. However, different people have different ideas about the language problem. Three interviewees (6, 7, and 8) mentioned about language problem. However, a male interviewer 6 thinks language is a problem or barrier especially when traveling aboard in places which are quite different from his living place.

Personal satisfaction

From the interviews, people would like to achieve two kinds of spirit enjoyments - fresh feeling and relaxing - through their travel experience. A male (interviewee 6) would like to go to places which are far away from China, like Brazil. He believes that places far away from where he lives would be more different. Going to a strange place makes him feel novelty. The reason why interviewee 9 would still like to go to Xi'an even he had been there for several times is that the city will bring him different feelings every time he went there. Four interviewees point out directly that they would like to enjoy a relaxed feeling in holidays. Apart from the two major feelings, a female (interviewee 8) also likes the feeling of involvement and finding herself.

A Model of Tourist Experience

Internal associations among the four themes were identified during the interviews and data analysis. Figure 1 below show the interrelationships of the four themes identified.

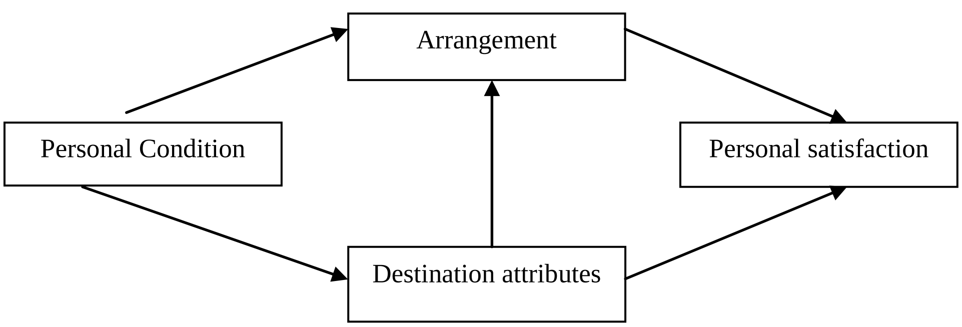

Figure 1. A Tourist Experience Model

First of all, tourists' personal conditions affect their personal satisfactions through travel arrangement. A very simple explanation is that if a tourist prepare sufficient time for her/his trip, s/he could arrange the travel not so rashly and the loose trip would easily make him feel relax.

Secondly, the tourist personal conditions may have influence on the choice of destination. For example, enough money will allow the respondents consume a better but more expensive physical attributes, such as a five star hotel. At the same time, as mentioned above, the destination attribution is an important element that tourists take into consideration when they make decision that is because high quality destination attributes have a significant influence on their personal feeling.

Thirdly, travel arrangement and destination attributes react mutually. On the one hand, arranging travel itinerary should base on the destination attributes. For instant, the selected attractions, the choice of transportation, accommodation and dining places and time spend on each attraction depend on the real attributes of destination.

These four categories constitute the tourism experience. Although the tourism experience preference and inclination degree to each category have a certain degree of differentiation, each category alone could not constitute a complete dream experience.

If one of the elements in the model of tourism experience goes sour, the whole dream tourism experience for the tourists will be spoiled.

Conclusion

Based on qualitative data collected from in-depth interviews in China, this study explored the major component of tourist experience. Four themes were identified: personal conditions, arrangement, destination attributes, and personal satisfaction. A model of tourist experience was developed to delineate the interrelationships among the four constructs. It is expected the study findings will contribute to the body of knowledge of tourist experience, and will also be of interest to the industry.

The full paper will include a thorough review of literature, more detailed description of methods, and additional findings with discussions. Research and practical implications of the study and its findings will also be presented. The full paper is complete with tables and references.

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A Mixed-Method Study of Destination Meanings and Trip Characteristics

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Abstract

Place meaning has drawn increasing research attention as the cornerstone for better understanding human-place relationship. However, little is understood about what makes the destination meaningful to tourists. Using mixed-method approach, this study fills the gap by investigating the dynamic nature of place meanings in tourist perspective, and exploring the relationships between trip characteristics and destination meanings. The qualitative data analysis revealed 13 themes of destination meanings, while the follow-up quantitative data analysis probed significant influences of trip characteristics on destination meanings. Implications to destination management organizations and tourism practitioners were discussed.

Keywords

Destination meanings, trip characteristics, mixed methods.

Customer Satisfaction and Behavioral Intentions: A Case Study of Tourists in Aruba

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Abstract

The importance of tourism in small islands are addressed in literature (Lorde, Jackman, & Francis, 2010; Jackman, Lorde, & Alleyne, 2011). The current study investigates the tourist satisfaction of a jeep and bus tour company, which is a major investment for a tourist on Aruba, a small island in the Dutch Caribbean. The results showed that tourists are generally satisfied with the tour company; however tourists, especially older respondents of 61 years or above expressed their dissatisfaction with hearing the tour guide. In addition, different attributes of satisfaction have been found to be strong indicators of tourists' behavioral intentions. Repeat tourists represent 20% of the respondents, indicating tourists' satisfaction should be taken as a high priority when developing marketing strategies.

Keywords

Aruba, customer satisfaction, tourist satisfaction, behavioral intentions.

Does When You Make a Travel Reservation Matter? Temporal Sunk Costs and Cancellation

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Abstract

Tourism products differ from ordinary retail products in terms of the spatial and temporal separation between purchase and experience. Despite its importance, temporal separation has not drawn much attention in tourism. The main objective of this study was to understand temporal sunk costs effects on potential travelers' cancellation intentions in addition to monetary sunk costs. The results of this study suggested the possibility that temporal costs can be converted into monetary costs, but the conversion relationship may not be linear. This study also indicated that travelers' cancellation intention decreased as the temporal and monetary sunk costs increased. Further, prior experience moderated the relationship when temporal sunk costs were involved.

Keywords

sunk cost effect, temporal sunk cost, monetary sunk cost, tourist behavior, tourism products

1. Introduction

Tourism products are considered unique due to various aspects, such as intangibility, separation of purchase and experience, tourists' novelty seeking behavior or considerable risk taking, and so forth (Reisinger et al., 2001). Specifically, the separation between purchasing and experiencing the product means that tourists actually consume the product at different location (i.e., spatial separation) and time (i.e., temporal separation) than the purchase. These separations have led to various studies focused on factors that affect travelers' behavioral intentions, such as pull-factor, perceived risk, perceived value, and etc. However, these factors are mainly related with spatial separation, and temporal separation had not drawn much attention like spatial separation.

When purchasing a tourism product, two different types of costs (i.e., monetary and nonmonetary) occur (Sirakaya and Woodside, 2005). Monetary costs are the price of the desired product, while nonmonetary costs refer to such things as the risk of making a bad decision or spending a long time searching for the right product. After purchasing a desired product, most travelers have to wait for the actual tourism experience, and this waiting time can be considered as another form of nonmonetary costs, the temporal cost.

Along with the notion that time can be converted to a certain monetary value (Becker, 1965), time has been known to affect consumer behavior (Arkes and Blumer, 1985). However, the importance of temporal costs has long been stressed in other research areas, such as social psychology and psychological economics. Previous studies have utilized the concept of the sunk cost effect and found that as prior investment (i.e., time, money, and effort) gets larger, the tendency to stick with the initial decision increases even if a certain level of risk exists (Arkes and Blumer, 1985). Extending the concept of sunk cost effect to tourism, the temporal costs due to the temporal separation may affect potential travelers' behavior.

Considering the unique characteristic of tourism product (i.e., temporal separation), the role of temporal costs should have been prioritized in tourism studies. Therefore, the overall goal of this study is to identify the role of temporal costs on potential travelers' behavioral intentions. Achieving this goal of this study provides important implications for academic research, in that the temporal factors should be included in tourists' decision-making process. Further, this study would provide implications for tourism product suppliers that they should consider consumers' temporal sunk costs when they impose fees for cancellation or change itinerary.

Thus, this study aims to fulfill the following research objectives: (1) to examine potential travelers' perception of whether temporal distance can be converted into monetary value, (2) to examine the effect of sunk costs (i.e., monetary and temporal) on potential travelers' intention to cancel their purchased product, and (3) to identify the moderating effect of prior experience on the relationship between sunk costs and cancellation intentions.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The cost of time

Generally, time has been considered the scarce resource (Leclerc et al., 1995). Specifically, time is the scarce for everyone because there are only 24 hours in a given day. Becker (1965) suggested that time can be converted to a certain monetary value. Oftentimes, the value of time has been considered in the combination with opportunity costs (Kahneman and Tversky, 1979; Thaler, 1985). In other words, individuals should consider the cost of time as they think of money, which can be bought and spent as well as being saved or wasted (Soster et al., 2010). Thus, it would be possible to assume that people would perceive the value of time differently according to its length.

For tourism products, overbooking is one of the most common practices for tourism suppliers such as airline companies, hotels, and travel agencies, to minimize losses (Kimes and Chase, 1998). When a plane is overbooked and all the passengers showed up unexpectedly, airline companies should look for passengers who will give up their seats voluntarily and provide them a certain amount of compensation. Following the notion that time has a certain value, temporal distance between purchase and travel can be converted into a monetary value. That value should vary according to when the potential traveler made the reservation. If potential travelers perceive the value of the time differently, travelers would ask for different amounts of compensation. Therefore, this study hypothesizes:

H_1: Potential travelers who made their reservations earlier would demand more compensation than those who made reservations later.

2.2. Sunk cost effect

The sunk cost effect is an irrational economic behavior where people are more likely continue an endeavor once an investment has been made in terms of money, effort, or time (Arkes and Blumer, 1985). More specifically, as the investment increases, consumer are more likely to stick with their initial decision regardless of their economic knowledge or preference. Theoretically, the sunk cost effect is related to cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957). Specifically, once a subject is induced to expend effort on a challenging task, the task is more highly valued. Such revaluations would presumably result in increased willingness to expend further resources on the task compared to the resources that would be voluntarily allocated by a subject who had not made a prior expenditure. Empirically, the sunk cost effect has been known to influence consumer behavior in the direction of sticking with their initial decision.

2.2.1. Temporal sunk cost and its effect

Every behavior may be defined in terms of time spent (Navarro and Fantino, 2009). In other words, a certain amount of time is necessary to conduct activities, and, thus, time can be converted into a certain value (Becker, 1965). When purchasing a tourism product, the temporal separation is almost inevitable. More specifically, from the moment of purchase the temporal costs occur and accumulate until the actual travel experience. Generally, the length of this temporal gap is longer than with an ordinary retail product. Compared to ordinary retail products tourism products require higher levels of risk taking because certain situations may inevitably arise where potential travelers have to cancel or change their purchase. More specifically, potential travelers may not perceive these temporal costs at the time of purchase, but these risky situations may evoke the feeling that they have already invested a certain amount of time after making a payment. Further, these temporal costs may accumulate (Soster et al., 2010). Thus, this study hypothesizes:

H_2: The amount of temporal sunk costs will have a negative effect on potential travelers' intentions to cancel their purchase.

2.2.2. Monetary sunk cost and its effect

The sunk cost effect has usually been studied in terms of monetary costs. For example, consumers spent $100 for a ski trip to Michigan and $50 for another ski trip to Wisconsin, they are more likely to stick with Michigan ski trip if these two events occur at the same time. This holds true even if the participants prefer the Wisconsin ski resort (Arkes and Blumer, 1985). Accordingly, Thaler (1980) suggested that prior monetary investment reinforces consumers to make them more willing to attend the activity, even in a risky situation such as blizzard. Similarly, a potential traveler pays a certain amount of money in advance for reservations. However, due to the relatively higher risk of the product, there may be a need for these potential travelers to cancel or change the product. Thus, tourism suppliers impose cancellation charges for cancellations or changes of product. This cancellation penalty can be seen as a type of sunk cost because it is not reversible once the penalty has been paid. Moreover, the rate of the penalty varies by tourism supplier. Thus, considering the cancellation penalty as a sunk cost, the amount of the penalty may suppress the intention to cancel. Therefore, this study hypothesizes:

H_3: The amount of monetary sunk costs will have negative effect on potential travelers' intentions to cancel their purchase.

2.3. Interaction between monetary and temporal sunk costs

Previous studies of sunk costs considered temporal and monetary sunk costs separately. These studies only considered situations where participants invested either time or money (Arkes and Blumer, 1985; Navarro and Fantino, 2009). However, in terms of purchasing tourism products it is nearly impossible to consider temporal and monetary costs separately. It is a sequential process that requires both temporal costs until the actual experience and certain monetary costs to acquire the product. In other words, there can be an interaction effect between temporal and monetary sunk costs. Thus, this study hypothesizes:

H_4: There is an interaction effect between monetary and temporal sunk costs on potential travelers' intentions to cancel their purchase.

2.4. Moderating effect of experience

A potential traveler chooses between two different types of destinations – a new destination or a previously visited destination. Thus, potential travelers can be classified into two categories (i.e., first-timers and re-visitors). In terms of decision-making process, purchasing a product to a novel destination requires an extended decision-making process, which utilizes an enormous amount of time and effort (Hong et al., 2009). However, when a consumer considers revisiting a destination, he or she tends to make a quicker decision with minimal effort. This is known as limited problem-solving (Moutinho, 1987). Thus, re-visitors may show a higher tendency to cancel their purchase when fewer sunk costs have been invested. Further, since they have visited the destination before, it is possible that they could easily switch their product, especially if the sunk cost is low. If the sunk costs were high, they would be less likely to go through the additional information search because they had already invested significant costs. Therefore, prior experience can have a moderating effect. Thus, this study hypothesizes:

H_5: Prior experience l moderates the relationship between temporal sunk costs and the intention to cancel the product.

H_6: Prior experience moderates the relationship between monetary sunk costs and the intention to cancel the product.

3. Methodology

This study utilized a scenario method, which has been adopted in previous studies (Arkes and Blumer, 1985; Soman, 2001). Two scenarios were developed. The first scenario was designed to identify whether participants perceive time as a cost differently according to invested time. Participants were randomly assigned to five different temporal distance points (6, 3, 2, 1, and ½ months). The second scenario was constructed to identify the effect of sunk costs on cancellation intention. Five time points (6, 3, 2, 1, and ½ months) and four monetary sunk cost situations (0%, 10%, 20%, and 30% cancellation charge) were included, and participants were randomly assigned to one of 20 different situations ($5_{\text{temporal costs}} \times 4_{\text{monetary costs}}$). Random assignment was used to control bias and unobserved variables (Shadish et al., 2002). The population for this study was general travelers, and the survey was distributed and collected by an online marketing research firm in the U.S. 700 surveys were distributed, and 640 surveys were collected. After eliminating responses with errors and missing values, 624 responses were used for further analysis.

- Suppose that you were planning to have **a leisure travel during this summer.** You had purchased an airline ticket **six months ago.** Since summer time is a high demand season, you could not get a discount. **You paid for full price (<u>$500</u>).** On the day of travel, you arrived at the airport, and tried to check in for your flight.

- When you checked in, an employee at the desk told you that **the plane was overbooked.** She said, "we are very sorry for overbooking. **If you give up your seat voluntarily, the airline would provide a ticket for the next flight (<u>after four hours</u>) and certain amount of <u>money ($) as compensation.</u>"**

- **Remember: You purchased your airline ticket ($500) six months ago.**

Figure 1. Scenario 1

- **Six months ago**
  - **Six months ago**, you and your friends were planning to have **a domestic travel** to **a destination that you wanted to visit for summer.** After reviewing several tour package products, you and your friends found **a 5-day package product to your dream destination.** The price, location, hotel, and even the view from the room were all satisfactory. Moreover, **this destination is famous for <u>its beautiful sunny weather.</u>** You and your friends purchased this tour package product, and made a full payment for this package **($1,300 per person).**

- **Today is a week (7 days) before the departure**
  - **Your long wait for this travel (six months) would be over soon.** You and your friends were supposed to leave for this travel **next week (after 7 days).** To make sure everything would be all right, you decided to **check the weather condition at the destination.** You thought it would be sunny. Contrary to your expectation, you found that **there could be 80% chance of thunderstorm.**

- **You and your friends were "frustrated"**
  - You and your friends were so frustrated that you checked other weather forecasting services. Unfortunately, the results were all the same – **unexpected thunderstorm.** Since **you only had seven days till departure,** you called the travel agency to check the **possibility of cancellation.** They said, ***"you can cancel this product, and there is <u>no cancellation fee.</u>***

Figure 2. Scenario 2

4. Results

The descriptive statistics of the random assignment was presented in Table 1, and it was identified that the samples were almost equally assigned to each situation.

			Temporal Costs					
			15 Days	1 Month	2 Months	3 Months	6 Months	Total
Scenario 1			125	117	126	127	129	624
Scenario 2	**Monetary Cost**	0%	31	31	30	33	32	157
		10%	31	32	31	31	31	156
		20%	31	32	30	32	32	157
		30%	31	30	30	31	32	154
Total			124	125	121	127	127	624

Table 1. Random assignment for scenarios

To test H_1, one-way ANOVA and Duncan post-hoc tests were used (Table 2). Only those who answered '*probably will*' or '*definitely will*' to a question asking the intention to give up seats in return for compensation were included for analysis. The results suggested that temporal distance had a significant effect on the amount of compensation. However, a post-hoc test suggested that only reservations made six months prior significantly differed from the other temporal costs. Thus, H_1 was partially supported.

	15 days	1 Months	2 Months	3 Months	6 Months
% for compensation	60.309[a]	63.677	62.857	64.054	77.169
	(27.876)[b]	(28.982)	(27.007)	(31.749)	(28.522)
	L[c]	L	L	L	H
Observation	81	68	70	74	83
F-value	4.290 (p < 0.01)				

a: Mean
b: Standard Deviation
c: Result from Duncun post-hoc test (L: low and H: high)

Table 2. Requested compensation for giving up the seat

To test H_2, H_3, and H_4 hierarchical regression was conducted (Table 3). Participants' involvement level (Zaichkowsky, 1985) and propensity toward risk (Meertens and Lion, 2008) were included as control variables. Both temporal and monetary sunk costs had a significant negative effect on cancellation intention. Thus, H_3 and H_4 were supported. However, the interaction effect was not significant, meaning that H_5 was not supported.

	β	(Std. Error)	t-value	F-value
Model I (R^2=0.047)				
Constant	3.645	(0.368)	9.905***	15.181***a
Involvement	0.129	(0.053)	2.432**	
RP	-0.188	(0.059)	-3.185***	
Model II (ΔR^2=0.012, F=7.856***)				
Constant	3.884	(0.376)	10.336***	12.851***
Involvement	0.124	(0.053)	2.346**	
Risk Propensity	-0.178	(0.059)	-3.026***	
Temporal Cost	-0.003	(0.001)	-2.803***	
Model III (ΔR =0.010, F=6.816***)				
Constant	4.181	(0.391)	10.694***	11.433***
Involvement	0.119	(0.053)	2.250**	
Risk Propensity	-0.192	(0.059)	-3.255***	
Temporal Cost	-0.003	(0.001)	-2.796***	
Monetary Cost	-0.016	(0.006)	-2.611***	
Model IV (ΔR^2=0.004, F=2.515)				
Constant	4.321	(0.400)	10.794***	9.672***
Involvement	0.125	(0.053)	2.368**	
Risk Propensity	-0.187	(0.059)	-3.18***	
Temporal Cost	-0.006	(0.002)	-2.946***	
Monetary Cost	-0.028	(0.010)	-2.857***	
Interaction (TC × MC)	0.0002	(0.0001)	1.586	

a: *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$

Table 3. Hierarchical regression analysis

To test H_5 and H_6, Moderating Regression Analysis (MRA) were conducted for each type of sunk cost (Sharma et al., 1981). The results suggested that prior experience had a significant moderating effect when the sunk cost was temporal (Figure 3). Thus, it can be concluded that the prior experience can be identified as a 'quasi' moderator.

	Temporal Sunk Cost		Monetary Sunk Cost	
	β (SE)	*t*-value	β (SE)	*t*-value
Model I	F=15.18***a, R^2=0.047		F=15.18***, R^2=0.047	
Involvement	0.129 (0.053)	2.430**	0.129 (0.053)	2.430**
Risk Propensity	-0.188 (0.059)	-3.190***	-0.188 (0.059)	-3.190***
Constant	3.645 (0.368)	9.900***	3.645 (0.368)	9.900***
Model II	F=12.85***, ΔR^2=0.012***		F=12.50***, ΔR^2=0.010***	
Involvement	0.124 (0.053)	2.350**	0.124 (0.053)	2.330**
Risk Propensity	-0.178 (0.059)	-3.030**	-0.202 (0.059)	-3.410***
Sunk Cost	-0.003 (0.001)	-2.800***	-0.016 (0.006)	-2.620***
Constant	3.884 (0.376)	10.340***	3.946 (0.384)	10.280***
Model III	F=10.32***, ΔR^2=0.004		F=9.89***, ΔR^2=0.003	
Involvement	0.118 (0.053)	2.230**	0.119 (0.053)	2.240**
Risk Propensity	-0.180 (0.059)	-3.060***	-0.203 (0.059)	-3.440***
Sunk Cost	-0.003 (0.001)	-2.850***	-0.015 (0.006)	-2.550**
Experience	0.219 (0.135)	1.620	0.192 (0.135)	1.420
Constant	3.821 (0.377)	10.120	3.879 (0.386)	10.040***
Model IV	F=9.20***, ΔR^2=0.007***		F=3.408, 8.63***, ΔR^2=0.005***	
Involvement	0.117 (0.053)	2.220**	0.120 (0.053)	2.260
Risk Propensity	-0.179 (0.059)	-3.040***	-0.208 (0.059)	-3.530***
Sunk Cost	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.680	-0.006 (0.008)	-0.710
Experience	0.587 (0.220)	2.670***	0.524 (0.225)	2.330**
Interaction Term	-0.005 (0.002)	-2.120**	-0.022 (0.012)	-1.850
Constant	3.656 (0.384)	9.520***	3.740 (0.393)	9.520***

a: *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$

Table 4. Moderated regression analysis by type of sunk cost

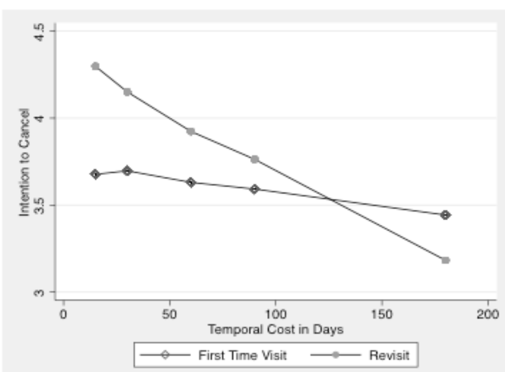

Figure 3. Moderating effect of prior experience

5. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to identify the role of temporal sunk cost on potential travelers' behavioral intentions. First, the results suggested that those who made a reservation earlier might not always require a higher amount of compensation. Specifically, there was no difference in compensation when the temporal costs were low, but participants requested higher amounts of compensation when the reservation was made too early (i.e., 6 months ago). Second, participants' sunk costs negatively affected cancellation intentions, but no significant interaction effect was found, meaning that temporal and monetary sunk costs influenced cancellation intentions independently. Third, prior experience moderated the relationship only when sunk costs were temporal. Specifically, when the temporal cost was low (i.e., less than 4 months), first time visitors showed lower cancellation intentions than re-visitors did. However, when the temporal costs were high, re-visitors showed lower intentions to cancel. This suggests that re-visitors' early reservations may represent their high desire to revisit the destination after satisfactory experiences.

The uniqueness of this study lies in including temporal costs in tourists' behavioral intentions. Further, this study provides important implications for tourism product suppliers. Tourism suppliers charge their customers for cancellation or changes in itinerary. However, the results showed that potential travelers' temporal sunk costs should be considered. Specifically, if a potential traveler makes a reservation very early, his/her cancellation intentions tend to be low, even if weather conditions in the destination are bad. Regardless of the fact that assessing a penalty can reduce the chance of cancellation, potential travelers' temporal costs also reduce their cancellation intentions. Especially for re-visitors who made early reservations, imposing too high of a penalty may induce negative feelings toward the tourism supplier.

Even though this study introduced a new research direction by considering temporal sunk costs in tourists' behavioral intentions, limitations also exist. The time points included in this study could not cover temporal points beyond six months. Thus, future studies should include more temporal points and other potential moderators to identify the role of temporal costs on travelers' behavioral intentions.

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A Study on the Factors Affecting the Use of Mobile Travel Guide Systems During Travel

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Abstract

With the growing popularity of smart phones, mobile travel guide systems have been gradually accepted and used by global travelers. Many people are making use of this new technology to plan their itineraries while travelling, in order to improve the efficiency of their decision-making. This study conducted a questionnaire survey on self-guided tourists from around the world, and retrieved 608 valid questionnaires. The results revealed that the user benefit, cost of use, and presence all affect the consumers' perceived value of mobile travel guide systems, and further affect their intention to use these products. The findings of this study can serve as reference for tourism industry operators, the developers of mobile travel guide systems, and relevant researchers.

Keywords

Mobile travel guide system, User benefit, Cost of use, Perceived value, Intention to use.

Introduction

Mobile travel guide systems (MTGS) are platforms integrating a cellular phone device with a geographic information system and community features, which can be used to assist travelers with their itinerary planning while travelling. Tsai (2010) used the technology acceptance model to investigate the factors affecting travelers' use of mobile travel guide systems, and found that the perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and entertainment will all affect the intention to use the products. However, Tsai's definition of MTGS does not include community features. Armstrong & Hagel (1998) further included business elements in a virtual social community, and suggested that a virtual social community is a place where a group of people with the same interests will share their knowledge. This study suggests that the concept of social community has been integrated into current mobile travel guide systems, and that the mutual aid among community members and their comments on tourist attractions can assist travelers in their travel plans.

Research Hypotheses

Intention to use mobile travel guide system

Numerous studies have been aimed at assessing the factors affecting the intention to use a product (Dasgupta, Granger, & Mcgarry, 2002; Hsu & Lin, 2008). Three items were used to assess the intension to use: a) the perception on how contributions are going to evolve (variable INTENT1); b) the individual's intention to increase his/her participation in MTGS (INTENT2); and c) the intention of recommending the use to family and friends (INTENT3). The studies on consumer behavior through perceived value have been widely accepted (Heskett, Sasser, & Schlesinger, 1997). Therefore, travelers' perceived value should have a positive effect on intention to use. Hypothesis 1 is proposed as follows:

H1: There is a positive relationship between the perceived benefits of using MTGS and the intention of using them in organizing and taking a trip.

Benefits of using mobile media while traveling

The first benefit is the functional benefit, which refers to the acquisition of useful information that can assist travelers in decision-making and planning. This study used the following items to assess the functional benefit (Wang and Fesenmaier, 2004): a) do the tools enable the traveler to keep up to date with knowledge about tourist sites and activities of interest

(BFUNC1); b) do the tools allow for collaborative activity on the Internet to organize trips, in order to help participants save expenses and obtain more from the resources invested (BFUNC2); and c) do the he tools provide mutual functional benefits to the participants, since the users of MTGS provide and receive information (BFUNC3).

The second benefit is the social benefit, which is relevant to the contact with other members, which includes establishing relationships as well as exchanging opinions, ideas, and information between travelers. This study used the following items to assess the social benefit (Wang and Fesenmaier, 2004): a) whether the tools could enable travelers to keep in contact with others who share the same interests regarding vacation trips (BSOC1); b) whether the tools could help create personal relationships with people that have similar motivations on their trips (BSOC2); and c) whether the tools could provide a strong feeling of belonging to a group (BSOC3).

The third benefit is the hedonic benefit. A number of studies have pointed out that travelers can use new technology in itinerary planning to create joy during travelling (Wang and Fesenmaier, 2004). This study used the following items to assess the hedonic benefit (Patterson & Smith, 2001): a) whether the use of social media is both pleasing and fun (BHED1); and b) whether the individuals who participate in collaborative environments by expressing opinions and sharing tourist experiences feel proud of doing so (BHED2).

Based on the results of the above literature review, this study found that the functional benefit, the social benefit and the hedonic benefit are the main causes promoting the use of new technology. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: There is a positive relationship between the perceived benefits of using MTGS and the intention of using them in organizing and taking a trip.

Cost of using mobile media during traveling

The first cost is the cost of effort, which includes both time costs and monetary costs (Merono-Cerdán, 2005). This study used the following items to assess the cost of effort (Patterson & Smith, 2001): a) the personal effort and time needed to find trip-related information of interest by means of MTGS (CEFF1); b) the monetary costs of the equipment and services required to collaborate on the Internet (CEFF2); and c) the difficulty in finding the time needed to monitor relevant Internet sites when organizing and taking a trip (CEFF3).

The second potential cost is the difficulty to use the tool. This study mainly used the following items to assess the difficulty of use: a) the difficulty of accessing travel websites caused by complex or bothersome processes (such as registration), which could make the visitor abandon the process (CDIFF1); and b) the difficulty of finding where to read or contribute comments and experiences, due to the large number of websites and pages (CDIFF2).

The third potential cost is the cost of privacy loss. The results showed that the loss of privacy as a result of using such media is the main concern. Many users are unwilling to share excessive amounts of personal information, and thus, their intention to use these systems is reduced. This study used the following items to assess the cost of privacy loss: a) the risk of privacy loss due to using an MTGS on the Internet (CPRIV1); b) the users' hesitation to post opinions or comments on forums due to being unsure that they want their comments to be seen by others (CPRIV2); and c) the personal feelings about the public exposure that comes from giving opinions on the Internet (CPRIV3).

Because the above three costs will all have a negative effect on the intention to use MTGS, this paper proposes the following hypothesis:

H3: There is a negative relationship between the perceived cost of using MTGS and the intention to use MTGS.

Cost of using mobile media during traveling

Presence

This study assessed presence based on the three aspects proposed by Lee (2004). In addition, an exploratory scale based on the definitions was developed in order to obtain the users' scores regarding presence. The items used to assess physical presence were designed as follows: a) the mobile travel guide system is identical to the real tourist environment. I feel like that I am in a general tourist environment when using the MTGS.The items used to assess social presence were designed as follows: a) I feel that I can interact with many friends through the social community mechanism of the MTGS system. I think that the interaction in the MTGS system is similar to my interpersonal interactions in real life.The items used to assess self-presence were designed as follows: a) I act in the MTGS system the same as that in real life; and b) the decision-making information provided by the MTGS system is usually consistent with my opinion.It has been shown that presence can improve the perceived value or the intention to use a product. Therefore, this paper proposes the following hypothesis:

H4: There is a positive relationship between the perceived presence of MTGS and the intention to use MTGS.

Empirical Analysis and Results

Data Collection

MTGS social community websites, and general social community websites. A total of 320 valid English questionnaires were collected, as well as a total of 288 valid Chinese questionnaires.

Individual item reliability and Composite reliability

An index was used to assess the factor loading of the measurement variables to the potential variables. As shown in Table 1, the factor loading of all of the individual items was larger than 0.5, complying with the recommended value. The CR value of the potential variables was composed of the reliability of all the measurement variables. Fornell and Larcker (1981) recommended a CR value larger than 0.6. The larger the CR value of the potential variables is, the higher the possibility that the measurement variable can measure the potential variables will be. As shown in Table 1, the CR value of the variables in the model was larger than the standard value of 0.6.

Potential variable	Individual item reliability		Composite reliability
	Measurement variable	Factor loading	
ξ1: User benefit	X1: Functional benefit	0.712	0.90
	X2: Social benefit	0.846	
	X3: Hedonic benefit	0.811	
ξ2: Cost of use	X3: Cost of effort	0.832	0.85
	X4: Cost of difficulty in use	0.820	
	X6: Cost of privacy loss	0.825	
ξ3: Presence	X7: Physical presence	0.802	0.76
	X8: Social presence	0.785	
	X9: Self-presence	0.844	
η1: Perceived value	Y1: Functional value	0.812	0.88
	Y2: Sentimental value	0.823	
	Y3: Social value	0.805	
η2: Intention to use	Y4: Intention to share	0.902	0.83
	Y5: Intention to use	0.811	
	Y6: Intention to recommend	0.892	

Table 1. Properties of the first order constructs

Average Variance Extracted

The test of discriminant validity of the research variables is shown in Table 2.The AVE for all of the variables was larger than the correlation value between the variables. Therefore, the discriminant validity of the research variables was acceptable.

Construct	User benefit	Cost of use	Presence	Perceived value	Intention to use
User benefit	0.80				
Cost of use	0.43	0.75			
Presence	0.49	0.48	0.71		
Perceived value	0.28	0.29	0.40	0.69	
Intention to use	0.30	0.25	0.38	0.54	0.72

Table 2. Correlation among factors of the measurement model

Overall model fit

The standard LISREL value of the overall model fit is generally an χ^2/df value greater than 5. The model fit of this study was $\chi 2/24=1.98<5$; therefore, the theoretical model of this study fit the observed income data. Other indices for assessing the fitness of a model, such as the goodness-of-fit index (GFI) and the adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), could represent the explained variance and covariance of the theoretical model. In general, a GFI value larger than 0.9 is suggestive of a good model fit. However, some scholars have suggested that a GFI value larger than 0.8 is acceptable. As for the AGFI value, in general, an AGFI value larger than 0.9 is suggestive of a good model fit.

As shown in Table 3, the other fitness indices of the research model were larger than the recommended standard value. The GFI value was 0.95, the AGFI value was 0.94, the NFI value was 0.93, the NNFI value was 0.93, the CFI value was 0.91, the IFI value was 0.91, and the PGFI value was 0.57 (larger than the standard value of 0.50). Therefore, the overall model fit of the research model was good.

Overall fitness index	Assessment item	Standard	Actual value	Overall fitness index	Assessment item	Standard	Actual value
Absolute Goodness-of Fit Index	X^2	The smaller the better	46.33	Relative Goodness-of Fit Index	NFI	>0.8	0.93
	χ^2/df		1.98		NNFI	>0.8	0.93
	NCP	The smaller the better	35.32		CFI	>0.8	0.91
	GFI		0.95		IFI	>0.8	0.91
	AGFI		0.94	Parsimonious Goodness-of Fit Index	PGFI	>0.5	0.57

Table 3. Model fit of the research model

Table 4 shows the direct effect, indirect effect, and total effect among the potential variables. The empirical results were discussed as follows. The user benefit had a direct effect on the perceived value but did not have an indirect effect on it. Both the direct effect and total effect were 0.726. The direct effect of the user benefit on the intention to use was 0.645, and the indirect effect was 0.799. The user benefit had a stronger effect on the intention to use through the perceived value. The total effect was 1.444.The cost of use had a direct effect on the perceived value but did not have an indirect effect on it. Both the direct effect and the total effect were -0.884, suggesting that there was a negative correlation between them.The direct effect of the cost of use on the intention to use was -0.784and the indirect effect was -0.973. The user benefit had a stronger effect on the intention to use through the perceived value. The total effect was -1.757.Presence had a direct effect on the perceived value but did not have an indirect effect on it. Both the direct effect and the total effect were 0.622.The direct effect of presence on the intention to use was 0.587 and the indirect effect was 0.684. Presence had a stronger effect on the intention to use through the perceived value. The total effect was 1.271.The perceived value had a direct effect on the intention to use, but did not have an indirect effect on it. Both the direct effect and the total effect were 1.101.

Correlation among variables		Direct effect	Indirect effect	Total effect
Potential independent variables (ξ) to potential dependent variables (η)	User benefit (ξ1)-> perceived value (η1)	0.726	0.000	0.726
	User benefit (ξ1)-> intention to use (η2)	0.645	0.799 (0.726*1.101)	1.444
	Cost of use (ξ2)-> perceived value (η1)	-0.884	0.000	0.884

	Cost of use (ξ2)-> intention to use (η2)	-0.784	-0.973 (-0.884*1.101)	1.757
	Presence (ξ3)-> perceived value (η1)	0.622	0.000	0.622
	Presence (ξ3)-> intention to use (η2)	0.587	0.684 (0.622*1.101)	1.271
Potential dependent variables (η) to potential dependent variables (η)	Perceived value (η1)->intention to use (η2)	1.101	0.000	1.101

Table 4. Direct effect, indirect effect and total effect among the potential variables

Conclusion And Suggestions

According to the research results, the perceived value has an effect on the users' intention to use MTGS. The consumers' intention to use these systems would be triggered if they perceived that the new technology could create value for them. This study summarized previous studies and proposed that the three factors of the user benefit, the cost of use and presence would affect the perceived value of MTGS. The user benefit includes the functional benefit, the social benefit and the hedonic benefit. Therefore, the MTGS design should enable travelers to obtain useful information, assist them in decision-making and planning, connect them with social communities, help them to share and exchange information with other social community members, and attach importance to items to bring joy to travelers. In terms of the cost of use, in addition to reducing the purchase cost, the operation of the interface should be simple and intuitive. As a result, usage testing should be frequently performed. Moreover, it is necessary to pay attention to privacy. Although consumers hope to share their personal travel information with friends, they do not intent to allow the functions concerning privacy to be abused. As for presence, physical presence can be improved through technologies such as GPS positioning, virtual reality or augmented reality. The social presence can be improved through the integration of MTGS with social community tools. As for self-presence, MTGS aims to improve the travelers' personal experience of use. The accuracy of itinerary planning can be improved through data mining techniques.

This study investigated the factors affecting the use of MTGS. Past studies on the use and acceptance of new systems have focused on many different aspects, such as the technology acceptance model. Future studies can explore this topic from different theoretical perspectives, in order to enhance the completeness of relevant studies.

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Exploring Cross-Cultural Understanding as an Outcome of Volunteer Tourism Programs: A mixed Methods Approach

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Abstract

This study examines residents' perceptions and support for cross-cultural understanding through volunteer tourism in small island communities of The Bahamas. Cross-cultural understanding can be a result of volunteer tourism activities; however, lack of proper program development may lead to friction between locals and tourists. Social exchange theory is used a theoretical foundation for this study to show the degree to which benefits, impacts and support for volunteer tourism affect the support for cross-cultural understanding as a result of volunteer tourism.

Keywords

Volunteer Tourism, Social Exchange Theory, Cross-cultural Understanding

Introduction

For the Islands of The Bahamas, the tourism industry is the main economic driver employing approximately 50% of the work force and accounting for nearly half the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Bahamas, 2010). The majority of tourism development found on the main island of New Providence is geared toward mass tourism projects. On the other hand, due to a lack of infrastructure and resources, the "Family Islands" have had little to no success with mass tourism projects with several failed ventures. These islands face challenges with sustainability, as well as negative social, cultural and environmental impacts characteristic of mass tourism (Gursoy, Jurowski & Uysal 2002). Due to the unique nature of the Family Island product, alternative forms of tourism may be one way to move toward sustainable tourism. Alternative tourism is characterized as any touristic development that caters to a small amount of people and operates with social, environmental and community values in mind (Gursoy, Chi & Dyer, 2010). One such approach for alternative tourism development in the Family Islands is that of volunteer tourism which has garnered a steady increase in attention from academia as well as practitioners (Tomazos & Butler, 2009).

Literature Review

According to Wearing, (2001, pp. 1), volunteer tourism is defined as travel involving "those individuals who, for various reasons, volunteer in an organized way to undertake holidays that might include aiding or alleviating the material poverty of some groups in society, the restoration of certain environments or research into aspects of society or environment." In an industry survey of over 300 volunteer tourism organizations worldwide, there were 1.6 million travelers who participate in volunteer tourism yearly with a value between $1.7 and $2.6 billion (Tourism Research & Marketing, 2008). Researchers perceive that volunteer tourism is capable of providing more sustainable benefits for both tourists and host communities (Wearing, 2001; Brown & Morrison, 2003; Lepp, 2008; McIntosh & Zahra, 2007; McGehee & Santos, 2005) however, optimism towards this 'volunteer-abroad' idea has received criticism when considering impacts on the host community.

The potential exists for "a neglect of locals' desires, a hindering of work progress and the completion of unsatisfactory work, a decrease in employment opportunities and a promotion of dependency, a reinforcement of conceptualizations of the 'other' and rationalizations of poverty, and an instigation of cultural changes" (Guttentag, 2009, pp. 537). These potential negative outcomes raise the need for community involvement. Therefore, of key importance to the success of volunteer tourism endeavors is the nature of the relationship between the resident and the tourist. To assume that sending volunteers abroad will automatically result in host community acceptance and cross-cultural understanding would be detrimental (Raymond & Hall, 2008) though this form of tourist-resident exchange has a greater propensity to promote cross-cultural understanding (Brown & Morrison, 200; Raymond & Hall, 2008).

Using social exchange theory as the underlying tenet to their study on resident perceptions of volunteer tourism, McGehee and Andereck (2009) argued that perceived benefits and positive impacts will result in higher support for volunteer tourism ventures whereas a lack of perceived positive impacts and benefits will likewise result in a lack of support. Thus it is reasonable to also extend this relationship to a support for cross-cultural understanding. Social exchange theory has been defined as “a general sociological theory concerned with understanding the exchange of resources between individuals and groups in an interaction situation” (Ap, 1992, pp.668). The theory provides researchers with a framework to examine the position an individual may take depending on the rewarding action from others (Wang & Pfister, 2008). These rewards or benefits are considered the outcome of the motives to participate in a volunteer experience (MacNeela, 2008) thereby asserting that motives are a precursor to benefits. According to Pearce (2003), motives are a key factor leading to involvement, whereas benefits refer to what is achieved through involvement. Thus, as an antecedent, motives are goal oriented objectives the participant wishes to pursue while the benefits are the achievements obtained from the experience (Piliavin 2005).

While a number of studies have examined motivating factors of volunteer tourists, few have examined the perceptions of the host community (Brumbaugh, 2010; Gursoy et al., 2010; Ooi & Laing, 2010; Sin, 2009) as it relates to their support for cross-cultural understanding. This research study is aimed at addressing these deficiencies in the literature. Through the measurement of resident motives, perceived benefits, impacts and willingness to support these ventures, practitioners can ensure the sustainability of volunteer tourism projects (Gursoy et al., 2010; Musa, Hall & Higham, 2004). Additionally, this research study will advance the current body of literature by extending McGehee and Andereck’s (2009) study to also investigate motivations and the support for cross-cultural understanding examined in the earlier works of Brown & Morrison (2003) and Raymond and Hall (2008).

Research Questions

To guide this mixed-methods study, the following research questions and hypotheses were developed for the qualitative and quantitative exploration:

1. What motivates residents in host communities to participate in volunteer tourism?
2. What variables contribute to the support for volunteer tourism activities? For this research question, the following hypothesis is posited for quantitative analysis:

   H1: Perceived personal benefits, negative impacts and perceived positive impacts will contribute to the support for volunteer tourism activities. Thus:

   $$\textbf{Support} = \textbf{a} + \beta_1\ \textbf{Benefits} + \beta_2\ \textbf{Positive} + \beta_3\ \textbf{Negative} + \textbf{e} \quad \textbf{(1)}$$

3. What variables contribute to the support of cross-cultural understanding created through volunteer tourism? To address this research question, the following hypothesis is posited for quantitative analysis:

   H2: Perceived personal benefits, negative impacts, positive impacts and support for volunteer tourism activities will contribute to the support for cross-cultural understanding through volunteer tourism activities. Thus:

   $$\textbf{Culture} = \textbf{a} + \beta_1\ \textbf{Benefits} + \beta_2\ \textbf{Positive} + \beta_3\ \textbf{Negative} + \beta_4\ \textbf{Support} + \textbf{e} \quad \textbf{(2)}$$

Qualitative Study

Qualitative research techniques such as interviews, focus groups, observation, online forums and case studies have been used generously by a number of researchers investigating volunteer tourism (Anderson & Shaw, 1999; Broad, 2003; Gray & Campbell, 2007; Heuman, 2004; McGehee & Santos, 2005; Raymond & Hall, 2008; Simpson, 2004; Sin, 2009; Tamazos & Butler, 2012). To understand the perceptions of Bahamian residents toward community volunteer tourism projects, face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted with eighteen residents on three Family Islands, namely, Exuma (population of 7,314), Andros (population of 7,386) and Eleuthera (population of 7,826). These locations were selected based on their population count, past and current tourism developments and proximity to the main island of New Providence. The qualitative phase sought to explore new perceptions on the study variables as well as to confirm those based on the literature. The results of this phase along with current literature were used in the development of an online and paper-based quantitative survey that was piloted before conducting the main study.

Word Stat 6.1, a self-organizing a text analysis program, was used to analyze the frequency of keywords and phrases along with charts and diagrams to show the inter-relationships among words. From the analysis of the qualitative interviews, six main themes (see Table 1) were derived based on the questions posed during the interviews. The themes were: “Community”, “Empowerment”, “Sustainability”, “Dependency”, “Local Involvement” and “Communication”. Themes derived from the interviews were consistent with previous research and used in the quantitative survey development process (Brumbaugh 2010; Guttentag 2009; McGehee & Andereck 2009; Wearing, 2001). Due to the limited scope of this study, the qualitative results were not able to be fully reported.

QUANTITATIVE STUDY

Using interview results as well as previous literature (Gursoy et al., 2010; McGehee & Andereck, 2009), a 41-item survey with 6 demographic questions and 35 5-point likert scale items (from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) examining the study variables was developed and administered as a pilot study to 86 Bahamian residents. The pilot study, with 75 useable responses, was designed to evaluate the clarity, content, and reliability of the survey instrument as well as to explore the underlying dimensionality of the data through exploratory principal components analysis (PCA) which reduced the scale to 30 items. Using SPSS v. 19, the results of the PCA yielded six components with a KMO of .705, total variance explained of 64% and an overall Cronbach’s Alpha score of 0.734. The final survey for the main study consisted of 37 questions divided into seven sections. Section one included seven demographic questions while sections 2-7 examined variables relating to the motivations for volunteering, the benefits of volunteer tourism activities, the positive and negative impacts resulting from volunteer tourism activities, the support for volunteer tourism activities and the support for cross-cultural understanding through volunteer tourism activities.

Participants in both studies were recruited using the snowball sampling technique. Initial contacts were made through the local branch for The Bahamas Ministry of Tourism on each island to aid in distributing the survey. Both online and paper based surveys were used. A total of 220 surveys were collected, (210 paper based surveys and 10 online) with 218 usable surveys.

Interview Question	Themes	Keywords	Key Phrases	Example of Resident Response	Resident Support (%)
What do you think would motivate you to participate in a volunteer tourism program?	Community -Young People -Free	Islands Bahamian Community Young Locals	Younger People	"One again, volunteer tourism can be another tool for education as far as making more people aware of the tourism industry while still volunteering. I think this would be great for the young people to get involved, they can learn about Bahamian tourism and meet new people"-Respondent # 10	77%
What sort of benefits do you see coming from a volunteer tourism program in your community?	Empowerment -Education	People Education Work Development Build Jobs	Younger People	"If you're teaching locals new skills so that they themselves can carry on and help you with further training, that's totally different and I think it's very important to do it that way. In this way, volunteer tourism is a tool of empowerment and not dependency. If we come in and we do it together, it's a different approach."-Respondent # 17	88%
What are some of the positive impacts you see as a result of volunteer tourism?	Sustainability -Job Creation (skills) -Repeat Tourists	Tourism Program Tourists Education Small Sustainable Skills Alternative Business	Family Islands Grand Bahama	"I think volunteer tourism has the ability to bring repeat tourists-tourists who are educated about the community. This is what we need in the family islands, we need to move more towards sustainable forms of tourism." -Respondent # 2	100%
Are there any negative impacts or concerns you would have with a volunteer tourism program?	Dependency	People	None	"I saw a situation in the community on more than one occasion, where a church group came in, took an old building, cleaned it up, made it beautiful, brought in computers, set up computer centers to teach the kids and when it was done, they left. Six months later, there were weeds were growing out of the doors. I think before it (volunteer tourism) can work, Bahamians have to learn how to go back to being self-dependent. Programs like volunteer tourism can encourage this culture of dependency." -Respondent # 8	17%
What do you think would encourage locals to support volunteer tourism programs?	Community Involvement -Information -Local Government Support	Locals Family Involved Government	Ministry of Tourism Central Government	"I think it's in their best interest to contact a local leader to be a part of the program because people are receptive to a more familiar face. Whether that's a leader in the church, or in the community it just needs to be somebody that people already know and trust." -Respondent # 2	94%
What are you perceptions on cultural exchange (as a result of volunteer tourism)?	Communication -Education -Local Involvement	Culture Learn Music Exchange	Bahamian Culture Bahamian Music Cultural Exchange	"That's where I think it would be important to have a local contact…because, like I said there are differences, cultural barriers,so a person from the island would know all of these things and would be able to direct you as to how to maneuver or how you would need to deal with this, or if there's something that is a really strong belief, you should always respect somebody's belief. That's where a local person would be vitally important because you wouldn't want to disrespect somebody's belief or their culture."-Respondent # 1	83%

Table 1 Results of Qualitative Interview

RESULTS OF THE MAIN STUDY

Participants in the main study resided on the Island of Exuma (45%), Eleuthera (26%) and Grand Bahama (28%). Most participants were between the ages 30-39 (33%), female (46%) and had at least a high school diploma (48%). Table 2 shows a summary of the descriptive statistics.

Demographics	Levels	Frequency	Percent (%)
Island of Residence	Eleuthera	57	26.5
	Exuma	97	45.1
	Grand Bahama	61	28.4
Gender	Male	101	46.3
	Female	117	53.7
Volunteer Experience	Yes	155	71.1
	No	63	28.9
Volunteer Travel Experience	Yes	65	29.8
	No	153	70.2
Employment Status	Tourism	90	41.3
	Non Tourism	124	56.9
Education Level	Less than High School	18	8.3
	High School	105	48.2
	Bachelor's Degree	82	37.6
	Master's degree or above	13	6.0
Age	19-29	55	25.3
	30-39	72	33.2
	40-49	48	22.1
	50-59	32	17.7
	60 and up	10	4.6

Table 2 Demographics of Bahamian Family Island Residents

Data from the main study were deemed to be normally distributed with no skewness (< 3), kurtosis (< 10) or multicolinearity (< .850) violations (Kline, 2005). An initial confirmatory PCA conducted in SPSS v. 19 on the 30-item scale used the a priori assumptions based on Figure 1. These results revealed five offending items that were subsequently removed due to cross-loadings on multiple factors, poor commonality statistics (below .400) and low factor loadings (below .400). With six components (see Table 3), the resulting analysis yielded a KMO statistic of .769, was significant at the .001 level with a Chi-Square value of .000, explained 59.7% of the variance and had an overall reliability score of .837.

Component	Label	Mean	Factor Loading	Reliability (Alpha)
Component 1	**Negative Impacts** *(7 items)*	**2.247**		**.851**
Negative_1	Neglect the needs of my community	2.358	.643	
Negative_2	Result in more noise and pollution	2.248	.719	
Negative_3	Exploit local residents	2.284	.753	
Negative_4	Result in vandalism in the community	2.195	.768	
Negative_5	Burden a community's resources	2.170	.759	
Negative_6	Make my community dependent on outside help	2.248	.714	
Negative_7	Lead to friction between locals and volunteers	2.227	.617	
Component 2	**Motivations** *(4 items)*	**3.897**		**.798**
Motive_2	Interact with foreigners	3.741	.724	
Motive_3	Be challenged	3.939	.808	
Motive_4	Become more involved in volunteer activities with other local people	3.949	.786	
Motive_5	Learn about others cultures belief systems	3.958	.598	
Component 3	**Positive Impacts** *(4 items)*	**3.846**		**.728**
Positive_1	Help create jobs in my community	3.847	.726	
Positive_2	Improve the local economy	3.745	.839	
Positive_3	Empower Bahamians through acquiring new skills	3.977	.657	
Positive_4	Develop facilities that residents can also use	3.814	.618	
Component 4	**Benefits** *(4 items)*	**3.850**		**.737**
Benefit_1	Personally benefit me	3.815	.647	
Benefit_2	Allow me to learn new skills	3.855	.782	
Benefit_3	Empower myself and my community	3.861	.739	
Benefit_4	Increase educational opportunities for the community	3.871	.495	
Component 5	**Cross-Cultural Understanding** *(3 items)*	**3.701**		**.742**
Culture_1	Volunteer tourism activities are likely to result in more cultural exchange between tourists and residents	3.819	.780	
Culture_2	Volunteer tourism activities are likely to result in increased cultural understanding between tourists and residents	3.586	.738	
Culture_3	Volunteer tourism activities are likely to create a positive impact on the cultural identity of a community	3.698	.772	
Component 6	**Volunteer Tourism Support** *(3 items)*	**3.918**		**.641**
Support_3	My community's government should do more to promote volunteer tourism activities	3.931	.715	
Support_4	I would be more likely to support volunteer tourism programs if a local Bahamian leader is involved	3.898	.731	
Support_5	I favor developing programs that will attract volunteer tourists	3.926	.547	

Table 3 Final Principal Components Analysis Solutions

The group means were computed for the dependent variables "Culture" and "Support" as well as the independent variables. Mean scores and standard deviations for these variables are presented in Table 4. Regression models are presented in Table 5.

Variable	Mean	Std Deviation
Culture	3.701	0.667
Motivations	3.897	0.626
Benefits	3.850	0.577
Positive	3.846	0.569
Negative	2.247	0.605
Support	3.918	0.527

Table 4 Descriptive Statistics

Regression Analysis of the relationship between variables						
Model	Analysis of Variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square		*f*
1	Regression	5.541	2	2.77		10.885
	Residual	54.721	215	0.255		
	Variable	β	Std. Error	t	Sig.	
	(Constant)	0.253	0.293	8.735	0	
	Positive	0.211	0.062	3.14	0.002	
	Benefits	0.172	0.061	2.566	0.011	
2	Regression	14.02	2	7.010		18.28
	Residual	82.448	215	0.383		
	Variable	β	Std. Error	t	Sig.	
	(Constant)	0.355	0.382	3.832	0.000	
	Support	0.323	0.082	4.992	0.000	
	Benefits	0.143	0.075	2.205	0.029	

Table 5 Multiple Regression Analysis

To test hypotheses one and two, multiple regression analysis using the stepwise method was conducted. Model one tested H1 where "Support" was regressed on "Benefits", "Positive "and "Negative." H1 was partially supported as only "Positive" (β=0.211) and "Benefit" (β=0.172) were found to have a significant influence on "Support" with a residual value of 54.721, an R^2 0.092 and an F statistic of 10.885. This suggests that 9% of "Support" can be explained by residents' perceived personal benefits and perceptions of positive impacts from volunteer tourism. H2 was tested and partially supported with Model 2 where Benefits", "Positive", "Negative" and "Support" were regressed on "Culture." The results showed a significant model with a residual value of 82.448, with an R^2 of 0.145 and an F statistic of 18.280. Therefore, 14% of "Culture" can be explained by residents' perceived personal benefits of volunteer tourism and residents support for volunteer tourism. Below are the final predictive regression equations for these models.

H1: Support = .253 + .172 Benefits +.211 Positive + e (3)

H2: Culture = .355 + .143 Benefits + .323 Support + e (4)

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate residents' perceptions of volunteer tourism with a specific focus on cross-cultural understanding thereby extending the previous work of McGehee and Andreck (2009). Study findings indicate that, in general, residents' motives toward participating in volunteer tourism activities were favorable with an overall mean score of 3.897. This finding is supported from by Brumbaugh (2010) and Wearing (2001). The number one motivation among residents was "I want to participate in volunteer tourism programs to learn about others cultures belief systems" ($\bar{x}$=3.958).

As mentioned earlier, the social exchange theory was the theoretical foundation for this study and was the basis for research questions two and three explored qualitatively and their respective hypotheses one and two that were tested using multiple regression. Model one was found to be in support of the social exchange theory as perceived personal benefits and perceived positive impacts were found to be significant predictors of support for volunteer tourism activities. Model two from this study is also consistent with the social exchange theory where support was found for the relationship between perceived personal benefits and support for volunteer tourism activities and their influence on the support for cross-cultural understanding. This model also suggests that will lead to support for cross-cultural understanding. However, perceived positive impacts was only found to be a significant predictor in model one and perceived negative impacts was not found to be significant in either model. Due to the connection between "Benefits" and "Support" with "Culture" a possible explanation for this lack of significance of positive and negative impacts may be that these variables play a mediating role in the relationship perceived personal benefits and support cross-cultural understanding.

FUTURE RESEARCH AND LIMITATIONS

There is potential for future examination of the social exchange theory to further studies in the volunteer tourism research stream. However, this current study has only examined one side of this relationship; that is, from the perspective of the residents. Future research should include a full examination of the volunteer-host community relationship examining behaviors and attitudes using SET as a theoretical base. In addition, factors affecting cross-cultural understanding through volunteer tourism could be explored using the model proposed in Figure 1 below where the presence of mediation is likely. Volunteer tourism is a multi-dimensional area of research with much more growth to be expected in the academic community as well as the industry at large.

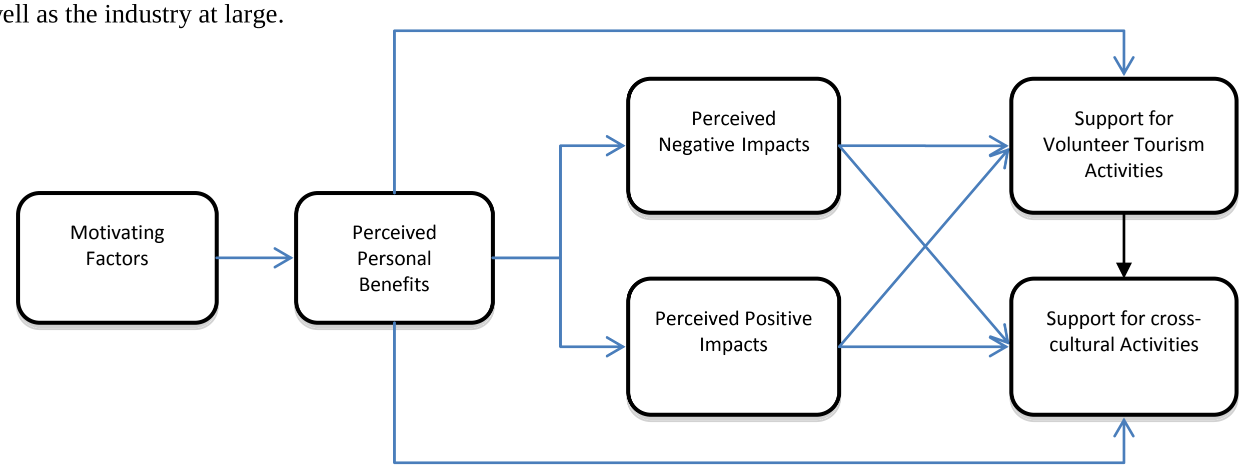

Figure 1. Research Model Depicting The Relationship Among Study Variables McGhee and Anderek's (2009)

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Perception of a Country as a Tourist Destination: Empirical Quantitative Analysis of Destination Image of the Country.

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Abstract

The purpose of this exploratory study is to investigate the perceptions of Americans of Japan as a country and a tourist destination. A self-administered questionnaire consisting of 61 questions was given to 231 tourists. Nine factors, representing 63.5% of the explained variance were extracted from the original 27 variables. Multiple regression analysis indicated that for Japan as a desirable tourism destination, the most important significant factor was labeled "Country Image" and "Culture and Nature". Logistic regression revealed that country comfort and entertainment are important factors to U.S. tourists who have not traveled to Japan.

Keywords

U.S. tourists, quantitative analysis, destination image.

Introduction

Due to an increased competition among tourist destinations in the last several decades, destination marketing managers and industry practitioners have become concerned about a destination's image (DI) in the minds of tourists (Wang & Pizam, 2011). From a demand side, tourists have access to more information about destinations, and in recent years, have become extremely concerned about the importance of value of a destination. From a supply side, practitioners have become concerned about product development and upkeep of their product in order to remain competitive. Not only is it important for destinations managers to understand the image of their own country, but it is also imperative that they understand the DI as compared to its competitors (Shani et al., 2010) To be successfully promoted, "a destination must be favorably differentiated from its competition, or positively positioned, in the minds of the consumers" (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003, p. 37). The objectives of this study are: (1) to examine which underlying dimensions, if any, used by U.S. tourists to evaluate Japan as a country and a tourist destination; (2) to explore which underlying dimensions of perceptions, if any, of U.S. tourists to Japan have the greatest effect on likelihood to visit; (3) to examine underlying dimensions of perceptions, if any, of U.S. tourists have of Japan that can Japan to predict and explain similarities and differences of those who have and of those who have not visited Japan.

Literature Review

Although destination image (DI) is an important construct that has been studied extensively since the 1970s (Hunt, 1975; Crompton, 1979; Crompton & Durah, 1985; Gartner & Hunt, 1988) a definition of DI is not clear (Pike, 2008). Consumer behavior theory suggests that consumers will make choices about a product based on the images that they hold of a product (Leisen, 2001; Gartner,1989; Runyon, 1977). In this regard, a traveler will make choices about a potential tourist destination based on the various images of that destination that have been constructed over time from the traveler's mind.

Gallarza et al (2002) suggests four main characteristics of DI. First DI is complex in that it is generally challenging to describe and does not have an agreeable definition. Second, DI has multiple definitions and features that represent its identity from a variety of stakeholders. Third, DI is relativistic, in that the definition is extremely hard to be concise as everyone has a different interpretation. Finally, DI is dynamic and tends to change over time. Therefore, tourism destination should be innovative and constantly seek new sources of comparative advantages (Kresic & Prebezac, 2011). Several studies reveal that: destination image is part of the total impression of a tourism destination (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991); it provides an effective response to a tourism destination (Bigne, Sanchez, & Sanchez, 2001); and it has an influence on preferences or visitation intentions to a given tourism destination (Boo & Busser, 2006; Milman & Pizam, 1995). To be successful on the international tourism market, destinations should ensure that their overall level of attractiveness is at least equal, or higher, than the attractiveness level of its competitors (Kresic & Prebezac, 2011; Stechkova & Mills, 2010). A study by Lew (1987) indicates, image is the most important aspect of a tourism attraction from a marketing point of view. It also has a major impact on the cognitive experience of an attraction.

Methodology

A self-administered questionnaire was developed in English and consisted of 61 questions in three sections: images of Japan as a country, attributes of traveling to Japan, factors of traveling to Japan. Additionaly, demographic and travel behavior questions were included. Respondents were asked to rate each question of the images Japan as a country on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (highly likely) to 5 (highly unlikely). Respondents were asked to rate each question of attributes and factors of traveling to Japan on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree).

In order to complete data analysis techniques, SPSS (version 17) was used. Data collected from the survey were analyzed using factor analysis, multiple regression analysis, and logistic regression analysis. The 27 attributes in relation to tourists' perception of Japan as a country and a tourist destination were factor-analyzed to determine the underlying dimensions of visitation to Japan. Exploratory component factor analysis was used to "define the underlying structure among the variables in the analysis" (Hair et al., 2010, p. 94). Additionally, regression analysis was then applied to determine the likelihood that U.S. tourists would visit Japan as a travel destination.

Results

Demographic and behavioral intentions

Table 1 states the demographic profile of those who were asked to complete the survey (n = 299). From the respondents, a majority (62.1%) was male and 37.9% was female. The respondents were predominately white (66.2%); followed by Hispanic (17.8%); Asian (9.8%); and African American (4.9%). Collectively, the respondents were highly educated as 170 (58.0%) had a Bachelor's degree. Together, 242 (82.2%) of the group had a Bachelor's degree or a Graduate degree (Master's or Doctorate). The high levels of education may explain the group's household annual income. Almost half of the respondents (47.1%) had a household annual income of over $75,000. In fact, 9.7% of those surveyed stated they had a household annual income of over $150,000. The respondents tended to be in the Generation Y cohort, 55.6% of the group stated they were between 18 – 29 years old. This may also explain their family status as 63.5% of the group was single without children. Finally, 59.3% of the respondents were working full time.

Table 2 displays the behavioral intentions of the respondents. The group appears to travel internationally frequently as 84.8% stated they traveled abroad in the last 10 years. Almost half of the respondents (48.1%) state they speak another foreign language other than English. Approximately three-quarters of the group have never traveled to Japan (76.2%) or Asia (76.1%).

Identification of factors

In order to identify the underlying dimensions used by U.S. tourists to evaluate Japan as a country and a tourist destination, exploratory factor analysis was selected as the statistical tool.

From the VARIMAX rotated factor matrix, 9 factors, representing 63.5% of the explained variance were extracted from the original 27 variables. The VARIMAX process produced a clear factor structure with relatively higher loadings on the appropriate factors.

Factor 1. Country image. This factor contains six items and explains 16.203% of the variance in the data with an eigenvalue of 5.509.

Factor 2. Home country comfort. Loaded with five factors and accounting for 29.836% of the variance, this factor has an eigenvalue of 4.635.

Factor 3. Culture and nature. With four items, this factor accounts for 37.683% of the variance and an eigenvalue of 2.668.

Factor 4. Safety and comfort. With an eigenvalue of 1.953, this factor explains 43.428% of the variance. This factor consists of four factors that primarily deal with a tourist's level of safety and comfort while travel.

Factor 5. Travel expenses. This factor consists of traits that have to deal with the perception of travel expenses to Japan compared to other destinations. This factor explains 48.394% of the variance and has an eigenvalue of 1.689.

Factor 6. Pop culture. This factor deals with components that tourists consider part of popular culture. Four factors loaded into this factor and explain 52.763% of the variance with an eigenvalue of 1.485.

Factor 7. Entertainment. Consisting of three items, this factor explains 56.531% of the variance and has an eigenvalue of 1.281. Items that loaded on this factor comprise of elements of entertainment. These factors include the "availability of entertainment," "availability of nightlife," and "friendly and hospitable hosts."

Factor 8. Japan vs. Korea and China. Two items loaded onto the 8th factor, which explains 60.108% of the variance and has an eigenvalue of 1.216.

Factor 9. Uniqueness of Japan. Finally, two items were loaded onto the last factor, with this factor in the model 63.528 % of variance was explained, and this factor has an eigenvalue 1.163.

Relative importance of factors of likelihood to visit

In order to answer the second research questions, multiple regression analysis was selected to determine the dimensions of perceptions of U.S. tourists of Japan that have the greatest effect on likelihood to visit. The 9 factors were entered into regression analysis to determine their level of importance in contributing to the likelihood of U.S. tourists visiting Japan in the next 12 months. Sample size (n = 231) was deemed sufficient in accordance to the recommendation of Hair et al (2011) that the minimum ratio of observations to variables is preferred to be at least 20:1. Additionally, in accordance with the Hair et al (2011), assumptions of multiple regression analysis were deemed acceptable.

In this analysis, likelihood of visitation to Japan was used as the dependent variable, which allowed us to explain the relationship between the dependent (likelihood to visit) and the independent variables (the 9 factors previously stated). The regression analysis reveals the relative impact that the independent variables have on U.S. tourists' likelihood of visiting Japan in the next 12 months. The results of the regression analysis are listed in Table 4 and Table 5 and state the significance of the results with the associated beta coefficients, which are used to explain the importance of the 9 factors in contributing to the variance in likelihood of visitation to Japan.

Regression analysis

Multivariate regression analysis (Table 4 and 5) indicated that for Japan as a desirable tourism destination, the most important significant factor was labeled "Country image" ($p < .001$), which included variables such as "When you hear "Japan", what is the image that comes to your mind?" Questions selected for this factor were high technology, advanced science, longevity, modern literature, unique movies, and modern products. The second significant factor was labeled "Culture and Nature" ($p<.001$). The third significant factor labeled was "Pop-culture" ($p=.05$) and included questions from category "Which of the following factors are important to you when you visit Japan?" These significant factors point out that if Japan is to be marketed as tourism destination to U.S. tourists, it would be important to emphasize Japanese country image, historical values a beautiful nature of Japan, and modern marvels and fashions of Japan.

The last significant factor which is negatively related with the dependent variable "Japan as desirable tourism destination" was labeled as "Home Country comfort". The negative relationship means that if people think that availability of English language and western food is important to them, Japan is not a desirable destination. This carries an effect that if Japan is to be marketed to this category of people, it is very important to add into a marketing campaign that Western food and English language (signs and communication) is available and the language barrier is not that challenging. People who are not familiar with Japanese language will not feel alienated. The regression model explained 68% of variation in the model. Overall, the model was significant with F-value 35.104, df= 4 and 298, and p-value >.001.

Logistic regression

In order to find the underlying dimensions of perceptions of U.S. tourists of Japan to predict and explain a binary two-group categorical variable of those who have visited Japan and those who have not visited Japan, logistic regression was utilized. For logistic regression (Table 6) in this analysis, we used a binary dependent variable 1 = Traveled to Japan and 0 = Have not traveled to Japan. Home Country Comfort ($p<.05$) and Entertainment ($p<.05$) factors are negatively related with the depended variable and we can conclude that country comfort and entertainment are important to the U.S. tourist who has not traveled to Japan. People who traveled to Japan found that factor "Country Image" ($p < .05$) to be important; this factor included variables such as "When you hear "Japan", what is the image that comes to your mind?" Statistically significant dependent variables in this analysis were Older Americans ($p<.001$), people who frequently travel outside of USA ($p<.05$), and those who studied Japanese ($p<.05$) and are positively correlated with the dependent variable of those who have traveled to Japan (1) and those who have not traveled to Japan (0).The Hosmer and Lemeshov test (Table 7) was not significant meaning that model has a very good fit.

Conclusion And Limitations

DI is a complex, multi-dimensional, relativistic, and dynamic construct (Gallara, et al, 2002). Destination managers are interested in understanding DI of potential tourists in order to make modifications of integrated marketing communication plans, branding decisions, and product development in order to reach their ideal target market.

There are several limitations of this study that should serve as a basis for future research in the area of DI. First, this study was limited to tourists who were departing a city in the southeastern part of the U.S. Future studies should employ a study with U.S. tourists from a variety of U.S. regions in order to account for any regional differences

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Table 1

Demographic Profile of Respondents

	Frequency	**Percentage**
Gender		
Male	185	62.1%
Female	113	37.9%
Race		
African American	14	4.9%
Hispanic	51	17.8%
Native American	1	0.3%
White	190	66.2%
Pacific Islander	3	1.0%
Asian	28	9.8%
Education		
Secondary/High School	6	2.0%
Associate	45	15.4%
Bachelor	170	58.0%
Master	51	17.4%
Doctorate	21	7.2%
Household Annual Income		
Under $10,000	37	12.8%
$10,000 - $14,999	18	6.2%

$15,000 - $24,999	24	8.3%
$25,000 - $34,999	33	11.4%
$35,000 - $49,999	41	14.2%
$50,000 - $74,999	47	16.3%
$75,000 - $99,999	34	11.8%
$100,000 - $149,999	27	9.3%
Over $150,000	28	9.7%
Age Group		
18 - 20	56	19.0%
21 - 29	114	38.6%
30 - 39	31	10.5%
40 - 49	48	16.3%
50 - 59	33	11.2%
60 - 69	10	3.4%
70 or more	3	1.0%
Family Status		
Single without children	186	63.5%
Married without children	34	11.6%
Single with children	13	4.4%
Married with children	60	20.5%
Employment		
Full-time	176	59.3%
Part-time	78	26.3%
Looking for a job	39	13.1%
Retired	4	1.3%

Table 2

Behavioral Intentions

	Frequency	**Percentage**
Frequency International Travel Last 10 Years		
Did not travel	45	15.3%
1-3 times	122	41.4%
4-6 times	58	19.7%
7-9 times	23	7.8%
More than 10 times	42	14.2%

Foreign Citizen	5	1.7%
Foreign Language other than English		
Yes	140	48.1%
No	151	51.9%
Travel to Japan		
Did not travel	227	76.2%
1-3 times	41	13.8%
4-6 times	4	1.3%
7-9 times	2	0.7%
More than 10 times	5	1.7%
Lived in Japan for more than 1 year	19	6.4%
Travel to Asia (other than Japan)		
Did not travel	226	76.1%
1-3 times	44	14.8%
4-6 times	9	3.0%
7-9 times	1	0.3%
More than 10 times	10	3.4%
Lived in Asia for more than 1 year	7	2.4%
Study Japanese (Nihongo)		
Yes	226	75.8%
No	72	24.2%

Table 3

Factor analysis results

Factor	**Factor Loading**	**Cumulative Variance Explained**
Factor 1. Country Image		16.203
High technology	0.677	
Advanced science	0.765	
Longevity (long life)	0.694	
Modern literature	0.629	
Unique movies	0.577	
Modern products	0.73	
Factor 2. Home Country Comfort		29.836
Language barriers in Japan	0.634	
Restaurants with Western foods	0.626	

Availability of English signs	0.771	
Able to communicate in English	0.749	
Understand historical events in English	0.574	
Factor 3. Culture and Nature		37.68
Traditional Cultures	0.775	
UNESCO World Heritage Sites	0.652	
Old Culture	0.507	
Natural Beauty and Landscape	0.787	
Factor 4. Safety & Comfort		43.42
Level of personal safety and comfort	0.705	
Cleanliness of cities and public spaces	0.853	
Accommodations with modern amenities	0.612	
Reliable transportation networks	0.849	
Factor 5. Travel Expense		48.39
Expensive airfare to Japan	0.761	
Expensive transportation costs in Japan	0.843	
Expensive hotel prices in Japan	0.801	
Factor 6. Pop Culture		52.76
Local food	0.582	
Large metropolitan cities	0.758	
Modern design	0.639	
Contemporary fashion trends	0.57	
Factor 7. Entertainment		56.53
Availability of entertainment	0.694	
Availability of nightlife	0.726	
Friendly and hospitable hosts	0.697	
Factor 8. Japan vs. Korea/China		60.1
Japan is similar to Korea/China culture	0.795	
Japan is similar to Korea/China amenities	0.822	
Factor 9. Uniqueness of Japan		63.52
Unique Food	0.819	
Old culture	0.575	

Table 4

ANOVA Results

ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	140.416	4	35.104	63.344	.000[b]
	Residual	162.928	294	.554		
	Total	303.344	298			

Table 5

Coefficients

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	3.946	.043		91.654	.000
	Country Image	.508	.043	.503	11.758	.000
	Home Country comfort	-.290	.043	-.288	-6.733	.000
	Culture and Nature	.367	.044	.354	8.273	.000
	Pop-culture	.085	.043	.084	1.967	.050

a. Dependent Variable: Japan as Desirable Destination

Table 6

Logistic Regression Results

Model	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Country Image	.570	.225	6.396	1	.011	1.768
Home Country Comfort	-.483	.206	5.469	1	.019	.617
Entertainment	-.507	.193	6.892	1	.009	.602
Age	.562	.141	15.801	1	.000	1.754
Studied Japanese	1.494	.443	11.373	1	.001	4.455

Traveled Asia or Japan	.436	.183	5.701	1	.017	1.547
Travel outside of USA	.379	.145	6.878	1	.009	1.461
Constant	-5.446	.666	66.916	1	.000	.004

Table 7

Hosmer and Lemeshow Test

Hosmer and Lemeshow Test

Step	Chi-square	df	Sig.
1	7.783	8	.455

Motivation of Chinese Tourists: A Means-End Approach

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Abstract

Deriving from motivation theories, Confucian dimensions, and findings of 79 in-depth personal interviews, the study theorized a motivation model of Chinese tourists. The model integrated seven major components: inner/outer cultivation, societal context, the Way/the ways, the gap, and travel motivation and presented a view of the important motivational factors of Chinese tourists. Key proposals are: motivation of Chinese tourists arises from the gaps between the Way (the ideal end-state) and the ways (the actual state); As a new lifestyle enabled by the current societal context in China, travel is sought as a means to bridge the perceived gaps in self, family, social life, society, and nature.

Keywords

Travel motivation, Chinese tourists, Culture.

Cultural and Sub-cultural Impact on Guests' Experience and Their Hotel Switching Behavior with Budget Hotels

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Abstract

This study attempted to understand the role that cultural and sub-cultural norms and values play in influencing budget hotel guests' experience and their hotel switching behavior, in the context of China, taking Home Inns as the study case. The study tried to advance this understanding through analyzing online comments posted on the hotel website and a major hotel booking website – Ctrip. Content analysis of the comments, with the help of NVivo 9, was processed. The study found that the four biggest concerns of Home Inns' customers were guest rooms, hotel location, staff service, and price and value for money. The study also identified that Home Inns' customers perceptions were influenced by Chinese traditional cultural values such as a harmonious relationship, face, and the life style of Chinese middle class.

Keywords

culture, sub-culture, experience, switching behavior, budget hotel

A Review of China's Outbound Tourism: Past, Present and Directions for Future Research

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Abstract

As one of the emerging markets, much research attention has been paid to the Chinese tourists. This study reviewed literature on China's outbound tourism, included a summary of research patterns and characteristics and suggested directions for future research. This study found that the majority of the research on Chinese outbound tourism employed quantitative methodologies, was based on single destinations and focused on the themes of tourists' characteristics, preferences, expectations and evaluations. The authors agreed that Chinese tourists cannot be seen as a homogenous group. Yet, additional cultural and psychological factors should be considered and coped with demographic and socio-economic factors to better understand Chinese outbound travelers. In addition, extended research should be conducted in top and newly added ADS destinations.

Keywords

China's outbound tourism, Chinese outbound tourists, tourism research.

The Effects of Employee Empowerment on Service Recovery Actions: Service Failure according to Predisposition to Complain

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Abstract

Given the vital role of employee empowerment and personality traits related to complaints in developing service recovery strategies, this study examines the effects of various service recovery actions and the differences in customer responses to service recovery actions according to personality traits related to complaints. The scenario-based test under 8 conditions was conducted with a repeated ANOVA. The results of this study show that there are significant differences in the effects of different service recovery actions, and in responses to service recovery actions according to tendency to complain. The research findings are anticipated to contribute to the development of service recovery strategies in the restaurant industry.

Keywords

Service failure, service recovery, employee empowerment, predisposition to complain

Leisure Satisfaction, Job Satisfaction, and Subjective Well-Being: Moderating Effects of Leisure Preference and Work Preference

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Abstract

According to preference theory, people's utility from leisure and work is leveraged by leisure and work preference. Previous studies also found that leisure and job satisfaction are two main antecedents of subjective well-being (SWB). Thus, by combining preference theory and resource conservation theory, this study proposed a new model to examine the moderate effects of preferences. 14 hotels participated in this study and 261 useable responses were received with the ratio of useable return as 87%. Results of this study revealed that leisure and job satisfaction are positively related to SWB. Besides, high work preference strengthens the positive relationship between job satisfaction and SWB. Nevertheless, leisure preference doesn't moderate the positive relationship between leisure satisfaction and SWB.

Keywords

Leisure satisfaction, job satisfaction, subjective well-being, leisure preference, work preference.

A Ten Year Overview of Hotel Revenue Management Research And Emerging Key Patterns

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Abstract

The hotel industry adapted revenue management from airline yield management as an essential way to maximize revenue for over twenty years. This article offers a comprehensive review of 73 articles that were published in 36 hospitality research journals from 2002 to 2012. Tabulating the findings into three key descriptive categories of strategic RM, tactical RM, and evolution of RM, this study sheds light on the progression of RM practices and related research in the hotel industry. The findings indicate that RM is increasingly becoming critical for competitiveness of operations while RM process is being shifted from a tactical to strategic approach. Also, the review of studies indicate that RM as a process will be more technology-driven and become more customer-centric.

Keywords

Revenue management, overview, hotel industry.

The Qualitative Analysis of Pricing Strategies in Beverage Operations

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Abstract

This study explored different pricing strategies used in beverage operations. The demand based pricing strategies are the core of revenue management. They are based on variable pricing that fluctuate according to the level of the demand. The effect of pricing strategies on perceived fairness was examined for regular and one-time customers. The investigation was divided into two segments: (a) an introduction to beverage operations and revenue management and the importance of price fairness and rate fences in the context of demand based pricing, and (b) qualitative triangulation methodology based on the interviews with managers and focus groups with beverage operation customers. The results from the study indicate that regular customers have different perception of pricing strategies compared to one-time customers.

Keywords

Beverage Operations, Revenue Management, Perceived Price Fairness, Qualitative Triangulation

Corporate Social Responsibility in Hospitality and Tourism: A Meta-methodological Analysis

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Abstract

The purpose of this review was to examine extant literature pertaining to the theory of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and how it is being studied in the domain of hospitality and tourism. A meta- methodological analysis was used to assess sixteen journal articles in this area of study by examining the four components of this approach. They are the objective component which comprises the definition of the method used; normative component which refers to the theoretical foundation of the study; empirical component which supports the methodology; and the illustrative component which expresses the methodological point. The result of the analysis showed that the majority of articles have conformed to these guidelines. This study can be a guide to future research.

Keywords

Corporate social responsibility, meta-methodology, objective component, normative component, empirical component, illustrative component.

How General Managers' Commitment Impacts Environmental Proactivity in Hotels: A Resource-Based Perspective.

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Abstract

This study explores how GMs promote environmental responsiveness of their organizations from a resource-based perspective. Using survey data of 167 hotels affiliated with two U.S lodging associations, this study examines the link between GMs' personal commitment to environmental sustainability and organizations' environmental management, focusing on the mediating role of environmental management capabilities. The results show that GMs' commitment to environmental sustainability is positively related to development of environmental management capabilities, which partially mediate the effect of GMs' commitment on hotels' involvement in green programs.

Keywords

Environmental management, top management commitment, environmental management capabilities

The Joint Effect of the Asset-Light & Fee-Oriented Strategy and the Business Cycle

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Abstract

We examine the asymmetric impacts of the ALFO strategy in dissimilar economic situations using a beta in the four-factor model. In the contraction period, firms earning fee-based income have a substantially lower beta than firms with no-fee income, confirming the hypothesized risk-reduction effect. However, in the expansion, the difference between firms earning fees and no fee is not obvious. Instead, only firms with high-fee income level have significantly lower beta during economic troughs and significantly higher beta during economic peaks. This suggests that only firms with high level of fee income, which leverage on established expertise in management/franchising business, may reap the fruits of economic prosperity while avoiding more negative shocks during economic downturns. The different implications of the strategy would provide the management with insights for developing risk management strategies according to the economic cycle.

Keywords

hotel management, franchising, business cycle, asset management, four-factor model

Introduction

In recent years, many hotel chains in the U.S. have shifted their position from an owner and developer of properties to a management service provider with lighter assets on the balance sheet. In most cases, fee business takes a form of either management contract or franchising. From 2002 to 2010, the industry-wide fee-income ratio, which is the ratio of the sum of fee-based income against the sum of sales revenue, has increased from 7.5% to 13.3%. In the meantime the hotel firms constantly reduced their fixed assets in half from $ 2.3 billion to $1.1 billion (Sohn, Tang and Jang, 2012).

Then what drives this migration? The main goal of the ALFO strategy lies in reducing risk. Fee income is less volatile than income earned from owning a property, suggesting that fee income brings stability to the bottom line (Roh, 2002). In addition, by whittling down properties, hotel firms not only reduce their operating leverage but also obtain additional liquidity. Such protection effect would reduce the dependence of hotel returns on the external economy during the contraction period. However, when the economy is strong, the scenario may be unfolded in a different way. Core competences in management/franchising business, such as established distribution channel and brand equity, are hard to imitated but easy to be replicated across properties. Hence, from the resource-based view it is predicted that fee-business oriented firms would grow quickly with limited capital during the expansion period, rendering themselves more responsive to economic prosperity.

Based on the observations, this study is aimed at investigating the dynamics of the ALFO strategy contingent on economic conditions. Given a close tie of the hotel industry to the economy (Wheaton and Rossoff, 1998), the importance of factoring the business cycle into the framework of the ALFO strategy cannot be overemphasized. We expect this study to deepen the management's understanding of the strategy by introducing them to mixed effects of the strategy in economic ups and downs. Additionally, the different implications of the strategy would provide the management with meaningful insights for developing risk management strategies according to the economic cycle.

Hypothesis Development

Implications of the Asset-Light & Fee-Oriented Strategy in Different Economic Conditions

The focus of the ALFO strategy is primarily on reducing risk. As fee income is mostly linked to sales revenue rather than operating income generated by managed/franchised properties, fee income bears less volatility than receipts that would have been earned otherwise and thereby provides a cushion to the bottom line when the economy goes sour (Roh, 2002). In addition, by turning over the property ownership to a third party, firms engaged in fee-generating business (hereafter fee firms) can further decrease risk attached to it (Mintel, 2007). Firms that heavily invest in fixed assets would not be able to easily adjust themselves to changing economic conditions since a large portion of their capital is already locked in illiquid assets. In contrast, firms that own smaller fixed assets relatively have more flexibility in managing their assets and so likely have more rooms to accommodate adverse economic shocks, reducing their market exposure (Tuzel, 2010). Additionally, proceeds obtained from property disposition may bestow financial slack upon fee firms. Capital freed up by disposing properties can be used to reduce debt leverage or internally retained to capture unexpected profitable investment opportunities (Hovakimian and Titman, 2006). During the bad times firms with more financial slack would be less prone to financial difficulties, lowering their beta. Therefore we can reasonably assume that in poor economy fee firms would have a lower market beta than the counterparts.

H1: In periods of contraction, fee firms have a lower beta than no-fee firms.

Next let us examine the impact of the ALFO strategy on beta when the economy is strong and treats the hotel industry favorably with increasing average daily rate and occupancy rate. According to the resource-based view literature, firms that leverage on common core competences (Rumelt, 1982) or share resources across businesses (Chatterjee and Wernerfelt, 1991) outperform other firms. By drawing on core expertise in management/franchising business, such as personnel, reservation system, and brand value, all of which are easy to be replicated across hotels but hard to be copied by followers, fee firms are likely to grow more efficiently than no-fee firms. In addition, the management/franchising business does not require huge capital investment to build or purchase properties, and thereby enables the firms to grow fast. Fast growth is regarded as one of beta determinants (Kim, Gu, and Mattila, 2002). Moreover, as the global economy gains in strength, most big hotel chains aggressively have penetrated into oversees market (Mintel, 2011). For instance, Starwood Hotels and Resorts is the largest operator of high-end hotels in China and was planning to open a hotel in every two weeks in 2011 (Mintel, 2011). In addition, fee-income structure alike option payoffs is another element increasing their exposure to the economic upswing. Fee income is normally comprised of base fee and incentive (or royalty) fee (HVS, 2011). Base fee protects the downside risk and incentive/royalty fee allows the firms to enjoy upside potential as well. For these reasons, we can expect that fee firms would be more responsive to economic recovery than no-fee firms.

H2: In periods of expansion, fee firms have a higher beta than no-fee firms.

If the ALFO strategy brings about differing implications, then the effect will stand out in the firms that are more deeply engaged in management/franchising businesses than the firms that are on the beginning stage of the business. That is, high-fee firms will have a lower beta in economic downturns but a higher beta in upturns than low-fee firms.

H3: The effect of the ALFO strategy is proportional to the extent that the strategy is implemented.

METHODOLOGY

Model and Variables

We measured the effectiveness of the ALFO strategy in terms of beta from the capital asset pricing model (CAPM). Why beta? One of the main goals of the ALFO strategy lies in mitigating risk by loosening the correlation of corporate financial performance and the economy, and the measure that quantifies the covariant relationship is beta (β). In this study, we referenced the market beta in the four-factor model (FFM), which incorporates three more factors into the CAPM. Following equation is the basic form of the FFM.

$$E(R_{i,t}) = R_{f,t} + \beta_{1,i}MKT_t + \beta_{2,i}SMB_t + \beta_{3,i}HML_t + \beta_{4,i}MOM_t$$

$$E(R_{i,t}){:}\,expected\ return\ of\ asset\ i\ at\ time\ t,\ R_f{:}\,risk{-}free\ rate$$

MKT is the excess market return, SMB is the excess return of small caps over big caps, HML is the excess return of value stock over growth stock (Fama and French, 1993) and MOM (Jegadeesh and Titman, 1993) is the excess return of high prior return stock over low prior return stock. Those three factors are to control for certain kinds of anomalies observed in the stock market. As a single measure of the ALFO strategy, we adopt a fee-income ratio, which is the sum of management and franchise fee income over total sales revenue.

Most accounting data were obtained from the Compustat database based on the Standard Industrial Classification code. We used data of firms under the SIC code 7011(Hotels and Motels). Daily stock prices were retrieved from the Center for Research in Security Prices and dataset of excess market return and three factors from Kenneth French's website. Regarding economic conditions, we referred the business cycle dates published by the National Bureau of Economic Research. The management and franchising fee income was manually collected from 10-K reports filed with the Securities and Exchange Committee. Data collection period covered 2002 through 2011. Firm data with no stock price, revenue or fee income (in case of fee firms) were removed.

Results And Discussion

Descriptive Analysis

Table 1 summarizes the average firm size and stock returns of the ALFO and no-fee income firms. We use logarithmic transformation of yearly sales revenue to proxy for size and multiplied daily returns by 252 to convert into yearly returns. Consistent with general knowledge, fee firms tend to be larger firms that are able to leverage on established brand value and accumulated expertise in management/franchising business. The size difference between fee and no-fee firms was significant as well (t = -4.70, p-value<.0001). However, as to the average excess returns, two groups are not statistically different from each other in any case.

	Size	Average excess return		
		Expansion	Contraction	Total
No-fee firms	5.197	0.164	-0.303	0.062
Fee firms	6.482	0.220	-0.407	0.097

Table 1. Descriptive summary

Regression Analysis

We tested the hypotheses using the CAPM and the FFM, and the results were qualitatively the same. To conserve space, we only reported the FFM outcomes in Table 2. Panel A compares the coefficients of non-fee and fee firms and shows that in overall the market risk exposures of two groups are not statistically different at α=.05. (t-value = -0.90). In periods of contraction, however, we can see that no-fee firms' beta jumped to 1.25 (t-value = 17.57), whereas fee firms' beta is as low as 0.91 (t-value=20.27). The difference between two groups (-0.337) is significant at α=.01 (t-value=-4.00), which rejects **H1**. By contrast, in periods of expansion the market beta of the ALFO group is larger but not in a statistical sense at α=.05 (t-value=1.87): **H2** is not rejected. The regression results for low- and high-fee firms are represented in Table 2 Panel B.[1] In contraction periods, the market beta is the lowest in the high- fee group and the highest in no-fee group. However, the difference between low- and high-fee firms is not significant (t-value=-1.03). Interestingly, however, during the expansion period the relationship is reversed: no-fee group has the lowest and the high-fee group has the highest beta. The difference between no-fee and low-fee firms is not significant (t-value=0.63) but the same measure between low- and high-fee firms is significant at α=.01 (t-value=2.08). Hence, **H3** is partially rejected. This implies that at the beginning stage of fee-generating business the hypothesized effect of the strategy does not show up. Instead, as fee firms expand the management/franchising business and accumulate relevant skills and resources, they would be able to win contracts more quickly and easily as evidenced in Starwood's case. The results are visually summarized in Figure 1.

[1] The list of firms is attached at the end of the manuscript.

Lastly, we checked the difference of beta in different economic periods horizontally (against the other group) and vertically (within the same group). Horizontally, the mean difference of the market beta between fee and no-fee groups is 0.084 (t-value=1.87) in the expansion and -0.337 (t-value=-4.00) in the contraction, implying that the difference of beta tends to widen in the contraction. Compared to other lighter fixed assets, i.e. equipment and furniture, real estate takes much longer periods to be expended and thereby renders itself inflexible to adjust to exogenous shocks. Firms are burdened with excess

		Panel A (All)		Panel B (Fee firms only)		Panel C (Difference)		
		No-Fee (0)	Fee (1)	Low Fee (2)	High Fee (3)	1-0	2-1	3-2
Total	MKT	1.07***	1.04***	1.06***	1.03***	-0.03	-0.01	-0.03
	SMB	0.83***	0.66***	0.88***	0.40***			
	HML	0.09	0.20***	0.32***	0.04			
	MOM	-0.47***	-0.30***	-0.29***	-0.29***			
	cons	0.009	0.049	-0.026	0.136*			
	Adj-R^2	0.267	0.243	0.262	0.222			
	obs	8617	18839	9925	8914			
Contraction	MKT	1.25***	0.91***	0.95***	0.86***	-0.34***	-0.30***	-0.09
	SMB	1.37***	0.58***	0.74***	0.34***			
	HML	0.14	-0.22**	-0.17	-0.30**			
	MOM	-0.39***	-0.61***	-0.63***	-0.60***			
	cons	-0.215	-0.355*	-0.486*	-0.160			
	Adj-R^2	0.344	0.305	0.289	0.343			
	obs	1885	3694	2185	1509			
Expansion	MKT	0.97***	1.05***	1.00***	1.11***	0.08*	0.03	0.11**
	SMB	0.54***	0.62***	0.93***	0.27***			
	HML	0.04	0.39***	0.61***	0.13			
	MOM	-0.20***	-0.15***	-0.07	-0.22***			
	cons	0.072	0.108*	0.062	0.077*			
	Adj-R^2	0.175	0.195	0.237	0.158			
	obs	6732	15145	7740	7405			
βcon-βexp		0.28***	-0.14***	-0.05	-0.25***			

Table 2. Four-factor model

p < .10, **p < .05, ***p < .01

capital when they need to dispose their investments to obtain liquidity, which is the economic downturns (Eisfeldt and Rampini, 2006). Following this reasoning, Tuzel (2010) observed that firms with a higher real-estate holding ratio have a higher beta than firms with a lower holding ratio and the difference is countercyclical as revealed in this study. Next, we vertically compared the market beta within each group. As expected, no-fee firms have a significantly higher beta in contraction periods (t-value = 3.50) whereas fee firms have a higher beta in expansion periods (t-value=-2.71). However, it turns out that the higher beta of fee firms comes from the high-fee group (t-value=-3.49). Low-fee firms show no significant change in beta between economic ups and downs (t-value=-0.72).

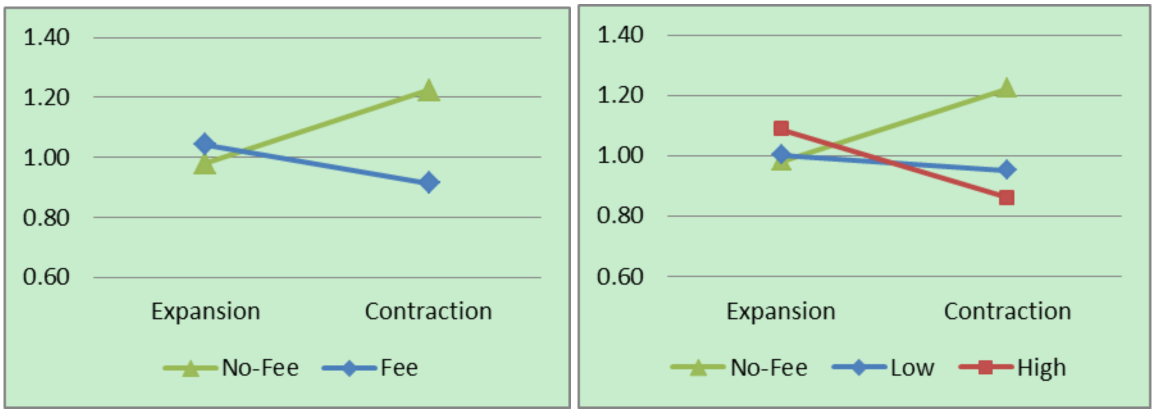

Figure 3. Market beta in the four-factor model

Conclusion

In this study, we examine the implications of the asset-light&fee-oriented strategy that are contingent on economic conditions. In the poor economy, stable income stream of fee-based revenue and low operating leverage would protect fee firms from unexpected negative shocks. However, efficient management of core intangible assets may act as a driving force for fee firms to grow faster in a booming market. To address this idea, we examine the asymmetric impacts of the ALFO strategy in dissimilar economic situations using beta. The results partially confirmed our hypotheses. In the contraction period, fee firms had a substantially lower beta than no-fee income firms. Even fee firms on the beginning or mid stage had a significantly lower beta than no-fee income firms, implying that the risk-reduction effect emerges once the strategy is employed. In the expansion, the difference between firms earning fees and no fee was not obvious. However, an interesting finding was revealed in the subsequent analysis that divides fee firms into two groups: high- and low-fee firms. Firms with high-fee income level have significantly lower beta during economic troughs and significantly higher beta during economic peaks. This suggests that firms with high level of fee income, which leverage on established expertise in management/franchising business, may enjoy the waves of economic prosperity more greatly than no-fee firms while avoiding more negative shocks during economic downturns. Firms with low-income level, by contrast, show practically no change in beta. It hints that in order to reap the benefits of the ALFO strategy across the business cycle, fee firms should diligently cultivate skills and manpower needed for the management/franchising business. Lastly, we found out that no-fee firms that have less room to accommodate exogenous shocks are exposed much more vulnerable to economic downturns than fee firms. Hence, the management should give more weights to crisis management and carefully formulate risk management strategies targeted for an economic recession.

Before concluding, several limitations should be noted. This study uses listed hotel firms only. Hence, the results may not appropriately reflect small hotel firms not traded in major stock exchanges. Use of a binary concept for economic status may entail information loss. This is to sharply contrast varying implications of the strategy in opposing economic situations but may not capture the whole dynamics of the business cycle.

No-fee firms	Low-fee firms	High-fee firms
Gaylord Entertainment Co. Intergroup Corp.	7 Days Group & Hldgs Ltd. Great Wolf Resorts Inc.	Fairmont Hotels Resorts Inc. Four Seasons Hotels

Lodgian Inc. Maui Land & Pineapple Co. Summit Hotel Properties Inc. Wynn Resorts Ltd.	Hammons John Q Hotels Home Inns & Hotels Mgmt Interstate Hotels & Resorts La Quinta Corp. Morgans Hotel Group Co. Orient-Express Hotels Red Lion Hotels Corp. Wyndham International Inc.	Hilton Hotels Corp. Hyatt Hotels Corp. Intercontinental Hotels Group Marriott International Inc. Sonesta International Hotels Starwood Hotels & Resorts Ltd.

Table 3. List of firms

The average firmyear fee-income ratio < 0.07535: low-fee firm
≥ 0.07535: high-fee firm

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Documenting Energy Awareness at Upscale and Luxury U.S. Lodging Properties

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Abstract

Energy costs in the lodging industry have been a reoccurring issue for over 40 years. However, the development of energy management programs and the employment of energy management systems in lodging have been uneven, at best. A study was conducted in 2011 to determine the level of awareness on the part of operators of upscale and luxury U.S. hotels of energy management systems and equipment. In addition to a profile of the respondents, the survey netted valuable information on how purchase decisions are made on energy management systems and equipment.

Keywords

kilowatt; British thermal unit; fossil fuels; initial cost; net simple payback; life cycle cost;

Introduction

According to the 2003 Annual Energy Review (EIA 2003), the U.S. lodging industry consumed approximately 69 billion kilowatt hours of electricity in 2003 (the most current statistic available). That level of consumption has, no doubt, increased over the past ten years, as has the nominal price per kilowatt hour (kWh) which reached 10.02 cents per kWh for the U.S. commercial sector in May of 2012 (EIA 2012). Out of all of the major energy sources used in U.S. commercial facilities (e.g., electricity, natural gas, heating oil, and district heat (i.e., purchased steam and hot water), electrical use constitutes 55% of the total (EIA 2003). Electricity is also far costlier per British thermal unit (Btu) when compared to other energy sources because of the energy (i.e., heat) loss incurred when converting another fuel source to electricity, and also due to the subsequent line loss when transporting electricity. Lodging managers can no longer ignore the financial costs associated with energy use in general and electrical use in particular. However, are lodging operators aware of the current alternatives available to them when designing energy conservation programs for their properties? Are operators also aware of the recent advances in technology that can positively impact a hotel's energy use? This study was intended to ascertain the level of energy awareness on the part of management at a select group of lodging properties.

Literature Review

During the seventies and into the eighties, nineties, and now into the new century, there continued to appear, information on energy management, such as Aulbach's seminal work, Energy Management, for the Educational Institute (1984) and the works of the International Hotel Environment Initiative (1996). Many of the first publications were written by academics (Redlin 1979) which appeared in the Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly and in other journals. Later sources included government entities such as the EPA, and the Department of Energy (DOE) as energy conservation programs were developed at state and federal levels (Energy Star 2011). By the nineties, energy management articles were appearing from consultants in the industry (Dale and Kluga 1992). Manufacturers of energy saving devices became yet another source of information through trade shows, conferences, and other venues (Schneider 2012). The lodging industry took notice of the need to reduce energy costs as evidenced by commercial building owners installing building energy management systems (BEMS) to reduce energy use and operating expenses according to the Smart Building Managed Services report (2012), which examined the global smart building market trends. PFK Hospitality analyzed the historical change in utility department expenses and found an extremely close correlation (i.e., 98%) between annual change in property-level utility costs and the energy component of the consumer price index (CPI). This indicated that despite ongoing operating practices aimed at reducing energy consumption, the greatest influence on hotel utility bills has been the prices charged by the local utility company (Mandelbaum and Walls 2008). Reducing utility bills by intelligent management, is much more than basic energy and HVAC control. Energy management solutions for lodging integrate property management system with all components in the solution including; thermostats, occupancy sensors, door contacts, lighting dimmers, electrical equipment plug load control devices. (Tienor 2012). Today, an energy management solution can save a property owner 20-45% on a utility bill - in addition to providing convenience and intelligent of management and monitoring (Tienor 2012).

Methodology

The study utilized a survey method to collect data. A questionnaire was developed based on review of related literature and in consultation with energy management representatives.

A list of upscale and luxury (i.e., Mobil 4 or 5 star) lodging properties in the U.S. was obtained from the hotel membership directory of the American Hotel and Lodging Association. The list included 1383 valid records. All but 14 hotels in the list were contacted at least once because the 14 hotels had duplicate phone numbers to other properties in the sample.

Data were collected in April, 2011 by utilizing telephone surveys. The Cannon Survey Center (CSC) collected and entered the data. The interviewers made themselves familiar with the energy management systems and terminology before conducting the interviews (Please see Appendix). The average interview took 21 minutes.

During the course of calling, the interviewers were frequently stalled or stopped by ‘gatekeepers’, typically hotel telephone operators. This influenced the response rate given the budget constraints. Using these methods, a total of 99 interviews were completed. Given the sampling method and lack of a non-response bias check, the results are not generalizable to all properties.

RESULTS

Profile of the respondents

Eighty-four percent of the hotels surveyed were upscale hotels whereas 16% were luxury properties. Casino resorts constituted 10% of the properties surveyed. Chain and independent hotels were 90% and 10%, respectively. Most hotels surveyed were city downtown (27%), suburban (26%), and resort (25%) hotels. Only 7% were classified as airport hotels.

Other interesting findings included:

- Sixty-five percent of the hotels surveyed have been built between 1980 and 2000;
- Eighty-seven percent had hotel rooms ranging from 200 and 950;
- Fifty-five percent of the properties surveyed were located in CA (17%), FL (13%), NV (9.0%), AZ (6%), CO (5%), and TX (5%);
- Eighty-one percent of the respondents make energy management choices for one property only;
- Fifty-eight percent of the hotel properties employ or retain the services of an energy efficiency professional to guide their decision making and had a full energy audit performed on their property in the past three years;
- Sixty-three percent of the hotels surveyed possess environmental certifications or awards, such as the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED program;
- Almost 78% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that being an environmentally conscientious hotel was a factor in their guests purchase decision;
- Almost 90% of the hotels use their energy related accomplishments in marketing to their customer;
- All the hotels surveyed indicated that they train their employees to conserve energy.

These findings certainly indicate some very positive trends in energy awareness.

Important considerations when making an investment in electrical energy management equipment

The respondents evaluated the factors they consider in making the investment on a 5-point Likert scale, 1 being “not at all important” and 5 being “extremely important.” The most critical consideration is guest satisfaction and comfort (4.88) followed by payback period (4.39) and initial cost (4.38). These responses may demonstrate a lack of financial acumen on the part of the respondents (i.e., chief engineers) whose preference seems to be for more simplistic and one dimensional measure versus more encompassing measures. For example, a higher weighting on the initial cost versus the product's total life cycle cost which includes such factors as maintenance and energy costs.

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Somewhat Important (%)	Extremely Important (%)
Initial Cost	4.38	0.91	20%	62%
Life Cycle Cost	4.16	0.93	30%	46%
Net Simple Payback Period	4.39	0.85	24%	59%
Net Present Value	3.72	1.07	24%	31%
Internal Rate of Return	4.29	0.91	25%	55%
Environmental Considerations	4.22	0.88	31%	48%
Guest Comfort and Satisfaction	4.88	0.43	4%	92%

Table 1. Important Factors in an Energy Management Investment

Twenty-seven percent of the respondents strongly agreed and 50% somewhat agreed with the statement "When your guests make a lodging decision, choosing an environmentally conscientious hotel is a factor."

Type of energy systems employed

As shown in Table 2, almost all the hotels surveyed have employed compact or tube fluorescent lighting (98%). The most popular energy management systems used was found to be automation and control systems including HVAC occupancy sensors (76%), lighting control systems for all applications (74%), use of variable speed drives on heavy equipment (86%), uninterruptible power supply equipment or surge suppressors (85%), energy use benchmarking (78%), and data storage management systems (74%). The least popular ones were electrical peak load shaving systems (34%), energy control equipment on kitchen refrigeration units (44%), power factor monitoring systems (31%), and automated electrical energy tracking systems (58%). The lack of popularity of some of these systems is probably based on multiple factors. For example, a property that has never experienced a peak load problem and a corresponding increase in its demand charges would be unlikely to invest in such a system. The same is probably true for power factor monitoring systems if the property has had no prior problems with inductive or capacitive power factor problems which would significantly increase electrical bills. Energy control equipment on kitchen refrigeration units may not be perceived as a necessary item because of a smaller return on investment than say, variable speed drives. The lack of interest in automated electrical energy tracking systems may well be predicated on the belief that manual tracking is sufficient, but operators would be well served to remember that 1) one cannot manage what one does not measure, and 2) it is always wise to avoid errors and omissions by eliminating the human element whenever possible.

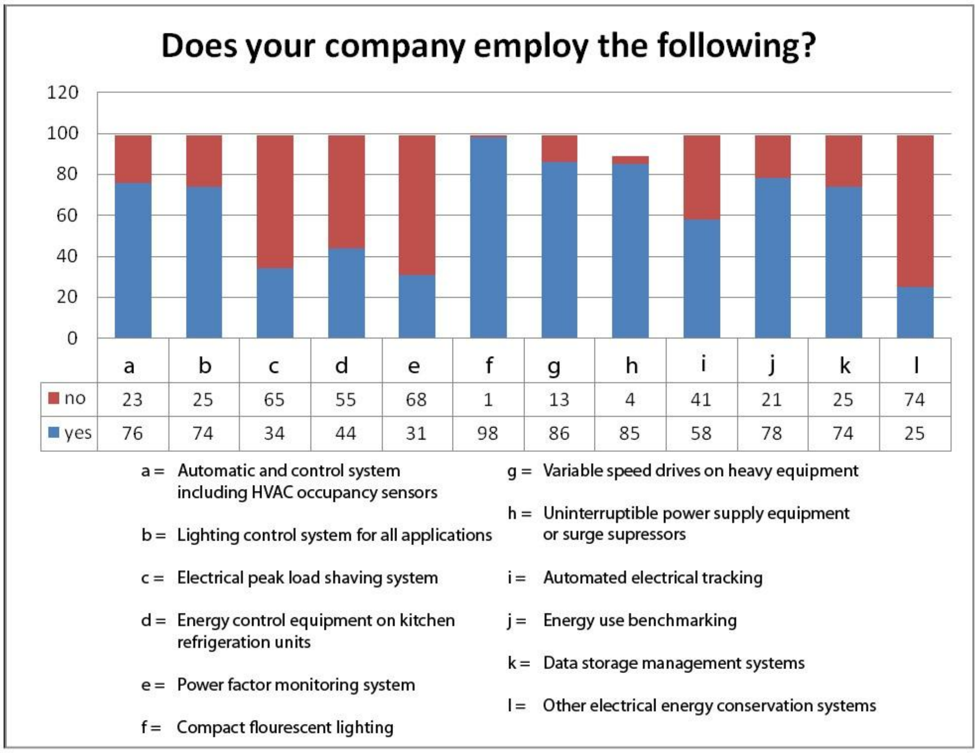

Table 2. Adoption of Energy Management Systems

Barriers to adopting energy management systems/equipment

There were several reasons why the energy management systems presented in Table 2 was rejected by some of the properties. For an "electrical peak load shaving system", "energy control equipment on kitchen refrigeration units", and "power factor monitoring system", the high initial cost of installation, low ROI, and a lack of knowledge were the main barriers. Another pattern observed was the fact that the high initial cost of installation, low ROI, and a lack of knowledge were mentioned as barriers to adopting "automated electrical energy tracking systems." Ignorance of the intended function of some of the energy management systems was evident. Two energy management systems were identified as having the greatest potential to provide a negative guest experience, electrical peak load shaving systems, and building automation and control systems including HVAC occupancy sensors.

Personal beliefs regarding sustainability

The respondents were asked to rate their personal sustainable development beliefs on a 5-point scale, 1 being "strongly disagree" and 5 being "strongly agree." All respondents were concerned about the planet, people, and profit, the 3P's of the triple bottom line, as seen in Table 3.

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
Investing in energy management systems makes me feel like I'm helping to protect the environment for future generations (**Planet**)	4.52	0.70	24%	64%
Investing in energy management systems makes me feel like I'm acting as a fiscally responsible decision maker (**Profit**)	4.47	0.73	27%	61%
Investing in energy management systems makes me feel like I'm contributing to society (**People**)	4.30	0.83	32%	51%

Table 3. Personal Beliefs on Sustainable Development

However, most of the properties indicated that do not plan to get too far ahead of the curve on environmental issues. Only 34% of the hotels indicated that they have plans to install charging stations for electric automobiles any time in the future.

Financial Considerations

Out of the 99 respondents, 59.4% had energy costs between two and five percent of their gross revenue. However, there was considerable disparity among the other 40.6% of the respondents. Over 30% of the respondents reported their energy costs at 10% or higher of the property's gross revenue with three respondents reporting energy costs that were 30% of the gross revenue.

When asked, "If you were going to implement an energy improvement project today, who would implement it?" 35% indicated it would be an "engineering firm" and 48% said, "a firm specializing in energy efficiency projects." Eighty-nine percent indicated they would be, "more inclined to make the initial investment if you could realize a 25% reduction in their annual energy costs." About 60% admitted that, "they would be more likely to invest in energy management technology if there was low cost financing available to help with the initial expense." When considering an investment's return, 51% considered 2-3 years to be the maximum simple payback period.

Future adoption of energy investments

Compared to other energy investments, "automation and control systems including HVAC occupancy sensors" and "an electrical peak load shaving system" are more likely to be adopted in the next 3 to 5 years; "energy control equipment on kitchen refrigeration units" is more likely to be adopted within the next year; and "a power factor monitoring system", on the other hand, is more likely to be adopted in more than 5 years.

Motivations for energy management systems or equipment investments

The motivations for energy investments are ranked as follows: Monetary Savings (94%), Hotel Image (88%), and Guest Loyalty (74%). The other category (30%) included environmental impact and carbon footprint reasons.

Benefits realized from energy management systems or equipment

The benefits realized from their investments followed the same order as motivations: Monetary Savings (97%), Hotel Image (83%), and Guest Loyalty (69%). The other benefits mentioned (25%) included such items as employee motivation and morale, environmental impact, increasing equipment life span, and personal satisfaction derived from the energy savings.

Not all knowledge is an impetus to change

It was reported that 62% of the respondents performed an energy audit on their property at least once in the past three years. Furthermore, 59% of the properties employ or retain an energy efficiency professional to guide their decision making. However, it was found that the conduction of an energy audit alone was not a significant factor in the purchase or use of an energy management system or equipment, but there was a significant correlation found between the retention of an energy service professional and the purchase and use of energy management systems. This would suggest that in-house engineering personnel do not have the necessary expertise to influence energy management purchase decisions.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMENDATIONS

The research provided some valuable indications and trends present that seem to be fairly common to this segment of the U.S. hotel industry. Regarding the adoption of energy management systems, the traditional concerns of high initial cost and the payback period are fairly prevalent. This may indicate a number of issues. First, capital budgets are fairly tight at present and likely to remain so in this current economic climate. Second, the respondents seem to have rejected more robust measures of value for simpler measures, such as in the case of initial cost versus total life cycle cost, or in the case of simple payback period versus return on investment. Obviously, many of the respondents are not conversant in high finance. However, this lack of understanding might serve as an educational opportunity for a supplier firm to explain all of the ramifications of certain energy system and equipment purchase decisions to the client. Encouraging the client to take a long, versus a short-term perspective is certainly a more sustainable position for all parties.

Not all energy management systems and equipment are equal in their perceived benefits and their adoption by the client base. Fluorescent lighting systems, occupancy sensors, variable speed drives, lighting controls, and surge suppressors are favored over peak load shaving equipment, power factor monitoring systems, kitchen refrigeration energy control systems, benchmarking and energy data tracking systems. Indeed, some properties may logically see no benefit to the adoption of some of these systems. For example, if a property never sees a power factor surcharge on its electrical bill, it is highly unlikely to invest in such equipment until a problem occurs.

However, in another instance, a property may not recognize the beneficial ramifications of installing a peak load shaving system to the property's demand charges. In this instance, care should also be taken to convince properties that such a system will have little to no effect on the guest's experience; that the system will be, in effect, transparent to the guest. This leads to another important observation derived from the study. Hotel operators, particularly in this segment of the market, are almost universally committed to the highest standards of guest service. Any system or program that even remotely might compromise that standard will be rejected, even if there are energy savings to be had. It should be noted that the study found the top three benefits of adoption of energy management equipment and systems to be cost savings, image, and guest loyalty. Two of the three are customer oriented. Transparency of these systems to the guest is a highly valued benefit in U.S. properties.

Finally, ignorance of the benefits that can be realized from certain energy management systems on the part of management, such as the use automatic energy tracking, and benchmarking systems needs to be addressed by the supplier through use of examples, and perhaps, case studies. Schneider Electric's on-line "university" is a sophisticated tool, but may be too sophisticated for certain customers, particularly a property's top management.

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The Effect of Self-monitoring on Emotional Display and Emotional Labor among Hotel Employees

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate how the self-monitoring personality (sensitivity and modification) influences emotional performance among hotel employees. The results show that self-monitoring explains a significant proportion of variances in displaying positive emotions, hiding negative emotions, and deep acting after controlling for two commonly known antecedents (extraversion and neuroticism). In addition, results reveal that sensitivity has a relatively higher and more significant influence on emotional performance than modification. This implies that the ability to "read" and understand others' expressive behavior make high self-monitors successfully accomplish desirable emotional performance.

Keywords

Self-monitoring, emotional display, emotional Labor, Big Five

Employee Brand Understanding: A New Perspective in Measuring the Effectiveness of Internal Brand Management

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Abstract

This study aims to propose an efficient measurement of organization internal brand management (IBM) effectiveness. This measurement focuses on employees' actual understanding of the organization's brand, providing insight with respect to employees' psychological brand commitment and their brand citizenship behaviors. Through evaluating the measurement and structural models, the authors identified employees' perceived behavior-brand connection as the most important factor to influence their brand commitment and brand citizenship behaviors. Thus, it is suggested that when employees believe that their behaviors can significantly affect how the brand is perceived by customers and they can make a difference in that perception, they are more likely to be committed to the brand and be willing to take extra effort to ensure customers' brand experiences.

Keywords

Employee brand understanding, Brand commitment, Brand citizenship behaviors, Hospitality organizations, Internal brand management

Manager Training in the Hotel Environment and its Effect on Employee Turnover Intentions

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Abstract

Employee turnover, its causes, and effects on an organization have been extensively studied across various industries. To date, no extensive studies have simultaneously researched the training that managers undergo in hotels and its impact on employee turnover intentions. This research found significant results linking overall manager training to an employee's perception of his or her manager, an employee's perception of his or her manager to employee turnover intentions, and quality of manager training to employee turnover intentions. This research did not find significant results linking amount of training to employee turnover intentions. This study analyzes these relationships, implications, and limitations and makes suggestions for future research.

Keywords

Human resources, training, hotel, employee, manager, turnover, intentions.

The Effects of Leader-Member Exchange on Hotel Employees' Perceptions of Gender Discrimination and Subjective Career Success

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to examine the effects of leader-member exchange (LMX) on employees' perceptions of gender discrimination and subjective career success. Data were collected from employees in nine chain hotels in Seoul, South Korea and analyzed by using SEM. The findings are as follows. First, LMX had a significantly positive impact on subjective career success. Second, LMX had a significantly negative influence on employment and promotion discrimination; however, it had no significant influence on wage and training discrimination. Third, wage and training discrimination had a significant positive effect on subjective career success; however, employment and promotion discrimination had a significant negative impact on subjective career success. The findings suggest practical implications for efficient human resource management to hotel managers.

Keywords

Leader-member exchange, gender discrimination, subjective career success

Sexual Harassment during Practicum: A Study of Hospitality/Tourism Students in Taiwan

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Abstract

Hospitality/tourism student interns can be victims of sexual harassment. Survey questionnaires were employed in current study and the results indicated that 50% of the hospitality/tourism students experienced different forms of harassment. The findings also revealed a lack of sexual harassment training/education in either schools or practicum sites with only about one-fifth of the respondents indicating that such training/education occurred. A second questionnaire was distributed to educators and practitioners with findings indicating that (1) student interns were mostly placed at the bottom of the organizations; (2) student interns had insufficient knowledge and passive attitudes when dealing with sexual harassment; (3) both academic institutions and the industry need to address sexual harassment and provide students a hassle-free work environment.

Keywords

Sexual harassment, hospitality/tourism students, practicum.

A Study of London 2012 Olympic Volunteers: Motivations and Intention to Volunteer

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine volunteers' motivations in a mega event setting. London 2012 Olympic volunteers are utilized as the sample (n = 10, 000) to evaluate the motivations and intentions (continuing in volunteering activities) of volunteers. The results of regression analysis show that the dimensions of value ($\beta = .131$, $t = 12.05$, $p < .01$), understanding ($\beta = .024$, $t = 2.14$, $p < .05$), enhancement ($\beta = .093$, $t = 8.18$, $p < .01$), career ($\beta = .191$, $t = 16.25$, $p < .01$), and social ($\beta = .083$, $t = 6.94$, $p < .01$) have positive impacts on volunteer intention, while the dimension of protective function ($\beta = -.042$, $t = -3.88$, $p < .01$) has negative impact. This study is anticipated to offer meaningful implications to event practitioners.

Keywords

London 2012 Olympics, volunteers, motivation, intention

How Does Jay-customer Affect Employee Job Stress and Job Satisfaction

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine how jay-customer behaviors (customer incivility and customer aggression) affect employee job stress, and job satisfaction. Hierarchical multiple regression analyses results based on 210 guest-contact employees show a positive significant relationship between customer incivility and job stress. Additionally, the results indicate a mediation effect of employee job stress on the relationship between customer incivility and employee job satisfaction. Unfortunately, the study was not able to analyze customer aggression because the majority of the participants did not report customer aggression. The findings of this study provide implications for hospitality companies that they should acknowledge the existence of jay-customer behaviors and recognize their significant impact on employees' job stress and job satisfaction.

Keywords

Jay customer behavior; Deviant customer behavior; Customer misbehavior; Customer incivility; Employee job stress; Employee job satisfaction.

The Effects of Promotion Framing and Sense of Power on Consumers' Perceived Savings and Willingness to Book

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Abstract

Price-based promotions are common in the hotel industry due to their positive impact on sales. To gain a better understanding of the effectiveness of various types of promotions, the current research examines the contrasting effect of two popular framing methods (i.e. percentage-off vs. dollars-off) on consumers' perceived savings and willingness to book. More importantly, this research examines the moderating effect of power on such relationships. Results indicate that personal sense of power moderates the effects of the promotion frame on perceived savings and willingness to book. In addition, we find that confidence in estimating the promoted price is the psychological mechanism that potentially explains the casual link from power to perceived savings and willingness to book.

Keywords

Consumer behavior, Promotion framing, Sense of power.

Customers in a Flash? Are Daily-Deal Offerings an Effective Means of Generating New Repeat Customers?

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Abstract

The incredible growth of flash-sale sites offering a steeply discounted coupon redeemable at business locations has begun to transform the tourism and service industries. This study aimed to identify the influence of price in determining flash sale purchases. Additionally, firms utilize daily deal offerings intending to generate long-term customers, this research examined the probability of repeat visitation from high frequency discount users. Finally, the influence of customer experience on return intention after redemption of the flash-sale was measured. Findings demonstrate the majority of respondents take a one-and-done approach, visiting the company for redemption and never intending to return without future daily deal offerings. Structural modeling identified purchase frequency and product awareness as predictors of purchase motivations of flash sale coupons.

Keywords

Daily Deals, Purchase Motivations, Structural Equation Modeling, Return Intention.

Surprise! Loyalty Rewards Re-examined

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Abstract

Despite the pervasive business application, the effectiveness of loyalty programs remains equivocal. In today's extremely competitive business environment, we believe that it is of critical importance for service firms to find an effective way to delight their loyal customers with rewards offerings. Adopting an experimental design, the current study collected data from real customers using hypothetical scenarios depicting either a positive or negative dining experience followed by either a surprise reward or a discount reward. Consistent with our predictions, the surprise reward lead to significantly higher levels of delight and customer satisfaction. More importantly, our results showed that the surprise reward leads to significantly lower levels of frustration, especially when the customer experienced a bad service. These findings have important implications for service business.

Keywords

loyalty rewards programs, reward type, discrete emotions, delight, customer satisfaction.

Price Placebo Effects: Consumers May Get What They Pay For

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Abstract

Given the widespread use of the premium pricing strategy in current marketing practice, how consumers evaluate a premium pricing action is an interesting issue for both marketing researchers and practitioners. The objective of this study was to examine perceptions toward premium prices in an upscale café and the role of price which act as a cue to improve consumers' experiences. Indeed, the findings from the structural model indicated that both beliefs of price-quality schema and prestige sensitivity were significant factors for inducing positive overall perceived luxury café quality including coffee, service, and atmosphere. To better understand consumers' mental accounting based on their income source, the study found the moderating effect of income origin confirmed the idea that the price tag seemed to attract distinctively consumers respond to café quality

Keywords

Price placebo effect, Price-quality schema, Prestige sensitivity, Luxury café, Consumer perceived quality, Income source

Introduction

The price of a product often shapes consumers' judgments of products and services. Various experiments have shown that price tag may influence hedonic and sensory judgments (Siegrist & Cousin, 2009). An interesting experiment has shown that individuals appreciate the same wine more and the area of the brain that associated pleasure is more active when they think that it is more expensive (Plassmann, O'Doherty, Shiv, & Rangel, 2008). One reason industries use a high priced strategy is to generate favorable expectations, which may influence consumers' reactions toward the product or service (Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1996). In the context of this literature, "Veblen effects" explains that consumers are willing to pay a higher price for a functionally equivalent good. For example, consumers often judge higher-priced items to be of higher quality or prestige (Rao & Monroe, 1989). When symbolic content is an important part of consumption, a price tag becomes a more critical cue (Cialdini, Wosinska, Dabul, Whetstone-Dion, & Heszen, 1998).

The question that we address in this research is how consumers evaluate a premium pricing action. For example, are consumers overly critical? Can price be a positive indicator of a product or service they have already chosen in order to reduce dissonance? The current study draws on expectations of quality based on price-quality schema/prestige sensitivity, which arise from marketing actions such as premium price promotions, may adjust consumers' subjective quality perception. We also identified whether the ability of price-schema/prestige sensitivity to encourage positive perceived service quality may be driven distinctively by the origin of discretionary income. The origin of young adult consumers' income, pocket money or personally earned, would be an interesting current issue to explore as well. Many young adult consumers still rely on their parents' financial support (Fingerman, Miller, Birditt, & Zarit, 2009). Gifted money and earned income may shape attitudes differently toward prices in premium pricing marketing actions. This study provides insights into parents' financial support, young adults' spending habits and attitudes toward price.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to identify how the perception of price in premium pricing action influences customer perceptions of overall service quality, as well as the extent to which income source moderates the relationship between perception of price and perceived quality. More specifically, this study examined young adult customers in the luxury café setting.

Literature Review

Price perception

Price perceived by customers has long been of interest to hospitality researchers (Oh, 2003; Nusair, Yoon, & Parsa, 2010), but consumers' belief of price cue and actual quality perception has been largely ignored in the hospitality sector (Rao, 2005).

The current study fills in a gap regarding the exact nature of the role of price beliefs/expectations on consumers' perceived quality when they have already made a choice. To assess whether premium price and perceived quality assessment might be correlated, this empirical study applied the young consumers' perception of positive role of price in the upscale foodservice sector. Consumers enjoying specialty coffee in a luxury café may have favorable opinions towards perceived premium prices. Price-quality schema and prestige sensitivity are positive price cues, indicating that a higher price leads to higher perceived quality or prestige and consequently increases the likelihood of a purchase (Lichtenstein, Ridgway, & Netemeyer, 1993).

Thus, it can be assumed that positive price cues (price-quality schema/prestige sensitivity) trigger perceived quality in a positive direction. There is a strong theoretical reason for suggesting that individual perception of service quality is likely to change with the process of cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957). In order to reduce dissonance a consumer may use selective perception, collecting favorable information and dismissing unpleasant facts, which is congruent with their choice (Chisnall, 1985).

Price Quality Schema: Some consumers are willing to pay more because they associate a high price with high quality. Consumers who have a positive price/quality schema prefer higher priced products (Veeck & Burns, 1995).

Prestige Sensitivity: Higher prices can also encourage consumers to increase spending because it conveys prestige to others. Paying higher prices can also signal to satisfy social desire to stand out from the crowd or to display wealth and status (Amaldoss & Jain, 2005).

Based on the above literature, this study proposes a consumer perceived quality formation model as shown in Figure 1. Consumers' expectations based on extrinsic price cues (price quality schema/ prestige sensitivity) influence perceived quality.

Premium Price Placebo Effect on Consumer Quality Perception

Expectations influence perceived experiences (Poulsen, Juhl, Kristensen, Bech, & Engelund, 1996). Prior to consumption, consumers have quality expectations based on quality cues (Rao & Monroe, 1989). This study is concerned with the extrinsic cue of price. According to Shiv's experimental study, marketing actions, such as price discounts or premium promotions, lead to a placebo effect which shows that price cues can yield real changes in efficacy, even if it is actually inert. This study was conducted in luxury cafés offering high priced specialty coffee to examine the role of premium pricing strategy. High priced marketing actions in a luxury café may evoke positive perceptions of the consumption experience. High prices in the luxury café may signal a higher level of service quality and social benefits to consumers. This study used the key service elements for café, food (coffee) quality, service quality and atmosphere, based on earlier studies (e.g., Jang and Namkung, 2009).

Source of Income as Moderating Role

Gen Y represents the cohort group that is most likely to enjoy high priced product such as luxury goods (Hauck & Stanforth, 2007). In fact, despite the fact that many young adults in need received material support, their total annual expenditures grew at a higher rate compared to other age groups (The Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009). Such parental financial help may condition grown children's attitudes toward money. Pocket money is expected to shape young consumers' price perception development and spending behavior (Furnham, 2001). This study verified origin of their discretionary money (received as a gift or earned) in order to deeper understand how young people utilize price as a cue for products/services quality assessment. For a given high priced coffee category, perceived service quality may be driven distinctively by the origin of discretionary income. We expected that consumers with "gifted" money source may less sensitive "pain of paying" compared to those who paying with "earned" with effort. Our proposed approach could be helpful to determine young adults' mindsets and why shortages in their income do not hinder them from pursuing premium priced products/services.

Hypotheses: Consumers possessing a price-quality schema are more likely to have a positive perception of the coffee quality (H1), service quality (H2), and atmosphere (H3) they experienced.

Hypotheses: Consumers possessing prestige sensitivity are more likely to have a positive perception of the coffee quality (H4), service quality (H5), and atmosphere (H6) they experienced.

Hypotheses: Price quality schema (H7)/ Prestige sensitivity (H8) are stronger predictors of willingness to give a positive evaluation of the service quality, specifically (a) coffee quality, (b) service quality, and (c) atmosphere when discretionary income has been given (pocket money) rather than personally earned.

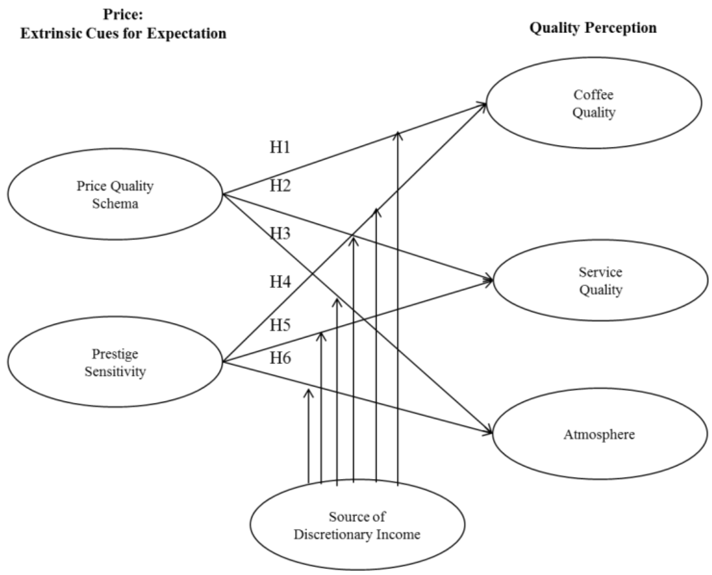

Figure 2. Operational Framework and Hypotheses

Methods

The data for the current study was collected from two luxury cafes named "Coffee Smith," which has become representative of the luxury café segment: all two are located in Gangnam in Seoul, South Korea. The average price of a cup of coffee at the selected cafés was at least US$7. Self-administered questionnaires were distributed by the café staff to randomly selected customers who were spending time in the café. Customers were asked to complete the survey on a voluntary basis. Out of 380 collected responses, 330 young adult customers were used for analysis after deleting incomplete responses. A questionnaire was developed based on a thorough literature review including customer quality perceptions (coffee quality, service quality, and atmosphere) and price perception (price-quality schema and price sensitivity). Structural equation modeling (SEM) with a maximum likelihood method was used to test the relationships among constructs. A confirmatory factor analysis was first conducted to determine whether the manifest measurement items reflected the hypothesized latent constructs. Using AMOS 18.0 package, Structural equation modeling (SEM) was conducted to test hypotheses. To examine the moderating effect of income source, multiple group analysis was used.

Results

Results of the structural model

A structural model was estimated to test proposed Hypotheses 1 to 6. The goodness-of-fit statistics of the proposed model showed that the model reasonably fits the data (chi-square = 1355.683, p=.000, chi-square/df = 2.477, IFI = .904, CFI = .903, RMSEA = .066). The structural results of the proposed model are shown in Table 2 and Figure 3. Table 2 illustrates that among the six relationships tested, all were found to be significant at the alpha level of 0.01. The belief in price-quality schema had a significantly positive impact on all three dimensions of perceived quality, including coffee quality (β=.209), service quality (β=.189) and atmosphere (β=.314) at $p<.001$. In the luxury café setting, a 'you get what you pay for' mentality leads to more favorable perceived quality. This result reflects that consumers who visit luxury cafés could be defined as a segment that is willing to pay more for better quality. Those consumers evaluate a premium pricing action as a cue of positive quality, and they may perceive they made a wise decision. Practically, the result suggests that the premium pricing strategy could be successfully conducted as a placebo effect on these consumers.

In addition, price perception with prestige sensitivity stimulated positive perceived café quality. The positive linkage between considering prestige sensitivity and coffee quality (H4) was supported by a significant estimate of β=.228 ($p<.001$), indicating that consumers' perceptions of high prices as reflecting status positively influences perceived coffee quality. The effect on prestige sensitivity on service quality and atmosphere (H5, H6) were supported by standardized estimates of β=.138 and β=158, respectively ($p<.05$). Based on the results, consumers feel that high-priced products signal important positive information to one's self and to others, which can yield perceived quality. In other words, the price seemed to have a psychological influence on consumers' experiences. This finding is consistent with the "Veblen effect" in that some types of high-status goods should maintain a high price in order to make the good even more popular. Decreasing the price may lower people's preference for buying it because it is no longer perceived as an exclusive or high status product. Therefore, such high cost premium coffee could be no better, or are even worse, than their lower priced counterparts.

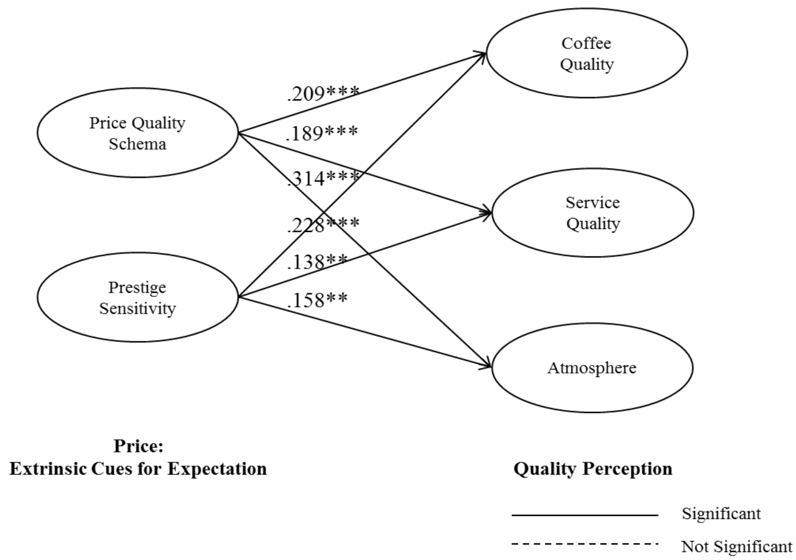

Figure 3. Structural Result

Table 2. Structural Parameter Estimates

Hypothesized Path		Standardized path coefficients	Result
Hypothesis 1:	Price-Quality Schema→ Coffee Quality	.209	Supported
Hypothesis 2:	Price-Quality Schema→ Service Quality	.189	Supported
Hypothesis 3:	Price-Quality Schema → Atmosphere	.314	Supported
Hypothesis 4:	Prestige Sensitivity → Coffee Quality	.228	Supported
Hypothesis 5:	Prestige Sensitivity → Service Quality	.138	Supported
Hypothesis 6:	Prestige Sensitivity → Atmosphere	.158	Supported

* p < .1. **p < .05. *** p < .01.

Moderating effect of income source

To examine the moderating effect of income source, a multiple group analysis was performed. To statistically test the differential effects between own income source and other income source, the chi-square difference (Δchi-square) between the constrained and unconstrained models was assessed with the difference in degrees of freedom (Δdf) (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). Overall, the chi-square difference (Δchi-square (Δdf = 6) = 15.919) between the constrained model (chi-square = 2226.808, df = 1114) and the unconstrained model (chi-square = 2210.889, df = 1108) was significant (p < .01). The result indicated that the relationship between café quality and price perception (price-quality schema and prestige sensitivity) significantly differed between the two income source groups.

To identify which relationships were statistically different, coefficients for each path were compared between own and other income source groups. As shown in Table 3 and Figure 4, statistical tests revealed that the moderating role of income source only existed for three hypothesized paths.

First, the differences in the coefficients between price-quality schema and café service qualities were not significant, which did not support hypothesis 7. These results indicated that the difference in impact of price-quality schema on evaluation of service quality based on income source was not prominent. However, the differences in the coefficients between prestige sensitivity and all café qualities were significant at .001 level, supporting hypothesis 8. This finding indicates prestige sensitivity is a stronger predictor of willingness to give a positive evaluation of café quality when discretionary income has been gifted rather than personally earned. It is important to note that the group who relies on the financial support of others may feel more prominent due to higher price signals and thus more likely to have positive perceptions of what they paid because it affirms that they spent wisely. According to the "house money effect" from economics and psychology (Thaler & Johnson, 1990), people may spend easy money more recklessly than they would their own money. In this sense, the own income source group could be more critical when making a purchase with money personally earned with effort. In other words, the price tag seemed to attract distinctively according to mental accounting.

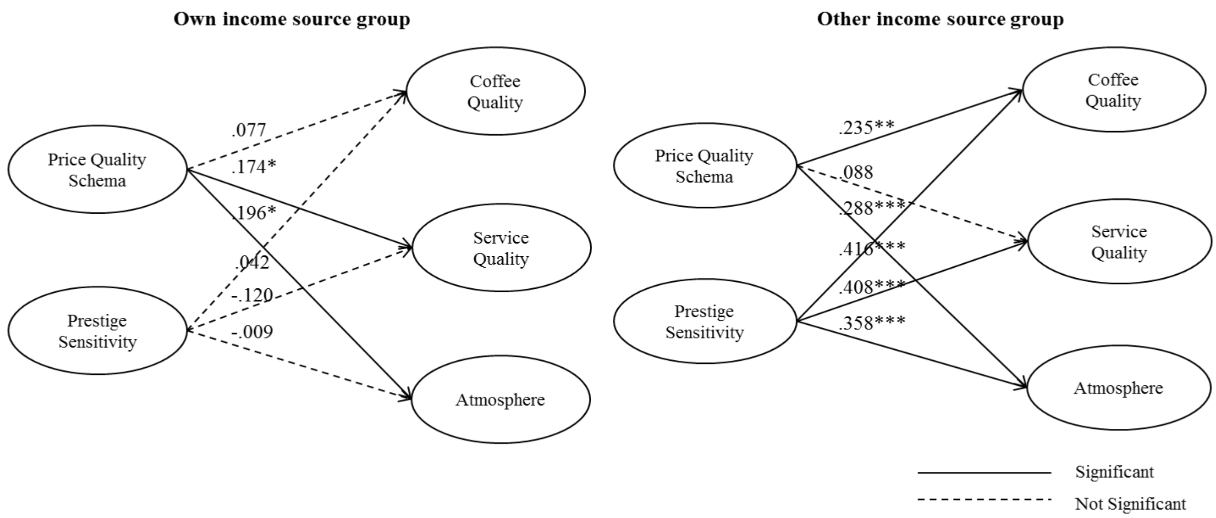

Figure 4. Structural Result for Moderating Role

Table 3. Comparisons of Path Coefficients (Own income source vs. Other income source)

Path	Standardized path coefficients		Δchi-square (Δdf = 1)	Significance of Δchi-square
	Own Income Source	Other Income Source		
Price-Quality Schema → Coffee Quality	.077	.235***	0.353	Not Significant
Price-Quality Schema → Service Quality	.174*	.088	0.792	Not significant
Price-Quality Schema → Atmosphere	.196*	.288***	0.000	Not significant
Prestige Sensitivity → Coffee Quality	.042	.416***	8.838	significant
Prestige Sensitivity → Service Quality	-.120	.408***	11.236	Significant
Prestige Sensitivity → Atmosphere	.009	.358***	5.309	Significant

Conclusion

Given the widespread use of the premium pricing strategy in current marketing practice, most companies cannot compete on price. How consumers evaluate a premium pricing action is an interesting issue for both marketing researchers and practitioners. The objective of this study was to examine perceptions toward premium prices in an upscale café and the way in which price can act as a cue to improve consumers' experiences. Indeed, the findings from the structural model indicate that both beliefs of price-quality schema and prestige sensitivity were significant factors for inducing positive overall perceived luxury café service quality including coffee, service, and atmosphere. Beyond the simple examination of the effect of price beliefs and quality perception at a luxury café, this study found the moderating effect of income source, which explains the strength of the relationship between belief and perceived quality. The moderating effect of income origin partly confirmed the idea that consumers with prestige sensitivity respond to café quality differently according to their income source.

In this study, we suggested a novel model to measure consumers' perceived quality based on consumers' beliefs regarding price. We found interesting results in that the price tag can cause a placebo effect and awaken consumers' expectations sufficiently to influence the resulting overall quality. Furthermore, as the present study considered the income source of consumers to understand their money accounting, it sheds light on the current issue of grown children's spending patterns that are formed by their parents (Aquilino, 2006; Fingerman et al., 2009). The present study has practical implications in terms of suggesting certain target segments seeking higher prices, which leads to a successful premium pricing strategy.

We believe that directions for further research include demonstrating additional situations in which marketing actions have placebo effects. For example, discount promotions could have a different effect on quality perception. Price-conscious groups can be compared to prestige sensitivity groups. Also, the current study only focused on the young adult segment, so other generational segments may require additional attention to apply our proposed model in future research. Price positioning can be particularly powerful in this context, which is a very relevant issue for managerial decisions(Bredahl, Grunert, & Fertin, 1998).

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The Effect of Trust and Emotion on Consumer's Wellness Experience

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Abstract

With increasing demand for relaxation and higher standards, consumers are turning toward improving their overall wellness. Given the fact that patients are emotionally-connected to their health, emotion and trust are important factors to be researched in a health service context. Therefore, this paper proposes that emotion and trust both have an important role in the overall health service experience. The purpose of this paper was to examine the influence of emotion and trust in the consumers' health care experience. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to estimate the causal relationship of trust and emotion to spa experiences. While trust came out to be significant, emotion did not. This implies that only trust has a positive impact on the wellness experience.

Keywords

health, wellness, trust, emotion, spa experience, spa consumer

Service Failure, Tipping Behavior and the Effect of Service Industry Experience

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Abstract

The relationship between tipping and the service provided is not always linear. Factors such as demographics, industry norms and social norms affect the amount of tip. Results from the current study reveal that tipping varies when service failure occurs due to servers' fault or organizational failure. Consumers with prior professional experience in the restaurant industry can distinguish between causes of failure, and tip accordingly. Consumers with prior professional restaurant experience were found to tip significantly more than those consumers that do not have prior hospitality experience. Tip rate for service failure due to servers' mistake tend to be lower than due to the organizational errors indicating that consumers do not penalize a server when the organization caused service failures.

Keywords

Tipping, Service Failure, Service Industry Experience

The Relationship among Brand Personality, Destination Image and Behavioral Intentions: A Comparison of First Time and Repeat Visitors to Jamaica

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Abstract

This research is utilizing a more sophisticated approach to study the relationship between destination image and behavioral intentions. Actual visitors in Jamaica are surveyed thru convenience sampling. Sample was divided into two segments: First time and repeat visitors. Each analysis was run separately for both segments. Cognitive image, affective image and destination personality was regressed on overall image. Results varied significantly based on the segment. Destination personality, while insignificant among first timers, turned out as the most significant predictor of overall image among repeat visitors. Overall image and above mentioned three predictors were also regressed on behavioral intentions: Recommendation and intention to revisit. Results consistently showed significant variation based on the segment. Practical and academic implications have been discussed.

Keywords

Segmentation, first time versus repeat visitors, destination image, destination personality, Jamaica.

Impact of Message Sensation Value on Young Consumers' Destination Image Perceptions and Behavioral Intentions: Does Sensation Seeking Trait Matter?

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Abstract

This study investigates whether advertisements with different (high or low) message sensation value have different impacts on young consumers with different (high or low) sensation seeking trait with regard to their destination image perception and behavioral intentions. This study also examines whether young consumers' destination image perception predicts their behavioral intentions. The results suggested that high message sensation value (MSV) video are more significant in influencing destination image perceptions for high sensation seeking viewers, and low message sensation value (MSV) video are more significant in influencing the destination image perceptions for low sensation seeking viewers. However, results did not find significant differences in the behavioral intentions among four treatment groups. Destination image was found as a significant predictor of behavioral intentions.

Keywords

Message sensation value, Sensation seeking trait, Destination image, Behavioral intentions.

The Relationship between Tourist's Vacation experience and Behavioral Intentions: Insight from Gay Tourists in Puerto Rico

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Abstract

There is a growing attention on specialized experiences that cater to preferences of gay market. The purpose of this study is to discover vacation experience characteristics, satisfaction levels, and behavioral intentions of gay tourists in Puerto Rico. Based on survey collected from gay tourists, 3 gay vacation experience factors were identified: (1) destination friendliness, (2) destination attraction, and (3) destination activities. In addition, the relationship between these factors and behavioral intentions was investigated. As a result, when gay travelers' expectation related to destination activities and attractions (factor 2 and 3) are exceeded, they are more likely to return, recommend, tell positive things, and tell family about the destination. However, when the expectations of gay friendliness attributes (factor 1) are exceeded, gay travelers are less likely to tell family about the destination. The significance of this study is to deliver useful information to tourism stakeholders help with delineating marketing strategies that specifically target and satisfy the needs of the gay market.

Keywords

Gay Tourism, Behavioral Intentions, Puerto Rico

Does Cruise Destination Image Affect Tourists' Behavioral Intention?

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Abstract

This study examined cruise traveler's perceptions of a cruise tourism destination image and the relationships among key experience constructs like destination image, perceived cruise-ship experience quality, cruise destination experience quality, overall satisfaction, and behavioral intention. Statistical results showed that destination image consists of five sub-categories (e.g. 'Safety and Cleanliness', Natural Environment and Weather', 'Culture and Heritage', 'Convenience', 'Activities'), and cruise experience quality is made up of two-sub categories like perceived cruise-ship experience quality and cruise destination experience quality. SEM results showed that destination image affects tourists' perception on travel experience, overall satisfaction, and future behavior.

Keywords

Behavioral intention, Cruise experience, Cruse destination, Destination experience, Destination image

Introduction

Cruise tourism is a fast growing sector in the tourism industry and researchers have addressed the cruise tourism from a variety of perspectives. For instance, researchers have noticed that cruise tourism has a great potential for destination development (De la Vina & Ford, 2001; Dwyer & Forsyth, 1996, 1998; Henthorne, 2000; Park, 2011; Seidl, Guiliano, & Pratt, 2007). Cruise tourism studies have also been conducted on topics such as cruise tourists' behavior, economic impact of cruise tourism on cruise destination, and the consumer experience onboard the cruise ship (Gabe, Lynch, & McConnon Jr, 2006; Petrick, Li, & Park, 2007; Petrick & Sirakaya, 2004). It has been noted that studies have focused almost exclusively on the “on board” cruise ship experience even though a cruise vacation experience often consists of two main components: the cruise ship experience and the cruise destination experience. The present study addressed this research gap in an integrated research framework, which considered the cruise-ship experience and cruise destination experience.

Destination image is an essential part of destination marketing, and cruise destination image plays an important role in cruise tourists' decision making process. However, there is limited extant research on the role of destination image in the cruise sector. Given that the importance of destination marketing in tourism development, it is imperative to investigate the impacts of cruise destination image on tourists' behavior.

The present study aims at answering following research questions: What is cruise destination image? Does cruise destination image affect important travel constructs? If it does, how the cruise destination image affects tourists' perceived quality, satisfaction and behavioral intention? Therefore, the current study's specific purposes are to investigate cruise destination image constructs, to examine hypothetical relationship between cruise destination image and crucial consumer constructs (e.g. perceived quality, satisfaction, and behavioral intention), and to test hypothetical relationship between cruise-ship experience and cruise destination experience.

Literature Review

Cruise destination image

Destination image is one of most powerful destination marketing tools and a widely researched academic topic (Litvin & Ng Sok Ling, 2001; Pike & Ryan, 2004). The destination image can be defined as the summation of tourists' perception about a tourism destination. (Jeong, Holland, Jun, & Gibson, 2012; San Martín & Rodríguez del Bosque, 2008; Yeh, Chen, & Liu, 2012). It is also commonly accepted that destination image consists of two components: cognitive image and affective image (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Pike & Ryan, 2004). These components enable destination image to play an important role in tourists' decision making process (i.e. destination selection) and evaluation of travel experience after the trip (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Echtner & Ritchie, 2003; S. Lee, Scott, & Kim, 2008).

Tourism scholars and marketing practitioners have paid attention to the role of destination image in tourist behavior. The causal relationships among destination image, attitude, perceived quality, satisfaction, and behavioral intention are some of the most extensively researched topics in destination image literature (T. H. Lee, 2009). According to the previous research, it has been commonly argued that destination image affects tourists' subjective perception, tourist behavior, and decision making process (Chi & Qu, 2008). It is posited that more favorable destination image lead to more positive tourists' responses, such as positive perceived quality and higher satisfaction. Moreover, these positive perceptions about travel experience influence tourists' future behavior and loyalty (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Chi & Qu, 2008; T. H. Lee, 2009; Machado, 2010) .

As each cruise tourism experience is made up of cruise-ship experience and cruise destination experience, it is reasonable for researchers to consider that perceived quality of cruise tourism has two dimensions like perceived quality of cruise-ship experience and perceived quality of cruise destination experience. Therefore, the research hypotheses are the following:

H1: Destination image positively affects perceived quality of cruise-ship experience.
H2: Destination image positively affects perceived quality of cruise destination experience.
H3: Destination image positively affects perceived quality of cruise destination experience.
H4: Destination image positively affects perceived quality of cruise destination experience.

Perceived quality

Service quality is the customers' overall evaluation of service delivery. It can be defined in a number of ways including as the comparison between customer expectation and real performance of service (i.e. SERVQUAL) (Asubonteng, McCleary, & Swan, 1996; Bolton & Drew, 1991) or customer's performance perception (i.e. SERVPERF) (Cronin & Taylor, 1994). In cruise tourism, these two measurement scale are widely used to check cruise service quality (Petrick, 2004; Qu & Ping, 1999). However, these attempts have been generally limited into cruise-ship experience instead of overall cruise ship experience. The cruise destination experience, an important component of the overall experience that has significant influence on tourists' behavior, has been largely neglected. As overall cruise experience includes cruise-ship experience and cruise destination experience, it is essential to integrate experience on cruise-ship and experience at cruise destination into quality measurement framework. Therefore, the current study tried to consider cruise-ship experience and cruise destination experience at same research framework. The research hypotheses are the following:

H5: Perceived cruise service quality affects perceived destination quality.
H6: Perceived cruise service quality affects tourists' satisfaction.
H7: Perceived destination quality affects tourists' satisfaction.
H8: Tourists satisfaction affects their behavioral intention.

Methodology

Survey instruments were adapted from previous destination image studies and SERV-PERVAL scale (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Echtner & Ritchie, 2003; Petrick, 2003). Cruise-ship experience quality items were adapted From SERV-PERVAL scale, and destination experience quality comes from Duman and Mattila's (2005) work. The questionnaire consists of five main components, measuring cruise destination image, perceived quality of cruise ship experience and cruise destination experience, overall satisfaction, behavioral intention, and demographic information.

The survey was conducted at an East Asia cruise program. Participants were sampled on eight separate 4-days voyages for Jeju Island, a famous East Asia tourism destination. A survey questionnaire was distributed to 200 cruise cabins, and cruise crew members gathered 140 questionnaires, resulting in 115 usable samples. In order to investigate cruise destination image components and perceived cruise experience quality, exploratory factor analysis was conducted on cruise destination image measurement items and perceived quality measurement items. In order to evaluate goodness of measurement model, confirmatory factor analysis was performed; a Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis was conducted to examine causal relationship among key research constructs like destination image, perceived quality of cruise-ship experience, perceived quality of cruise destination experience, overall satisfaction, and behavioral intention.

Results

According to the respondents' descriptive information, 30.7% of respondents had previous cruise experience; 67% of respondents were females and 33% of respondents were male. An age group of "25-34 years" and age group of "35~44 years" accounted for 50.88% of respondents; Average income level was between $30,000 and $40,000. Table 1 shows results of exploratory factor analysis for cruise destination image, reveling that the cruise destination image consists of five latent constructs including 'Safety and Cleanliness', Natural Environment and Weather', 'Culture and Heritage', 'Convenience' , and 'Activities '.

Constructs and items	Factor Loading	Mean	Eigenvalue	Construct Reliability
Safety and Cleanliness			9.06	0.84
1. The destination is safe and secure.	0.682	5.71		
2. The destination is clean	0.843	5.73		
3. The destination is friendly	0.704	5.39		
4. The destination is tranquil atmosphere	0.749	5.27		
Natural Environment and Weather			1.95	0.75
5. The destination has pleasant weather.	0.777	4.48		
6. The destination has wonderful scenery	0.790	5.45		
7. The destination has unspoiled wilderness	0.533	5.31		
Culture and Heritage			1.39	0.87
8. The destination has variety of entertainment	0.729	5.00		
9. The destination has tempting cultural event and festival	0.762	4.39		
10. The destination has variety of shows and exhibitions	0.662	5.05		
11. The destination has distinctive history and exhibitions	0.524	4.8		
12. The destination has vintage buildings	0.536	4.78		
Convenience			1.21	0.81
13. The destination has wide selection of restaurants/cuisine	0.569	4.84		
14. The destination has wide variety of shopping facility.	0.742	4.96		
15. The destination has easy access to the area	0.668	4.82		
16. I feel comfortable at a destination.	0.455	5.08		
Activities			1.02	0.84
17. There are exciting water sports	0.860	3.59		
18. There are a variety of outdoor recreations.	0.640	4.49		
19. It is reasonable price for attraction.	0.721	4.11		
20.There is a good bargain shopping	0.591	4.27		
Total % of variance explained			73.23%	

Table 1 Exploratory Factor Analysis Results for Cruise Destination Image

Table 2 Presents results of exploratory factor analysis on perceived cruise experience quality, showing that perceived cruise experience consists of two sub components like cruise destination experience quality and cruise-ship experience quality.

Constructs and items	Factor Loading	Mean	Eigenvalue	Construct Reliability
Cruise destination experience quality			4.00	0.90
Port of call(destinations) is attractive	0.84	5.35		
Destination choice is good	0.90	5.22		
Itinerary to destinations is well organized	0.88	5.23		
Cruise-ship experience quality			1.06	0.89
This cruise ship has a outstanding facility	0.74	5.78		
The quality of F&B is good	0.91	5.41		
The quality of service delivery is good	0.92	5.62		
Total % of variance explained			84.42 %	

Table 2 Exploratory Factor Analysis Results for Perceived Cruise Experience Quality

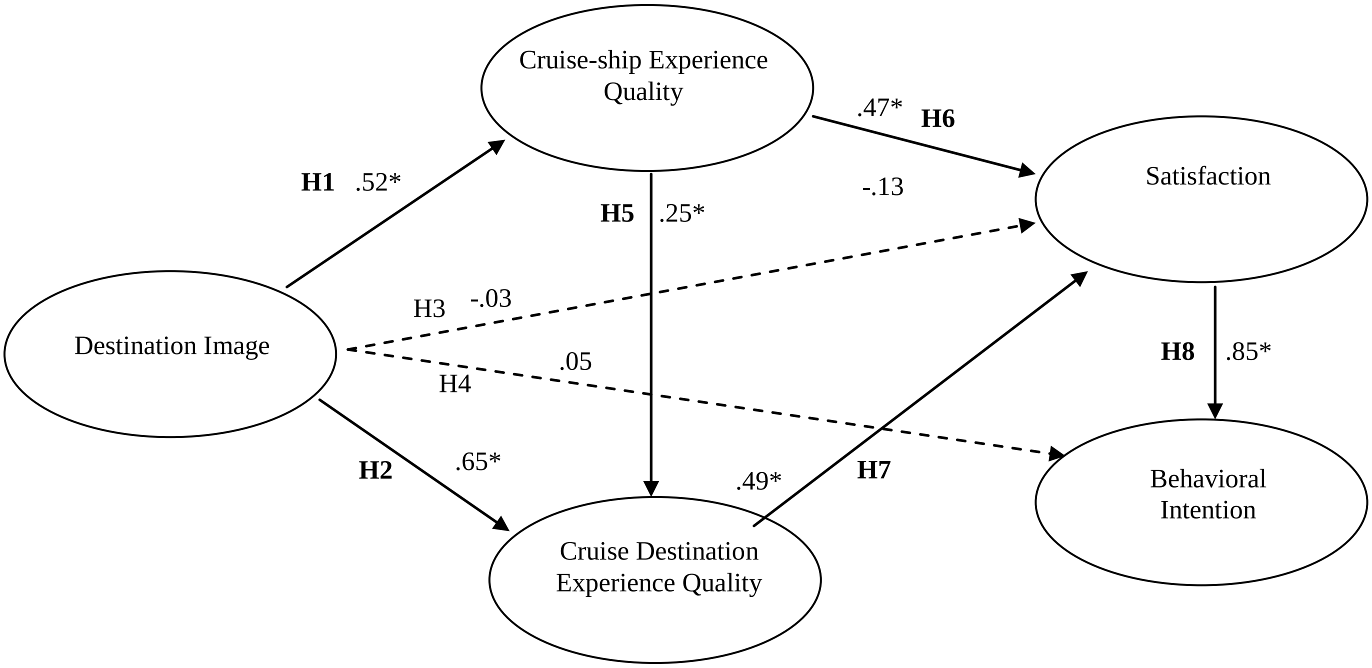
Table 3 shows covariance table of exogenous latent variables such as destination image, destination experience quality, cruise-ship experience quality, overall satisfaction, and behavioral intention. Such a table also provided indices of model goodness for measurement model, showing that the measurement model fits the data appropriately (χ^2= 142.71, df= 94, p=0.001, χ^2/df = 1.518, CFI = .0.965, TLI=.0.955, RMSEA = .067).

	IM	DQ	CQ	Sat	Beh
Image (IM)	0.476				
Destination Experience Quality (DQ)	0.575	1.109			
Cruise-ship Experience Quality (CQ)	0.309	0.539	0.731		
Satisfaction (Sat)	0.385	0.770	0.599	0.824	
Behavioral Intention (Beh)	0.418	0.710	0.603	0.867	1.079

χ^2= 142.71, df= 94, p=0.001, χ^2/df = 1.518, CFI = .0.965, TLI=.0.955, RMSEA = .067

Table 3 Covariance Table of Exogenous Latent Variables

Figure 1 presents results of SEM analysis. According to the results, six hypotheses were supported and two hypotheses were rejected (e.g. H1, H2, H5, H6, H7, and H8 were supported; H3 and H4 were rejected), which means that destination image affects cruise traveler's perceived quality of cruise experience and indirectly affect overall satisfaction and behavioral intention. Moreover, it was verified that destination experience quality is partially affected by cruise ship experience.



* $p < .01$. $\chi^2 = 147.96$, df= 96, p=0.001, χ^2/df = 1.541, CFI = .0.963, TLI=.0.953, RMSEA = .069

Figure 1 Results from the Proposed Structural Model

Discussion And Conclusion

This study examined cruise traveler's perceptions of cruise tourism destination image and relationships among key experience constructs like destination image, perceived cruise-ship experience quality, cruise destination experience quality, overall satisfaction and behavioral intention. Statistical results showed that destination image consists of five sub-categories (e.g. 'Safety and Cleanliness', Natural Environment and Weather', 'Culture and Heritage', 'Convenience', 'Activities'), and cruise experience quality is made up of two-sub categories like perceived cruise-ship experience quality and cruise destination experience quality. SEM results showed that destination image affects tourists' perception on travel experience, overall satisfaction, and future behavior.

Most of previous cruise tourism studies have focused solely on the onboard cruise-ship experience, economic impacts on cruise destination, and a role of cruise-ship brand on tourists' decision. This study shed a light on neglected but important cruise tourism component, cruise destination image. Even though cruise destination image is one of most important factor for determining tourists' decision making process and evaluation of tourists' experience, cruise tourism scholars and practitioners have neglected the crucial role of destination image in cruise tourism. This study is an attempt to awaken cruise tourism academia and industry to the realization that cruise destination experience is significant component of cruise tourism. New findings from this study are valuable not only as a contribution to the body of knowledge but a useful for practical applications in cruise industry. The complete paper presents and discusses the full findings of the study.

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The Mediating Effect of Satisfaction on the Relationship between Service Quality and WOM Intention for EXPO 2012 Yeosu Korea: A Caregivers' Perspective

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Abstract

This study was to empirically examine among event service quality, satisfaction and WOM intentions as caregivers' view for people with disability. To attempt the purpose, this study utilized structure equation modeling (SEM) with the mediating analysis. The results showed that the relationship among event service quality, satisfaction, and WOM intentions is fully mediated. Especially, only service convenience factor in service quality directly influence satisfaction and indirectly WOM intentions indirectly. Therefore, this study suggested that service convenience is the most important factor to enhance satisfaction and WOM intentions for caregivers. Overall, this study may contribute to provide potential implications for event organizers and other hospitality industries related to people with disabilities or caregivers.

Keywords

caregiver, perspective, people with disabilities, event service quality, satisfaction, word of mouth(WOM) intention

Introduction

According to the United Nations (2012), over a billion people, or approximately 15% of the world's population, live with some type of disability and often face barriers to participation in many aspects of society. As the disabled population increases, the need for caregivers is also increasing. A caregiver is a person who is responsible for helping people with disabilities, for example, a family member or a relative (Bedini, 2002). When people with mobility impairments travel, their caregivers can often help to alleviate the stress caused by inconvenience they encounter during travel (Wiles, 2003).

Tourism, usually a pleasant experience for tourists, can create barriers for tourists with disabilities. Gladwell and Bedini (2004) indicate that people with disabilities are less likely to travel to unfamiliar places due to "a number of barriers" such as uncomfortable facilities and discriminatory attitudes toward disabilities. However, when they are accompanied by caregivers when traveling, they are able to participate in many tourist activities. Caregivers play a significant role in reducing "social barriers" for people with disabilities (Mckercher, Packer, Yau, & Lam, 2003). As a result, company of caregivers will likely increase the willingness for people with disabilities to travel (Gladwell & Bedini, 2004).

Despite the important role of caregivers in the travel experience of people with disabilities, there is little understanding of caregivers' experience or perspectives in the tourism and event literature. Existent literature is primarily focused on studying tourists with disabilities such as assessing their travel-related behaviors (Burnett & Baker, 2001), understanding people with disabilities' changing view on holiday making (Shaw & Coles, 2004), constraints and negotiations to pleasure travel (Daniels, Rodgers, & Wiggins, 2005), accessibility and attitudinal barriers (Bi, Card, & Cole, 2007), and leisure travel motivations (Shi, Cole, & Chancellor, 2012). However, we should consider caregivers' roles in the travel experience of people with disabilities because their perceptions or experiences can be directly associated with tourists with disabilities (Yates, Tennstedt, & Chang, 1999).

Although ample studies have found significant relationships among service quality, satisfaction and Word-of-Mouth (WOM) communication, they are mostly done from the tourists' perspective. If caregivers can impact decision making and the travel experience of tourists with disabilities, the relationships among service quality, satisfaction and WOM should also be examined from the caregivers' perspective.

Due to the intangible nature of events, WOM communication is of critical importance for participants (Murray & Schlacter, 1990; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985). For event management, they need to understand the role of WOM because it has a strong relationship with service quality of the event (Harrison-Walker, 2001), and satisfaction of event attendees (Kotler, 1994). Based on evidence from the literature, the following hypothesized model is tested using a sample of caregivers who accompany people with disabilities who attended the EXPO 2012 in Yeosu, Korea: 1) service quality will positively influence satisfaction, 2) service quality will positively influence WOM intention, 3) satisfaction will positively influence WOM intentions, and 4) satisfaction plays a mediating role in the model.

Methods

A total of 230 surveys were collected from caregivers who visited the 2012 YEOSU Expo in South Korea to accompany people with mobility impairments. Of the surveys collected, 214 were usable. A little over half of the respondents were male (55.6%, N=119) and 44.4% were female (N= 95). The majority of the respondents were family and relatives (93%) of people with mobility impairments. Other relationships included service provided by public facility (5.1%), friends (1.4%), and groups from school (0.5%).

The eleven items used to measure event service quality were derived from results of the pre-interview and survey for deriving items and previous studies related to events and festivals (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Crompton & Love, 1995; Lee, Lee, & Choi, 2011; Getz, O'neill & Carlsen, 2001). Six items used to measure event satisfaction were adapted from several tourism studies (Lee et al., 2011; Lee, Yoon, & Lee, 2007). Finally, WOM-intention scales were adapted from Baker and Crompton's (2000) loyalty subscale. All responses were measured on a seven-point Likert scale, with one 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree. To avoid response bias, the items were randomly placed in the questionnaire.

Result

This study conducted a two-step analysis—a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and mediating effect through structure equation modeling (SEM)—using SPSS 18.0 and Amos 18 software. First, CFA was conducted to assess the measurement properties of the selected constructs and factors (Arbuckle, 2006). The final measurement model includes 20 items: service quality (11 items), event satisfaction (6 items), and WOM intention (3 items). The measurement model has an acceptable fit, as indicated by Table 1. All factor loadings were greater than .50, ranging from .56 to .93. Overall factors were estimated and internally consistent with a range of α =. 763 (service convenience) to α = .935 (event satisfaction). Correlations among research variables were acceptable, ranging from .49 to .80, except one case (event satisfaction and WOM intentions), which indicates the discriminant validity of the measures (Kline, 2005). Taken together, the results provide strong evidence for the convergent and reasonable level of discriminant validity of the measurement scales (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2005).

Second, the hypothesized model was tested with the mediating effect of event satisfaction (Arbuckle, 2006). The simultaneous equation fit well with the data as shown in Figure 1. To examine the mediating effect between event service quality and WOM intentions via event satisfaction, this study explored the direct and indirect effect with bootstrapping. Among three dimensions of event service quality, only convenience was significant (β = .39, S.E. = .168, $p < .05$). However, there is no direct effect between convenience and WOM intentions. The direct path from event satisfaction to WOM intention is also significant (β = .78, S.E. = .088). Therefore, this result shows the convenience factor has a full mediating effect. Consequently, to confirm the mediating effect, a Sobel test was conducted. The results of the Sobel test were statistically significant (Sobel test = 4.81, $p < .001$).

Conclusion

Since the role of caregiver is to accompany with people with disabilities, they enable many people with disabilities to participate in travel experiences. Therefore, it is important to understand caregivers' perceptions of travel and tourism service quality, their satisfaction levels with travel and tourism services, and their behavioural intentions. The findings of the study reveal the relationships among participants' perceived service quality of EXPO 2012, satisfaction, and WOM intentions from the perspectives of caregivers. As the mediating analysis indicates, event satisfaction plays an important role in influencing WOM intentions. Specifically, service convenience is the most important factor that impacts caregivers' satisfaction and their WOM intentions. Meanwhile, there is no significant impact of service equipment and service providers on either satisfaction or WOM intentions. The results show that caregivers are most likely to consider service convenience when travelling with people with disabilities. In conclusion, convenience of facilities and services is the primary concern for caregivers and people with disabilities. When planning and organizing mega-events, it is necessary to focus on convenience and capacity of event facilities. Service convenience of event facilities is the important factor to determine the quality of event for not only people with disabilities but also general event tourists. Therefore, it is crucial to improve convenience of event facilities for successful management of the event.

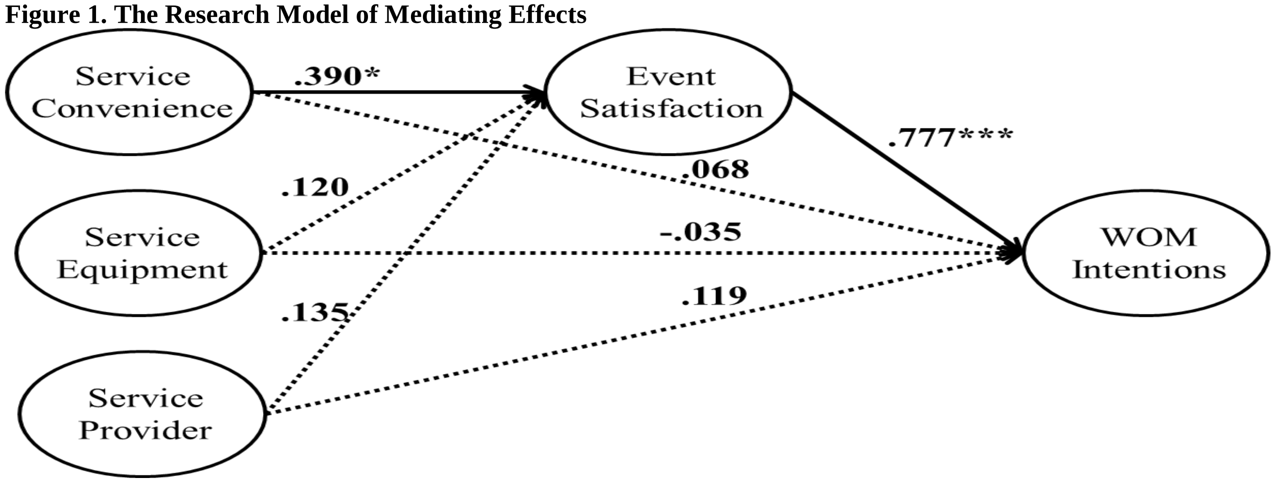
Table 1. The Result of Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Factors & Items	Mean	SD	Factor	Reliability	AVE

			Loading		
Service Convenience (4)				.763	.465
Convenient to use restaurant	4.31	1.04	.556		
Convenient to use entrance	5.16	1.01	.714		
Convenient to move	5.44	.86	.752		
Convenient to enjoy program	5.32	.97	.691		
Service Equipment (3)				.768	.547
Excellent Facilities related to disabilities and elders	5.75	.84	.622		
Rental equipment	5.26	1.01	.776		
Excellent equipment for disabilities and elders	4.94	.93	.808		
Service Provider (4)				.866	.639
Willingness to help	5.22	.86	.781		
Kindness	5.33	.87	.845		
Easiness to assess for helps	5.16	.96	.854		
Information related to disabilities and elders	4.84	1.04	.708		
Satisfaction(6)				.935	.705
Overall satisfaction	5.64	.73	.822		
More satisfied than expectation	5.66	.76	.852		
Thoughtful event for disabilities	5.81	.78	.821		
More satisfied than time and expense	5.80	.81	.864		
Satisfied with program and system	5.93	.81	.848		
Emotional Satisfaction	6.23	.79	.831		
Word-of-Mouth Intentions (3)				.914	.787
Intention to visit similar events	6.00	.82	.907		
Positive recommendation	6.15	.84	.930		
Recommendation toward other disability and elders	6.41	.78	.820		

Note. χ^2/df = 457.981/160 = 2.862, GFI = .822, CFI = .903, SRMR = .0587, RMSEA = .094

Figure 1. The Research Model of Mediating Effects



Note 1. $p < .05$ *, $p < .01$ **, $p < .001$ ***
Note 2. χ^2/df = 465.470/163 = 2.856, GFI = .819, CFI = .902, SRMR = .0585, RMSEA = .093

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How to Make Your Facebook Posts Attractive: A Case Study on Super 8 Hotel's Fan Page

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Abstract

Building on the premise that hotels always hope fans engage in interaction on Facebook, we aim to identify the most effective post in drawing larger number of fans to like, comment on, or share it. In the case of Super 8 Hotel's Facebook, 14 underlying factors are identified in a content analysis of its posts. By using multilevel longitudinal regression, it is verified that it's not a smart idea to provide too much information about hotel product attributes. The posts expressed in humor and ended with request to like the post tend to get more "like". Attached questions for getting ideas from fans may get more "comments". Pictures can provide the post with a higher opportunity to get shared.

Keywords

Facebook, Communication, Content Analysis, Super 8.

E-Service Quality of Online Review Websites

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Abstract

Consumer-generated content in the format of online review websites have increased substantially in recent years. The purpose of this study is to examine customers' perceptions of e-service quality of online review websites. Utilizing an e-satisfaction scale, exploratory factor analysis revealed three main dimensions of e-satisfaction. In sum, the three factors for this group are trust/safety/security, convenient information, and design/features. These factors were then utilized in a multiple regression to determine a relationship with satisfaction and loyalty. Positive relationships between all three e-service quality dimensions and satisfaction were found. In addition, trust/safety/security and convenient information positively lead to loyalty.

Keywords

E-service quality, online review websites, e-satisfaction, consumer-generated content.

A Study on the Correlation between Cruising Motivation and Cruising Intention

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Abstract

The purpose of the paper is to identify the motivation factors influencing the intention of the cruise passengers and to study the correlation between the cruising motivation and the cruising intention. With the growing potential of cruising industry in China, a problem that how to master the cruising both motivation and intention is closely relevant to the cruise lines. Therefore, the paper is of great significance in practice. Moreover, it contributes to the research of Chinese passengers' behavior with respect to the cruise industry.

Based on the push-pull model (Crompton, 1979) and all the elements of motivation mentioned in the relevant literature, the paper proposed that the push-factors of cruising motivation should be classified into four categories, comprising escape/relaxation, socialization, family bonding, social recognition, while the pull-factors of cruising motivation should consist of two ones, including entertainment and ashore tour. In particular, the push-factor of family bonding was identified as the variable suiting the passengers with the eastern culture background. As a result, a six-factor model of cruising intention was developed and six hypotheses were proposed, H1: relaxation is positively associated with cruising intention, H2: socialization is positively associated with cruising intention, H3: family bonding is positively associated with cruising intention, H4: social recognition is positively associated with cruising intention, H5: entertainment is positively associated with cruising intention, H6: ashore tour is positively associated with cruising intention.

In order to collect data, a random-sampling survey through questionnaires was carried out in the Shanghai International Cruise Passenger Center (North Bund) and Wusongkou International Cruise Terminal of Shanghai in May, 2012. The respondents of the survey were passengers of two cruise liners. One was the Victoria of Costa Cruise Lines, which called upon Jeju, Busan of South Korea, and Fukuoka, Kagoshima of Japan. The other was the Legend of the Sea, which called upon Inchon, Jeju of South Korea and Kagoshima, Fukuoka of Japan. The survey was carried out in two phases. Phase one was a pilot test involving 72 cruise passengers. The purpose of the pilot test was to ensure the quality of the questionnaire. After that, the main study was carried out. It involved 300 cruise passengers, yielding a total of 300 questionnaires. And 296 questionnaires were returned. However, 21 questionnaires were incomplete or invalid, and they had to be discarded, resulting in 275 questionnaires for use.

The results of data analysis and hypotheses test indicated that the independent variables of relaxation, family bonding, entertainment, and ashore tour were positively associated with cruising intention, while the rest of independent variables, social recognition and socialization, were not. The highly positive correlation between relaxation and cruising intention was consistent with the attribute of cruise, the type of vacation tour. The positive correlation of family bonding and cruising intention demonstrated that a cruise was appropriate to the family-tour. Tourists with eastern culture background considered family as one of their core values. Our survey indicated that a large proportion of aged passengers took the cruise vacation which is purchased by their children. It was filial piety that was the major motivation factor triggering cruising intention. The relatively significant correlation of entertainment and cruising intention accounted for entertainment's importance in influencing cruising passengers' consuming decision. Diverse performances, games, casino on ship were unique to the cruise and should be the advantages of cruise promotion. The itinerary of cruise was another major factor impacting the potential passengers' decision. And the ashore tour, with the center of call-upon port, had the limited space of a cruise expanded largely. When a potential passenger made a purchase decision, the call-upon ports and the ashore tours would be weighed

much. Theoretically, for cruise, socialization should be one of the motivation factors impacting intention for the ship. However, the data analysis indicated that the motivation of relaxation was not positively correlated with intention. One major reason was that the respondents to our survey are the passengers with eastern cultures background. The Chinese passengers stamped by the culture had weak motivation for sociable parties. That gave a hint to the cruise line that simply copying the products for European and American is definitely not wise. Although cruising tour can be classified into the high quality tourism product, the motivation of social recognition was absolutely not the major factor influencing the potential passengers' intention. One reason was that with the traveler getting more experienced, the motivation of prestige through travelling becomes weakened. The other reason was that a few price-sensitive travelers have become cruise passengers as the result of various promoting ways employed by cruise lines, in order to expand their market shares.

Although the study is considered to be a contribution to travel motivation of Chinese passengers, it is nonetheless subject to some limitations. First, the number of samples was not very adequate. And the survey to collect data, carried out in Shanghai, does not necessarily represent the whole Chinese population. Second, since only two cruise lines were reached in our survey, generalizing the current results to other cruise lines should be done with caution. Third, the study has developed a valid and reliable measurement scale for motivation to cruising. Further testing of the scale with other samples such as cruisers in other regions of China would be useful to refining the measurement scale.

Keywords

Cruise passengers, cruising motivation, cruising intention, correlation analysis

Acknowledgement

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A Customer-Based Brand Equity Model for Upper-Midscale Hotels

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Abstract

This study examines how hotel customers process brand and price information toward brand loyalty by adopting a customer-based brand equity model (CBBE). The extended CBBE in this study newly incorporates the concepts of perceived price and price fairness, as compared to brand awareness. Furthermore, satisfaction is introduced as an additional mediating construct between perceived value and brand loyalty. Results showed that the significance of all relationships in particular, perceived price and price fairness appear to influence perceived value through different pathways. Furthermore, satisfaction was found to increase brand loyalty. Managerial implications and suggestions for future research are provided based on the study results.

Keywords

Customer-based brand equity model (CBBE), upper-midscale hotel, perceived price, price fairness, satisfaction.

The Impact of Restaurant Green Practices: Does it Really Influence Restaurant Image and Customer Attitude?

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Abstract

This study examined whether customers' perceptions of restaurant green practices have a positive influence on customers' perceptions of restaurant green images and customers' overall attitude toward a restaurant. It also examined if the customers' perceived restaurant green images has a positive influence on overall attitude toward a restaurant. Additionally, the study investigated the moderating effect of different green customer segments. Lastly, the study identified the important green practices that influence the perception of restaurant green images. The result indicated that the perception of green practices significantly influenced perception of restaurant green image and this image also significantly influenced the customers' overall attitude to a restaurant. However, the impact of green practices on overall attitude was not significant. This study provides practical implications for substantive green restaurant management and offers a theoretical contribution for the study of green restaurants. Detailed findings and implications are provided in the manuscript.

Keywords

Restaurant green practices, Customer attitude, Green image, Green marketing

Introduction

Due to the intangible characteristics of the restaurant industry, this critical linkage among green practices, company image, and customer behavior has an even greater impact on the restaurant business. Customers may highly depend on the image of a restaurant when they make dining decisions. Presumably, they are more likely to choose a restaurant with a stronger positive image (Namkung & Jang, 2012).

Even with this critical impact of green practices for green image generation in restaurant customers' green behavior, not many studies have examined the important role of green practices as green image generators nor have they examined impacts of green practices. Many of the green studies done in the hospitality industry were conducted from a company's prospective (Choi & Parsa, 2006; Chou, Chen, & Wang, 2012). The studies examined how companies behave while considering factors of adopting green practices (Chou et al.,2012) and investigated the direct effect of green attributes on the companies' finical performances (Choi & Parsa, 2006). Recently, Namkung and Jang (2012) discovered that green practices significantly influence customers' perceptions of a brand's green image and corresponding behavioral intentions. However, their studies examined the impact of green practices and brand images on customers' ideas of "green" behavioral intentions, not the overall behavior intention to a restaurant. From their results, it is difficult to see if green practices have a substantive and genuine positive impact on customers' behavior.

In order to examine whether green practices have a substantive overall influence on restaurant customers' behavior, customers' overall attitude to a company was employed in this study. Because the role of two major components structuring one's attitude - values and beliefs - are essentially fundamental elements in explaining customers' green behavior and the unique nature of a restaurant's green attributes regarding customers' perceived direct and indirect benefits of consuming green attributes, it seems more appropriate to examine customers' attitudes toward a restaurant than to examine customers' overall behavioral intentions in the context of green behavior.

Through the discovery of the substantive impact of green practices on customers' overall attitudes toward a restaurant, this study would offer a more appropriate theoretical model to explain restaurant customers' green behavior. Also, this study provides practical guidelines for effective green marketing management in restaurant operations.

To fill the research gap, this study's research questions are: 1) Do customers' perceptions of green practices critically influence customers' perceptions of restaurants' green images and overall attitude toward restaurants? 2) Does the green image critically influence overall attitudes? 3) What are key green practices influencing green image? 4) Do the effects of green practice perception work differently in different green customer segments?

Literature Review

Restaurant Green Practices and Its Impacts

One renowned green organization in the restaurant industry is the Green Restaurant Association (GRA). GRA is a non-profit organization helping to revolutionize the restaurant industry by implementing sustainable practices including educating restaurant employers and employees and encouraging customers to dine in green restaurants. There are seven environmental categories that GRA emphasizes: energy efficiency and conservation, water efficiency and conservation, recycling and composting, sustainable food, recycled and biodegradable products, non-toxic cleaning and chemical products, and green building and construction (Green Restaurant Association, 2002).

Engaging in green practices not only helps restaurateurs obtain a socially responsible business and save long-term operating costs but also helps them gain competitive advantages such as possessing a positive image and reputation. One major impact of green practices on restaurants is establishing a superior image that the company is environmentally responsible (Miles & Russell, 1997). A study done by Miles and Russell (1997) provide excellent support for the impact of green practices. Their study, which examined the relationship between reputation formed by green practices, environmental performance, and financial performance, strongly indicated that demonstrating good environmental stewardship helps create a reputational advantage that leads to enhanced marketing and financial performance. Little research has been done to estimate this major impact of green practices. Therefore, more empirical studies to examine this impact are needed.

Restaurant Green Image – Its Formation and Impact

In a study of store image in marketing, Bloemer and Ruyter (1998) defined store image as a consumer's perception of a store based on particularly noticeable attributes and expressed as a function of salient attributes of a particular store that are evaluated and compared to one another.

Ryu, Han, and Kim (2008) investigated the relationships among overall quick/casual restaurant image, perceived value, customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions. By emphasizing customers' perceptions of a store's image in terms of functional attributes, they discovered that restaurant image significantly influences perceived value and is a significant predictor of customer behavior. Nguyen and LeBlance's (1998) findings also support the relationship between corporate image and customers' retention decisions. They suggested that customers who form a positive overall impression of a financial institution were more likely to prefer the organization.

Based on the study of store image, restaurants' ecological images can be expressed by salient green attributes of a particular restaurant. A restaurant's green image can be described as a dinners' mental definition of a restaurant, formed by the restaurant's performance of green practices. A study of corporate image in marketing indicates that the function of green practices is a component of developing the image of a company. According to Nguyen and Leblanc (2001), corporate image can be identified by five determinants: corporate identity, reputation, service offering, physical environment, and contact personnel in the service industry from the customers' prospective. The results indicated that corporate image is derived mainly from reputation. In a study of CSR, executing green practices has been considered an essential component to measure corporate reputation, a main element of corporate image (Schwaiger, 2004).

Restaurant Customers' Attitudes

According to psychology and consumer behavior studies, one of the major components in predicting customers' behavior is attitude, which is mainly shaped by personal or social values and beliefs. Consumers' green behaviors are highly influenced by their genuine altruistic beliefs toward the environment and social values regarding status enhancement.

Altruism involves the act of doing something good for others without expecting anything in return. People are presumed to engage in conservation primarily because they intrinsically care, at some level, about the well-being of the planet and its inhabitants (Fransson & Garling, 1999; Stern & Dietz, 1994). Consumers desire to achieve public recognition as green customers, which motivate pro-environmental behavior (Griskevicius et al., 2010). Customers' genuine altruism toward the environment and restaurant customers' desire to obtaining status enhancement through dining in green restaurants may develop into an overall positive attitude toward a restaurant with superior performance in sustainability. In the context of green behavior, it seems more appropriate to examine customers' attitudes toward a restaurant rather than customers' overall behavioral intentions.

Conceptual Framework And Hypotheses Of The Study

Based on the literature review, the researchers offer the following hypotheses:

H1: Customers' perceptions of green practices significantly influence their perceptions of the green image of a restaurant.

H2: Customers' perceptions of green practices significantly influence customers' overall attitudes toward a restaurant.

H3: Customers' perceptions of green image of a restaurant significantly influence customers' overall attitudes toward restaurant.

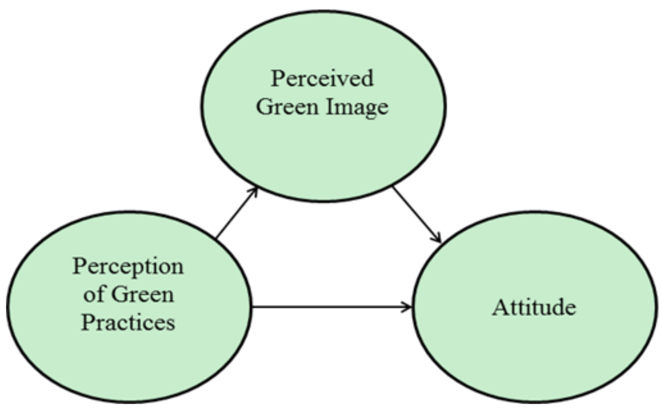


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

Methodlogy

A self-administered survey questionnaire was developed. The survey included five parts: 1) perceived customer effectiveness, 2) perception of green practices, 3) perception of green image, 4) attitude, and 5) demographics. In perceived customer effectiveness, which is generally considered an important measure to predict customers' green behaviors, respondents were asked about attitudes or beliefs that may positively influence their behavioral outcomes toward ecological problems (Straughan and Roberts, 1999). In the perception of green practices measure, respondents were asked to evaluate perceived performance of green practices based on their experience in the surveyed restaurant. Based on the LeBlanc and Nguyen's (1996) and Schwaiger's (2004) studies, four items were developed to indicate respondents' perceived green image of the restaurant. In the fourth section, respondents were asked to rate their attitude toward the survey restaurant, and seven items were adopted from Bennett and Rundle-Thiele's study (2002). All four sections were measured using a 7-point Likert-scale.

The data was collected from a restaurant located on a Midwestern University campus in the US. A total of 349 responses were collected. Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) two-step approach was employed. To investigate the moderating effect of different green customer groups, multiple group analysis was performed. Lastly, multiple regressions were executed to determine key green practices influencing perceived green image and attitude.

Result

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The reliability of the measurement items was assessed by Cronbach's. The level of internal consistency for the three constructs ranged from .815 to .901, which exceeded the minimum requirement of .60 (Hair et al., 1998). α To assess convergent validity, standardized factor loadings for all measurement items and an average variance extracted (AVE) were estimated. All measurement items had standardized loading estimates of 0.5 or higher (ranged from .615 to .876), and were all significant at the alpha level of .001. Additionally, the AVE of the three constructs ranged from .503 to .693, which exceeded the minimum hurdle of .5. To assess the discriminant validity of each construct, the squared correlations between the constructs were compared with the AVE. Each construct squared correlation between pairs of constructs was less than the AVEs (Fornell & Larker, 1981).

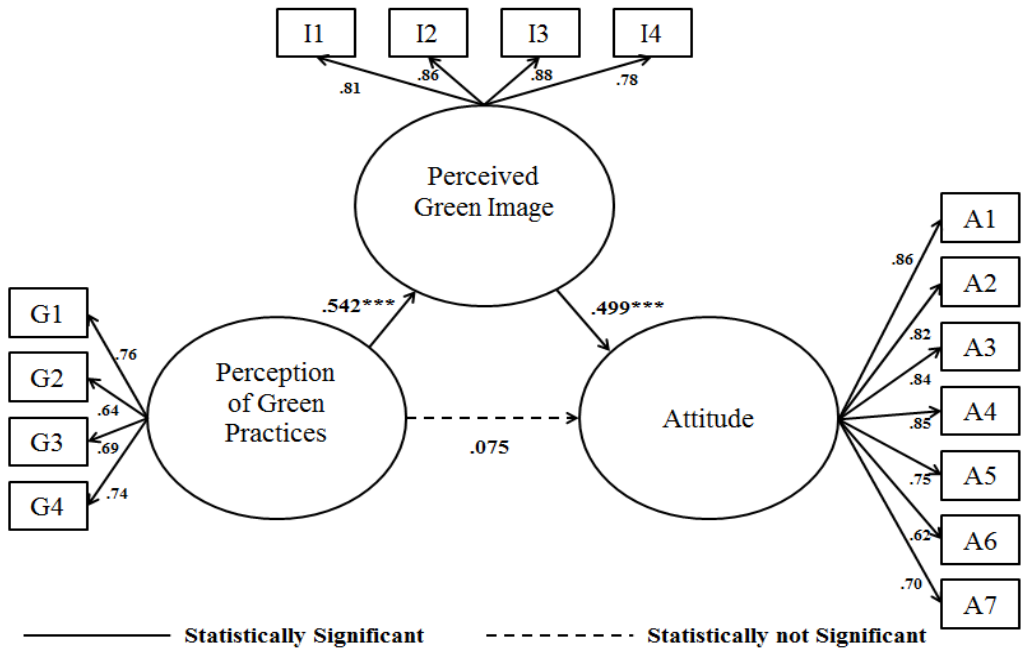
Variables	Standardized loading	t-statistic	P-value	Cronbach α	AVE
Perception of Green Practices				.815	.503
Recyclable take-out containers	.737				
Recycling waste	.692	8.726	.001		
Water-efficient equipment	.640	8.786	.001		
Energy-efficient equipment	.762	9.381	.001		
Perception of Green Image				.897	.693
Starbucks behaves in a socially conscious way.	.813				
I have the impression that Starbucks in very responsive to environment issue.	.863	18.321	.001		
Starbucks is concerned about the preservation of the environment.	.876	18.640	.001		
I have the feeling that Starbucks in not only concerned about the profit but also concerned about the environment and other consumers.	.775	15.871	.001		
Attitude				.901	.593
Bad-Good	.798				
Unpleasant-Pleasant	.815	16.553	.001		
Unfavorable-Favorable	.841	17.227	.001		
Negative-Positive	.845	17.380	.001		
Undesirable-Desirable	.754	14.951	.001		
Unwise-Wise	.615	11.647	.001		
Unlikely-Likely	.697	13.540	.001		

Table 1: Results of confirmatory factor analysis for measurement model

Structural Model and Relationship Testing

The proposed model was estimated to investigate the relationship among the three proposed constructs. The goodness-of-fit statistics of the model showed that it has a reasonable fit with the data. Perception of green practices significantly influenced customers' perceptions of the restaurant green image. The green image significantly affected customers' attitudes. However, customers' perceptions of green practices did not significantly influence their attitude.

Even though the result showed that customers' perceptions of green practices may not have a direct impact on customers' overall attitude toward a restaurant, the indirect impact of green practices on attitude can be detected as well. Through green image constructs, the perception of green practices indirectly influences customers to have positive feelings toward a restaurant. The indirect effect of green practices on attitude is .270 (=.542×.499), calculated by multiplying the two indirect path coefficients. Furthermore, the path coefficient (.542) designated to explain the relationship between perception of green practices and green image indicated that other determinants influencing perceived green image may exist.



Note: ***p< .001, **p< .01, *p< .05

Figure 2. Result of Structural Model

Path	Standardized Estimate	t-statistic	P-value	Relationship
Green Practices → Green Image	.542	7.222	.001***	Significant
Green Image → Attitude	.499	6.748	.001***	Significant
Green Practices → Attitude	.075	.967	.333	Not Significant

Goodness-of-fits statistics	Structural Model	Cut-off Value
	Chi-square=179.938	N/A
	Normed Chi-square=2.068	1.0-5.0
	NFI=.934	>.90
	TLI=.951	>.90
	CFI=.964	>.90
	IFI=.965	>.90
	RMSEA=.055	.05-.08:Mediocre fit >.05:Good fit

*Note:****p*<.001, ***p*<.01, **p*<.05

Table 2: Structural Parameter Estimates and Fit Indices

Moderating effect of green vs. less green customers

A multiple group analysis was performed to investigate the moderating effect of different customer groups. To reflect each group's definite and distinctive disposition toward ecological matters, one hundred respondents with the highest PCE scores (average =6.39) and one hundred respondents with the lowest PCE scores (average =4.22) were used for the group analysis. In the green group, two paths indicated a relationship between perception of green practices and green image, and a relationship between green image and attitude were statistically significant at the alpha level of .001. In the less green group, only one path coefficient indicating the relationship between green image and attitude was statistically significant at the alpha level of .001. To discover the statistical differences between these two groups, the chi-square difference between the unconstrained and constrained models was estimated. The results of the f-test indicated that the difference in χ^2 was not statistically significant. Comparison of the structural models' path coefficients and their statistical significance indicated differences in explaining the relationships of three constructs between the two groups. Since the result showed the groups are not significantly different from one another, this result should be interpreted cautiously. The result implicitly showed that less green customers' perceptions of green practices may not influence either their perception of green image or attitude. From a managerial perspective, enhancing the green image of the restaurant might be more critical than the performance of green practices to encourage a positive attitude toward the restaurant in less green customers.

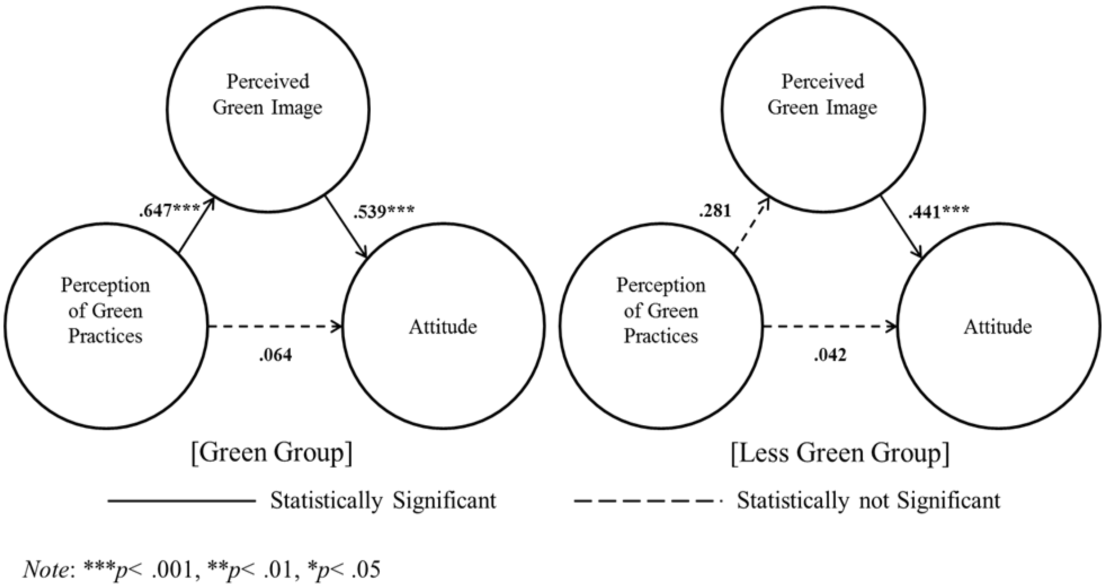


Figure 3: Result of Structural Model for Green vs. Less Green Groups

Restaurant green practices influencing perceived green image

In order to explain which green practices were influencing customers' perceived green image of the restaurant, multiple regression analysis was executed for the green group. The result showed that three green practices have statistically significant influences on customers' perceptions of green image. Based on the parameter estimates, using recyclable take out containers was identified as the most important practice affecting green image. This result indicated that restaurant green practices which were more visible to customers were the key practices which influence customers' construction of the green image of a restaurant. Because the setting of this study was a café, using recyclable cups was one of the most visible green attributes since most of the core products were served in take-out cups. Using water-efficient equipment has no significant impact on green image perception. Compared to the visibility of the three other green practices, water-efficient equipment might be difficult for customers to observe. Restaurant green practices that are visible and offer clear green cues to customers seemed to be the key practices that influence green image formation.

Variables	Unstandardized coefficients	SE	Standardized coefficients	t	p-value
Recyclable take-out containers	.251	.087	.331	2.895**	.004
Recycling the waste	.173	.084	.204	2.064*	.039
Water-efficient equipment	.018	.083	.024	.220	.826
Energy-efficient lighting	.178	.080	.243	2.229*	.026

Note: ***$p < .001$, **$p < .01$, *$p < .05$

Table 3: Green Practices Influencing Perception of Green Image

Conclusion

The result of this study offered both theoretical and practical contributions. By employing attitude construct, the study provided a theoretical model that explains whether green practices have a substantive overall influence on restaurant customers' behavior. This study also provides practical guidelines for effective green marketing management in restaurant operations.

Conventionally, environmental practices are not considered a part of the core functional service in restaurants. It is possible that customers may perceive green practices as secondary or supplementary services that do not always provide direct benefits to customers themselves. Therefore, the aforementioned direct impact of green practices on customers' overall attitudes might not be discovered in a restaurant setting.

To elicit a positive customer attitude toward a restaurant, industry professionals should focus on green image enhancement. The key green practices that influence green images are primarily tangible ones. Adopting tangible and observable green practices, such as recyclable take-out containers or napkins, would have more impact on customers when they consider the green image of a restaurant.

In reality, customers' perceived green image of a restaurant can be greatly affected by other sources, such as green advertisements, rather than customers' perceptions of green practices in the restaurant. Even though a company performs excellent green practices, the customers' perception of its green image may stay the same. Through other resources that stimulate perceived green image, such as executing green advertisements, restaurateurs may effectively induce customers' positive attitude toward a restaurant.

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Navigation Outcomes of DMO Website Features

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Abstract

Destination marketing organization (DMO) websites are used to help for more effective marketing. As DMO websites provide both computer and human elements, web users' utilitarian and hedonic needs may be fulfilled by navigating the websites. Further these websites facilitate learning about destination. Using 519 U.S. resident samples via online survey, this study found that informativeness and interactivity have positive effects on utilitarian performance while playfulness and design have positive effects on hedonic performance. Both perceived utilitarian and hedonic performance increased the levels of familiarity with, interest in, and knowledge about the destination. DMO marketers and web managers should develop the sites which are informative, interactive, fun, and visually appealing, thereby attracting potential visitors.

Keywords

DMO, website feature, utilitarian and hedonic performance, navigation outcome

Brand Emotional Attachment in Travel Social Network Websites: The Long-term Goal for Travel Organizations

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Abstract

This study develops a theory-based model of commitment and brand image in an online travel context. Data was collected from 236 participants. The authors have identified five factors that influence the formation of brand emotional attachment (BEA) through successful travel social network platforms: virtual interactivity, reward activities, brand image, and affective commitment. The test of the associations among these elements proposes that travel and tourism organizations can improve by enhancing brand attachment as a long term goal if travel organizations can manage their travel OSN websites adequately. This is one of the primary investigations in this area and study results provide theoretical and practical implications in relation to building brand emotional attachment (BEA) in the travel-related OSN websites.

Keywords

brand emotional attachment, brand image, affective commitment

Introduction

Brand attachment, the long-term outcome of brand relationships (Esch, Langner, Schmitt, & Geus, 2006), is created and enhanced when consumers develop strong emotional bonds with brands (Thomson, MacInnis, & Park, 2005). In this respect, travel-related online social network (OSN) websites not only offer industry experts additional communication platforms and process of interactivity, but also permit them to establish emotional bonds and form affective commitment among current and prospective consumers.

OSNs have gained substantial recognition in travel and tourism contexts and the effect of OSN websites is substantial for travel and tourism businesses (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). Consumers benefit from the virtual platforms to acquire travel related information and share their personal experiences, comments, opinions, reviews on vacations and travel packages. Only a few studies have investigated structural relationships between (BEA), and the factors that influence BEA. The present study is twofold: 1) to examine the structural relationship between brand image and affective commitment with BEA; and, 2) to identify the contributing factors to both brand image and affective commitment.

Research questions:

1. What are the key antecedents that contribute to the development of brand image in travel-related OSN websites?

2. What are the key antecedents that contribute to the development of affective commitment in travel-related OSN websites?

3. How brand image through social network websites help to enhance BEA?

4. How affective commitment contributes to enhance BEA?

Theoretical Foundations And Hypotheses Development

Influencing factors of brand attachment

The examination of the literature has revealed five factors that influence the formation of brand emotional attachment through the use of travel-related OSN websites: brand image, affective commitment, virtual interactivity (VI), reward activities, brand image, and affective commitment.

Brand Emotional Attachment (BEA)

According to Bowlby (1979) an attachment is a bond between a person and a particular person or object. Esch et al. (2006) perceive brand attachment as a longer-lasting, commitment-inducing bond between brands and consumers. In the travel context, it is expected the ultimate outcome of brand relationships – namely BEA (brand emotional attachment) – is a determinant outcome of travel social network relationships.

Brand Image

Brand image is a set of perceptions about a brand reflected by brand associations for consumers (Cretu & Brodie, 2007). Faircloth (2001) indicates that consumers develop an image through a combination of signs and messages emanated by the brand. In this study, brand image refers to the extent to which travel-related OSN websites assist members to perceive quality, to create a positive attitude, and to reinforce a favorable attitude towards the brand of preference. If consumers possess a positive perception of a particular travel social network website, it will eventually influence positively the emotional attachment with that specific social network website brand. Therefore, the following relationship is proposed:

H1: Brand image is positively associated with brand emotional attachment.

Affective Commitment

Commitment is defined as the long-term desire to preserve a relationship that is perceived as significant (Moorman et al., 1992). In this study, affective commitment refers to the level to which travel-related OSN websites members feel toward the relationship their brands and other brands. In the travel context, affective commitment is a signal that an individual stays in a relationship because he/she expresses an emotional attachment toward the travel-related OSN website (Nusair, 2011). Likewise, (Wetzels, De Ruyter, & Van Birgelen, 1998) findings support the hypothesis that affective commitment has strong positive influences on the plan to keep a relationship, the emotional attachment to a relationship, and the motivation to invest in a relationship. The following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Affective commitment is positively associated with brand emotional attachment.

Virtual Interactivity (VI)

VI is viewed as an interpersonal communication perspective either through a medium or without the assistance of a medium (Coyle & Thorson, 2001). VI refers to the level to which travel-related OSN websites members consider the information exchanged useful, the speed of inquiry fast and the communication among users influential. The frequent space of interactivity through social networks permits consumers with shared interests to organize and interact (Turkle, 1994). Davis, Buchanan-Oliver, & Brodie, (1999) hypothesized that the expected virtual interactivity experience when shopping online will form the image in the consumer's mind of the brand. Consequently, the following hypothesis is suggested:

H3: VI is positively associated with brand image.

Likewise, when the customer is involved in different levels of communication and interactivity, the high involvement on the customer's side essentially generates a stronger affective commitment with the brand (Slywotzky, 2000). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: VI is positively associated with affective commitment.

Reward Activities

Affective commitment is theorized to exist when individuals consider that their commitment to the organization provides access to significant rewards that satisfy their needs (Mowday, Steers, and Porter, 1979). In this study, reward activities refer to the extent to which members of travel-related OSN websites receive monetary, psychological and member privileges. Reward systems and activities to compensate consumers directly affect the level of commitment of these members and their intention to participate in online social networks (Koh, Kim, Brian, and Bock, 2007). Likewise, according to Webster & Keller (2004) reward for activities helps in the formation of brand perceptions and in the favorable influence of brand image. Hence, it is hypothesized that:

H5: Reward is positively associated with affective commitment.

H6: Reward is positively associated with brand image.

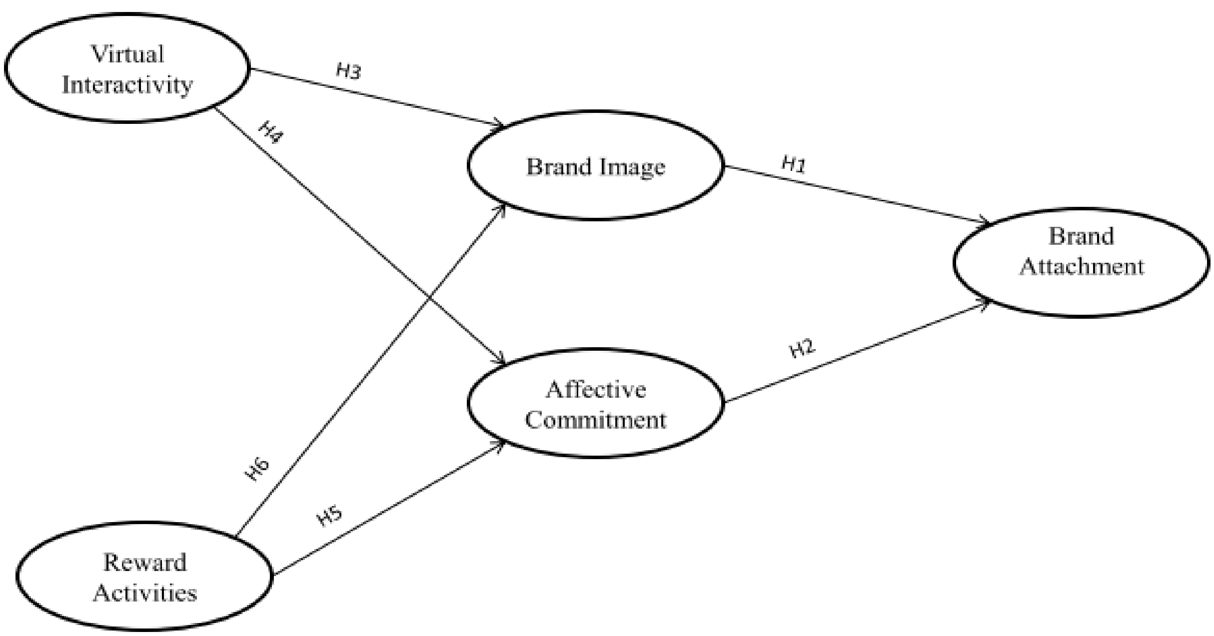

Figure 1 Brand Emotional Attachment final model.

*p<0.01, **p<0.05, ***p<0.001

Methodology

Research model

Drawing from the literature review, the authors constructed a theory-based model of BEA for this study and explain the relationships among brand image, affective commitment and BEA, and the influencing factors for building favorable brand image and affective commitment in travel-related OSN websites. These factors include: Virtual interactivity (VI), and reward activities. Based on this research model, the authors proposed six hypotheses regarding the relationships among the variable considered in this study.

Measurement and Pilot Testing

This study aimed to develop a brand emotional attachment (BEA) framework and test five posited hypotheses. Each of the constructs employed in the study was measured using multiple-item, seven-point Likert scales. All scales were adapted from previous research studies, with “strongly disagree” and “strongly agree” anchoring the scale. Modifications were made in statements to fit the context of the OSNs. Tests of validity and reliability were conducted; the questionnaire was administered to randomly selected hospitality and tourism graduate students at a US university. Pilot respondents were asked to reveal any wording that was not clear. The respondents’ comments from the pilot test resulted in minor revisions to the instrument in terms of phrasing, layout and simplicity of the items.

Sampling and Data Collection

The link for survey was e-mailed to randomly selected 30,000 respondents from a nationally representative pool owned by a marketing company. This marketing company owns a database of respondents that have used travel-related OSN websites for travel related reasons. The participants received a link to the instrument via e-mail. The questionnaire items were evaluated with 7-point Likert scales anchored at Strongly Disagree 1 and Strongly Agree 7. A total of 836 were collected and 236 were usable responses using a deletion method for missing data cases. The survey participants provided their responses through Qualtrics. Those answers were automatically sorted in SPSS order to remove data entry errors.

Data analysis

Data analysis was accomplished using a three stage strategy. First, a confirmatory factor analysis was used to estimate the competence of the measurement model. Second, a reliability analysis was analyzed. Finally, the overall model fit in both measurement and structural models was evaluated using the following goodness-of-fit indices were considered appropriate to the estimation of the models: Chi-Square/df ratio, CFI, GFA, AGFA, NFI, PNFI, RFI, IFI, and RMSEA (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). Cronbach’s alpha was computed to assess scale reliabilities of each of the six constructs and was above 0.70 for the majority of them. All of the constructs had reliability coefficients greater than the proposed level of 0.70 (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, and Black, 1998).

Results

Male respondents represent 36% while female respondents represent 64% of the sample. Approximately 23% of respondents were between the ages of 45- 54 years old, 22% between 35-44 years old, 21% were 55-64 years old, 12% were 65-74 years old and 6% were 19-24 years old. In relation to ethnicity, 66% were Caucasian, 15% African American, 5% Asian, another 5% Hispanic and the rest did not specify their ethnicity. Additionally, in relation to how frequently they usually review online social networking websites, 53% checked 1-5 times per day, 27% checked 1-5 times per week, 8% checked 1-5 times per month and 12% checked 6-10 times per day. In relation to the number of contacts respondents have in their contact list, 29% had less than 50 contacts, and 71% have more than 51 contacts. Finally, the most favorite social network website among participants were Facebook, Youtube, LinkedIn, Twitter, blogger, Myspace, and Flickr in order of preference.

The Measurement Model

In the present study, confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) were performed to verify the validity of the measurement model. Because there was no violation of the assumption of multivariate normality, the authors utilized the maximum likelihood method of estimation. The goodness-of-fit measures were considered to assess the overall model fit. The overall fit indices for the proposed research model were acceptable, with Chi-square/df equal to 2.3, root mean square error approximation (RMSEA) of 0.078, normed fit index (NFI) of 0.95, comparative fit index (CFI) of 0.97, goodness-of-fit index (GFI) of 0.89, adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI) of 0.83, PNFI of 0.71, incremental fit index (IFI) of 0.97, and relative fit index (RFI) of 0.93. All the above indices for the measurement model are considered to possess an acceptable fit (Hair et al., 1998). Therefore, the validity of the data considered in the present project was deemed good enough to be used for further analysis. Subsequent to reaching acceptable overall fit indices, the measurement model was assessed for its reliability, convergent and discriminant validity.

The Structural Equation Model and Hypothesis testing

A structural equation model (AMOS 18.0) was used to test the research hypotheses. VI was found to positively influence bran image (path coefficient = 0.70). On the other hand, the findings for H2 which states that VI is positively associated with affective commitment were not significant (path coefficient = 0.16). Research findings related to H3 which states that psychological benefits is positively associated with affective commitment were found statistically significant (path coefficient = 0.29). The findings related to H4 (coefficient = 0.11) which states that reward activities is positively associated with brand image are consistent with previous studies. This study found that reward activities did have a positive influence on affective commitment (path coefficient = 0.55). Brand image was also found to positively influence BEA (path coefficient = 0.58). Lastly, affective commitment was found to positively influence BEA (path coefficient = 0.45).

Conclusions And Implications

Results from the research hypothesis revealed that VI and reward activities both had a positive influence on brand image. This suggests that travel-relates OSN travel websites marketers are advised to make sure levels of virtual interactivity occur through the use of travel-related OSN websites, this will provide the capable instrument for building brands and also ensure that customers perceive the benefits of the application of marketing strategies. Moreover, marketers need to make sure that through the use of OSN websites, their brand provides access to relevant and significant rewards that satisfy tangible benefits, such as financial rewards, intangible benefits such as psychological gains, improvement and satisfaction, (e.g. task autonomy), and finally social rewards such as positive interpersonal relationships. Brand image and affective commitment had a significant influence on BEA, which suggests that practitioners in the travel context should pay more attention to managing and creating their positive brand image by forming positive feelings, impressions, beliefs and perceptions of the brand and to establish and pursuit the long-term desire to maintain a relationship with travel-related OSN users who perceive this relationship as valuable in order to enhance long-term brand emotional attachment.

Implications and Directions for Future Research

First, industry practitioner in the travel industry should focus their marketing efforts on travel social network users who look for virtual interactivity, especially those who look for high levels of VI to occur through the use of particular travel social network websites. They should allocate resources to create and maintain this high level of VI in social network sites for their communication and interactive process with users in the hope that it will lead to positive brand image and BEA. Users who receive rewards (tangible and intangible) will boost the affective commitment and BEA, so practitioner and travel experts should create, maintain and enhance strong emotional bonds with travel-related OSN users in order to augment commitment and emotional attachment with the brand. Rewards must be considered fundamental to establish the formation of affective commitment. The present study shows that travel experts can succeed in enhancing BEA if they can manage relationships that can enhance feelings of attachment to the brand and ultimately fortify users' brand reactions and positive brand perceptions.

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Digital Personalities: Comparing the Online Identity of Travel and Tourism Industry Segments

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Abstract

The personality of a tourism Website coupled with its ability to attract, retain, and facilitate ongoing customer relationships is important to achieving success online. But what specific personality traits do tourism Websites possess? This study examines the personality traits of Websites from several tourism segments; lodging, restaurants, tourism destinations, and virtual travel bookers; using the Big Five Factor Model of personality to explain how these sites differ in the online environment. Results found virtual travel intermediaries, such as Expedia and Orbitz, demonstrated the least evident personality traits, particularly in terms of agreeableness, emotional stability, and openness. This discovery signals there may be room for improvement among select industry sectors. These findings, along with recommendations for future research are presented.

Keywords

Digital Personality, Five Factor Model, Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI), Tourism Websites.

The Interaction Effect of Power and Gender on Technology Acceptance

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Abstract

The current study examined the joint effect of power and gender on individuals' perceptions and evaluations of information systems, and further their behavioral intentions of technology acceptance. The results suggest that elevated power positively influences technology acceptance for male users but not for female users. While primed power enhances computer self-efficacy for male users, it actually decreases female users' self-efficacy. In addition, powerful male users rated the information system as more enjoyable and easier to use (compared to powerless male users). However, such an effect of power was not significant for female users.

Keywords

Social power, gender, hospitality information technology, and technology acceptance.

Leveraging the Ranking Power of Hotels by Consumer Reviews: Evidence from TripAdvsior.com

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Abstract

According to Toulmin's (1958) model of argumentation, the content of hotel reviews is multifaceted and the numeric, image, textual review features and reviewers' competency can present value-assuring arguments. Using 56,284 hotel reviews for 1,055 hotels from TripAdvisor.com over a ten-year period, we test the effectiveness of four types of value-assuring arguments (number, number plus image, number plus image and text, number plus image, text, and backing) in a hierarchical regression. The results indicate that four arguments all drive up the hotel ranking, a proxy for consumers' perceived value, but number plus image and text leads to the highest level of value perception. The findings provide an effective basis for website designers to develop convincing arguments and to improve the effectiveness of hotel reviews.

Keywords

Hotel reviews, hotel ranking, value-assuring argument, TripAdvisor.

Introduction

Technological advances over the past decades have led to the proliferation of user-generated content on social media platforms where consumers shop for goods. Consumer reviews are posted on a wide range of products and services and have become part of the decision-making process for many consumers (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006). In particular, consumer reviews are important for learning about experience goods such as hotel rooms as their quality is often unknown before purchase (Nelson, 1970; Pine & Gilmore, 1998). This leads to a burgeoning group of hotel review websites such as TripAdvisor, Travelocity, and Expedia, in which consumers reduce their level of perceived risk and uncertainty by referring to hotel reviews posted by other consumers.

These hotel websites feature a hotel ranking list producing runs from number one to the total number of hotels within that city or vicinity. Each individual ranking and its place within the overall score (i.e., #10 out of 100 hotels) is displayed in a prominent manner against each listed hotel, with the most popular shown at the top of the list. Such a system serves as a simplified heuristic to signal the hotel value perceived by consumers (Luca, 2010). With the ranking system, an individual can quickly identify an ideal hotel in particular vicinity, rather than reading all the reviews (Jeacle & Carter, 2011). Studies have demonstrated that the hotel ranking is very likely to predict the potential market demand (Ye et al., 2009; Chen & Xie, 2008; Duan et al., 2008; Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009) and thus to leverage the business profit (Calveras & Orfila, 2009). It is not surprising that managers and shareholders in the intensely competitive hospitality industry are increasingly asking for accountability in the hotel value indicated by the hotel ranking.[2] However, there is a paucity of research about what and how evidences in hotel reviews drive such ranking (O'Connor, 2008). Whether it is a reviewer's rating placed on the website about a hotel's quality or a symbol representing the number of Facebook likes for a hotel, we cannot assume a priori that their presence will necessarily change consumers' value perceptions of a hotel.

Therefore, this paper aims to bridge this gap by examining the prediction mechanism of consumer review evidences on the perceived hotel value as indicated by the hotel ranking. Specifically, we examine (1) whether or not the provision of user generated data (e.g., text, image, number) on the hotel review website drives the hotel ranking, a proxy for the perceived value in that hotel, and (2) what is the most effective form of data presence that can drive the hotel ranking. Toulmin's (1958) model of argumentation is proposed as a basis to identity the evidence of a hotel review and to strengthen the effects of

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[2] The Digital Marketing Inner Circle, "How can we improve our hotel ranking in hotel list search?" (http://www.sinotechblog.com.cn/index.php/component/content/article/48-direct-marketing/659-how-to-promote-your-hotel-in-tripadvisor-and-ctrip).

value-assuring evidence in hotel reviews. Based on Toulmin's (1958) model of argumentation, three components of arguments that commonly appear in daily communication; namely, *claim, data*, and *backing*, are identified. *Data* refers to the grounds for a *claim*, while *backing* is used for providing reasons for why the *data* should be accepted. Different types of hotel review evidences (*number*, *number plus image*, *number plus image and text*, *number plus image*, *text*, *and backing*) are developed in a hierarchical structure. The effects of these four forms of value-assuring review evidences are tested using an extensive dataset of 56,284 hotel reviews for 1,055 hotels across five cities in Texas (i.e., Austin, Houston, San Antonio, Dallas, and Fort Worth) from TripAdvisor.com over a ten-year period.

Theoretical Framework

In our research context, a value-assuring argument about a hotel refers to "a claim and its supporting evidences used in a hotel review to address the perceived hotel value". We know from previous work by Toulin (1958) that there exists a hierarchy of argumentation that can be used to bolster the veracity of such claims. Toulmin (1958) proposed a well-established model of argumentation in daily communication based on arguments made in court of law settings, in which he has identified three most important elements that appear frequently in daily communications - *claim, data,* and *backing*.

Claim: "assertions or conclusions put forward for general acceptance" (Ye & Johnson, 1995).
Data: "evidence used to support a claim" (VerLinden, 1998).
Backing: "evidence explaining why warrant and data should be accepted" (Toulmin, 1958, VerLinden 1998).

A *claim* is what one is arguing for, and *data* is the ground on which the claim is based. A bare argument often consists of *claim* and *data*. *Backing* is used for providing reasons for why the data should be accepted. An example of an argument and its relationship to these three elements is depicted in Figure 1.

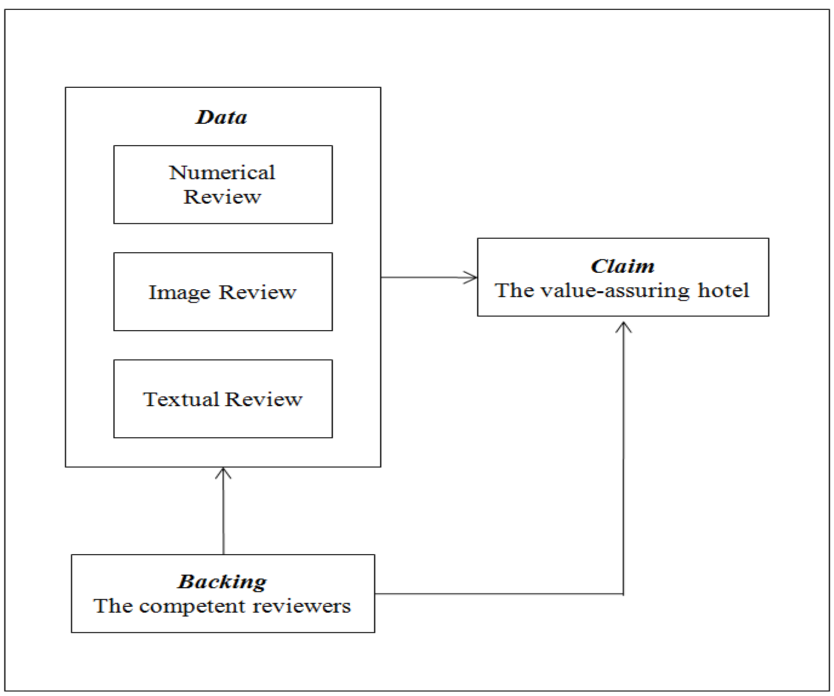

Figure 1. A Value-Assuring Argument: Data, Claim, and Backing

In Figure 1, *Data* support *claim* directly. *Backing* supports claim indirectly by supporting the *data*. In this example, a value-assuring hotel is a *claim* and its supporting evidence in hotel reviews include numbers (e.g., number of reviews received, average rating), image (e.g., traveler photos), and text (e.g., the readability of reviews). [3] These three types of hotel review information are reasons for the *claim*, called *data* (Toulmin, 1958). Often consumers may not believe a *claim* if they are not convinced by the veracity of the *data*. For example, consumers may inquire as to why a highly-ranked hotel is more valuable than other hotels. The answer to this question is called *backing* (Toulmin, 1958, VerLinden, 1998). One example of backing is that the most reliable reviews (e.g., senior contributors, senior reviewer) provide consistent reviews about the good quality and best value-for- money of a hotel. With this *backing*, it is more likely that more people will accept the *data* part, thus increasing the acceptance of the value-assuring *claim* about a hotel.

Hypothesis Development

Predicting Consumers' Perceived Value Using Hotel Review Features

Following the classic modeling approach of the negative exponential utility framework (Roberts & Urban, 1988)[4], every hotel includes an *n*-dimensional point of well-defined hotel attributes $z_j = (z_{1j}, \ldots, z_{nj})$. Consistent with previous literature on consumer reviews, the focal hotel attributes evaluated in the consumer reviews include numbers (Chen et al., 2004; Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006), text (Ghose et al., 2011; Ye et al., 2009), and image (Ghose & Ipeirotis, 2007), as showed in Figure 2. Each z_{ij} represents the amount or quality of the *i*-th attribute for the *j*-th hotel. We then assume a simple scenario of homogeneous preferences for hotel attributes. If we assume that for any consumer and any hotel $\overline{z_j}$ with deterministic vector of attributes $(z_{1j}, \ldots, z_{nj})$ and price p_j, the utility of purchasing the hotel is given by

$$u(\overline{z_j}) = -\exp(\alpha p_j - \sum_{k=1}^{n} \beta_k z_{kj} + \varepsilon_{ij})$$

where ε_{ij} is the "taste for randomness" residual, representing inherent randomness in a consumer's choice process. Rational consumers always choose hotel $\overline{z_j}$ with the highest expected value $Eu(\overline{z_j})$, consistent with what the hotel ranking implies. The negative exponential utility framework with multi-attribute choice indicates that the consumers' perceived value, as indicated by the hotel ranking, is monotone with respect to the perceived value of a combination of review attributes discounted by an additional price component representing the cost about the hotel attributes. In such scope, we outline the prediction mechanism for empirical estimation of the relationship between consumer reviews and the hotel value. Specifically, we predict that displaying value-assuring review evidences increase consumers' perceived value in a hotel.

H1A. *Displaying value-assuring evidences that consist of* numeric review data *about a hotel drives the perceived value of that hotel.*
H1B. *Displaying value-assuring evidences that consist of* image review data *about a hotel drives the perceived value of that hotel.*
H1C. *Displaying value-assuring evidences that consist of* text review data *about a hotel drives the perceived value of that hotel.*

[3] In this study, the multifaceted hotel review data is classified into number, text, and image. A similar classification of hotel review data can also be found in Jeacle and Carter (2011).

[4] Roberts and Urban (1988) provide an elaborate argument in favor of negative exponential utility based on the observation that, for measurable value functions, if the consumer obeys the von Neumann-Morgenstern axioms for lotteries and if a utility function exists, the value function should show constant risk aversion with respect to the strength of preference measure.

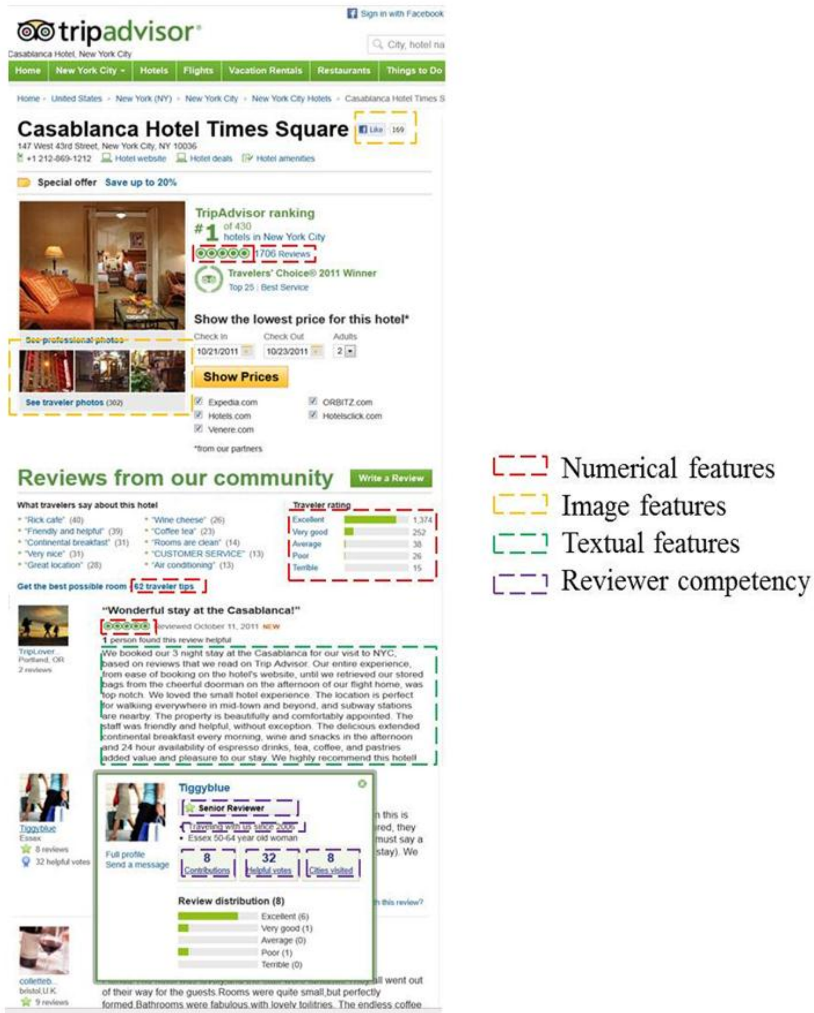

Figure 2. Decomposing hotel reviews on TripAdvisor.com

Effective Form of Value-Assuring Arguments

In general, people accept the claim of an argument if they accept the *data* (e.g., evidence). If customers express skepticism about particular data, then *backing* provides the reasons for why they should be accepted. People are more likely to accept the *data* of an argument that includes *backing* than that without. In fact, consumers may rely on credible hotel reviews posted by the most competent reviewers (e.g., senior contributor, senior reviewers) in their decision-making. Ye and Johnson (1995) have reported that explanations that conform to Toulmin's (1958) model are more persuasive in getting people to accept an expert system's conclusions than those that do not. In addition, studies on knowledge-based system explanations (Gregor & Benbasat 1999) have posited that arguments, which conform to Toulmin's (1958) model of argumentation are more effective in influencing consumers' perceptions. Therefore we predict that value-assuring arguments that include data plus backing are an effective form.

H2. *Displaying value-assuring evidences that consist of* data *plus* backing *produces consumers' value perception of a hotel than displaying value-assuring evidences that consist of* data only *does.*

Data Collection

TripAdvisor.com is our focal review site because it is a most salient online review website for travel information and has recently gained tremendous industry attention (O'Connor, 2008). We collect 56,284 individual consumer reviews for 1,055 hotels across five cities in Texas (i.e., Austin, Houston, San Antonio, Dallas, and Fort Worth) from TripAdvisor.com. This data is extensive in the sense that it contains ten-year consumer review data from September 3, 2002 to March 23, 2012. The consumer review data are supplemented with hotel characteristics retrieved from the individual hotel company websites. Specifically, for each hotel, our dataset includes observations from two sources: consumer review data (i.e., number, image, text, and reviewer competency) and hotel characteristics data (See Appendix for the data profile). The different data sources are then merged to create one comprehensive dataset summarizing the variables of interest for all hotels. By doing this, we safeguard against common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). For a better understanding of the variables in our setting, we present the summary of the dataset (Table 1) and definitions and summary statistics of all variables (Table 2).

Table 1. Summary of the Dataset

The consumer review website	TripAdvisor.com
Number of selected cities	5
Number of hotels	1,055
Number of consumer reviews	56,284
Observation window	September 3, 2002 to March 23, 2012

Table 2. Definitions and Summary Statistics of Variables

Variable	Definition	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.
Main Variables					
Number of reviews received	The total number of reviews a hotel receives	57.44	103.81	0	1237
Average rating	The average rating for a hotel (from 1 to 5, i.e., the worst to the best)	3.64	0.59	0	5
Number of “excellent” ratings received	The total number of “excellent” ratings for a hotel	15.78	58.59	0	782
Number of “very good” ratings received	The total number of “very good” ratings for a hotel	9.74	29.00	0	306
Number of “average” ratings received	The total number of “average” ratings for a hotel	4.32	12.58	0	92
Number of “poor” ratings received	The total number of “poor” ratings for a hotel	2.70	8.42	0	81
Number of “terrible” ratings received	The total number of “terrible” rating for a hotel	1.98	6.39	0	62
Number of travel tips received	The total number of travel tips written by prior consumers for a hotel	5.78	12.02	0	140
Number of traveler photos	The total number of photos submitted by travelers for a hotel	22.08	28.19	0	287
Number of Facebook “likes”	The total number of Facebook “likes” for a hotel	0.96	2.52	0	30
Automated Readability Index	Automated Readability Index for readability	3.39	0.92	1	5
Presence of managerial response	A dummy variable with a value of 1 indicating the hotel has managerial responses for consumer reviews and 0 otherwise	0.13	0.21	0	1
Hotel Characteristic Variables					
Hotel class	Hotel class ranging from 1 to 5 stars	2.22	0.59	0	5
Number of rooms	Number of guest rooms in a hotel	146.03	147.87	0	1840
Number of amenities	Number of internal amenities	6.75	a	0	13
Hotel style - family	The total number of family travel occasions a hotel serves	4.84	6.37	0	49
Hotel style - couples	The total number of couple travel occasions a hotel serves	4.33	6.94	0	63
Hotel style - business	The total number of business travel occasions a hotel serves	7.00	10.65	0	121
Hotel style - solo	The total number of solo travel occasions a hotel serves	3.20	4.54	0	42
Hotel style - friends	The total number of friend travel occasions a hotel serves	1.16	2.21	0	23
Average room price	The mean of the upper and lower room rates as shown on the hotel page	121.03	78.22	0	947

Note: The average number of reviews a hotel received was about 58, but there was a huge variation in the total number of reviews received across hotels. While each hotel received some consumer reviews, some hotels had as many as several thousand reviews.

Results And Findings

Hypothesis Testing: Comparison of Four Forms of Value-Assuring Arguments

By combining different types of hotel review evidences, we developed the following four forms of arguments: (1) *number only* , (2) *number plus image,* (3) *number plus image and text, and* (4) *number plus image, text and backing* in a hierarchical fashion. Following a hierarchy regression procedure, we first specify a model that includes hotel characteristic variables (the baseline model), then add the main effects of numeric features (Model 1), image features (Model 2), and textual features (Model 3) in a stepwise fashion. Model 3 is our main model, as it examines the contribution of each type of hotel features mined from the consumer reviews to the hotel popularity indicated by the hotel ranking. The results of our econometric analysis are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Hierarchical Regression Models Indicating the Hotel Ranking

	The Hotel Ranking					
	Baseline	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Observations	1,055	1,055	1,055	1,055	702	696
Adj. R^2	0.348	0.672	0.678	0.685	0.549	0.546
Adj. R^2 diff.	-	0.323***	0.007***	0.004***	-	-
Intercept	5.655*** (0.000)	8.757*** (0.000)	8.717*** (0.000)	8.901*** (0.000)	7.372*** (0.000)	7.350*** (0.000)
Block 1:Hotel Characteristics						
Hotel class	-0.108*** (0.001)	0.007 (0.776)	-0.002 (0.928)	0.002 (0.939)	-0.015 (0.729)	-0.015 (0.722)
Number of rooms$^{(L)}$	0.000 (0.934)	0.000 (0.173)	0.000 (0.237)	0.000 (0.280)	0.000 (0.319)	0.000 (0.314)
Number of amenities	-0.049*** (0.000)	0.001 (0.918)	-0.002 (0.854)	0.006 (0.534)	-0.009 (0.529)	-0.008 (0.564)
Average room price	-0.005*** (0.000)	-0.001** (0.011)	-0.001** (0.014)	-0.001* (0.063)	-0.001*** (0.009)	-0.001*** (0.009)
Hotel style - family	0.004 (0.496)	0.018*** (0.000)	0.019*** (0.000)	0.021*** (0.000)	0.020*** (0.001)	0.020*** (0.001)
Hotel style - couples	-0.020*** (0.008)	-0.006 (0.205)	-0.007 (0.130)	-0.009* (0.090)	-0.003 (0.652)	-0.003 (0.676)
Hotel style - business	-0.021*** (0.005)	-0.012* (0.050)	-0.012** (0.030)	-0.011* (0.062)	-0.016** (0.018)	-0.016** (0.021)
Hotel style - solo	0.052*** (0.000)	0.037*** (0.000)	0.036*** (0.000)	0.036*** (0.000)	0.044*** (0.000)	0.042*** (0.000)
Hotel style - friends	-0.004 (0.880)	-0.025 (0.162)	-0.018 (0.269)	-0.020 (0.251)	-0.017 (0.419)	-0.016 (0.457)
Block 2: Numeric Features						
Number of reviews received$^{(L)}$		-0.288*** (0.000)	-0.292*** (0.000)	-0.306*** (0.000)	-0.340*** (0.000)	-0.341*** (0.000)
Average rating		-0.930*** (0.000)	-0.912*** (0.000)	-0.937*** (0.000)		
Average individual reviewers' ratings					-0.491*** (0.000)	-0.483*** (0.000)
Number of "excellent" ratings received		-0.005*** (0.000)	-0.004*** (0.003)	-0.004*** (0.000)	-0.005*** (0.000)	-0.005*** (0.000)
Number of "very good" ratings received		0.009*** (0.000)	0.008*** (0.001)	0.007*** (0.002)	0.009*** (0.000)	0.009*** (0.000)
Number of "average" rating sreceived		-0.003 (0.511)	-0.002 (0.673)	-0.001 (0.922)	0.001 (0.928)	0.001 (0.923)
Number of "poor" ratings received		0.015** (0.012)	0.015** (0.027)	0.012* (0.070)	0.018** (0.019)	0.018** (0.022)
Number of "terrible" ratings received		0.014*** (0.008)	0.011* (0.070)	0.013** (0.038)	0.013* (0.071)	0.013* (0.065)
Number of travel tips received		-0.015*** (0.005)	-0.017*** (0.001)	-0.013*** (0.009)	-0.017*** (0.002)	-0.017*** (0.002)
Block 3: Image Features						

Number of traveler photos			0.003** (0.029)	0.003* (0.057)	0.002 (0.166)	0.002 (0.160)
Number of Facebook "likes"			-0.036*** (0.005)	-0.029** (0.033)	-0.040*** (0.006)	-0.040*** (0.006)
Block 4: Textual Features						
Automated Readability Index				-0.029** (0.026)	0.009 (0.478)	0.006 (0.649)
Presence of managerial response				-0.263** (0.018)	-0.348*** (0.009)	-0.349*** (0.009)

In the hotel characteristic model (the baseline model), hotel class, number of amenities, and price have negative and significant effects on hotel ranking. However, the number of rooms is not significantly related to the hotel ranking. In addition, we find three types of hotel style, i.e., couple style, business style, and solo style, have negative and significant effects on hotel ranking, whereas family style and friend style are not significantly related to hotel ranking. These control variables explain 34.8% of the variance in the hotel ranking.

Numeric features only

As shown in Model 1, numeric features explain a large portion of variances in the hotel ranking (Adj. R^2 = 67.2%). We found that the average rating negatively influences the hotel ranking ($\gamma_{averating}$ = -0.930, $p<0.01$), representing a predominant driver of hotel popularity. The findings are consistent with those of Chevalier and Mayzlin (2006). The number of reviews received is negatively related to the hotel ranking ($\gamma_{reviews}$ = -0.288, $p<0.01$), which lends support to classical models of risk aversion: given similar products controlled for average rating, consumers will prefer the product that has more reviews. In addition, number of travel tips is negatively associated with hotel ranking (γ_{tips} = -0.015, $p<0.01$). Interestingly, the travelers' rating distribution shows mixed effects. As might be expected, the number of "excellent" ratings ($\gamma_{excellent}$ = -0.005, $p<0.01$) is negatively related to higher hotel ranking. Other less-appealing ratings, i.e., number of "very good" ratings (γ_{good}=0.009, $p<0.01$), number of "poor" ratings (γ_{poor} = 0.015, $p<0.01$), and number of "terrible" ratings ($\gamma_{terrible}$=0.014, $p<0.01$) are positively related to a higher hotel ranking. The results indicate that a higher hotel ranking tends to be manifest only with the top ratings (i.e., "excellent" ratings). However, the number of "average" ratings has an insignificant effect on hotel ranking. This might be consistent with the "J-shape" distribution argument in consumer review research. For example, Hu et al. (2006) indicate that the average rating is a poor proxy of the product quality, as review systems tend to have an asymmetric, bimodal (J-shaped) distribution with mostly 5-star ratings, some 1-star ratings, and hardly any ratings in between. Archak et al. (2011) found that a polarized set of reviews may be perceived as more informative that a set of 1-star reviews, and a 5-star review will be preferred to a set of two 3-star reviews by consumers.

Numeric features plus image features

Entering the image features into the model (Model 2) explains 67.8% of variance in hotel ranking. As the number of Facebook "likes" ($\gamma_{facebook}$ = -0.036, $p<0.01$) increases, the hotel ranking goes higher. However, number of travelers' photos (γ_{photos} = 0.003, $p<0.01$) lowers the hotel ranking, as one would expect, because consumers are likely to upload their own amateur photos right beneath a hotel's professional photos when they are unsatisfied (i.e., underreporting bias as examined in Hu et al., 2006). In addition, numeric features that are significantly related to the hotel ranking in Model 1 continue to play an important role in driving hotel ranking.

Numeric features plus image features and textual features

Thus far, we have not fully exploited the information about an individual review from the data, which is embedded in its natural language text. Model 3, which includes the variables in textual features, explains an additional 0.4 percent of the variance in hotel ranking over and above Model 2 (Adj. R^2 = 68.5%). The results indicate that hotels with managerial responses ($\gamma_{responses}$ = -0.263, $p<0.05$) and readable textual reviews (γ_{ARI} = -0.029, $p<0.05$) are positively associated with higher rankings. As before, numeric features in Model 1 and Model 2 and image features in Model 2, which are significantly associated with hotel ranking, continue to influence ranking. In terms of the controls, a different observation is that the "couples" hotel style (γ_{couple} = -0.009, $p<0.1$) tends to negatively influence hotel ranking, indicating that reviewers who have experience with couple-style hotels tend to be satisfied with the hotels and thus rate them higher.

Numeric features plus image features, textual features and backing

We report two additional tests using the main model on alternative samples: the dataset containing reviews from reviewers at higher-competency levels, i.e., top contributor, senior contributor, and senior reviewer (Model 4), and the dataset containing reviews scoring above the median value of four types of identity disclosure information by the reviewer, i.e., number of review contributions, number of helpful votes, travel with TripAdvisor since, and number of cities visited (Model 5). Accordingly, we use the average rating of the filtered reviews (i.e., "average individual reviewers' ratings," calculated by taking the mean value of the review ratings from individual reviewers in the alternative samples) to replace the aggregate average rating of all reviews for each hotel (i.e., "the average rating"). We found that the coefficients from the estimations are qualitatively very similar to our main results in Model 3. Similar to those in the main results, most variables in the alternative models also illustrate statistical significance at or below the 5% level or stronger. However, in both Model 4 and Model 5, the absolute magnitude of the rating goes down when we replace the average rating with the average individual reviewers' ratings. Specifically, for the main dataset, the main model (Model 3) reports a coefficient of -0.937 for the average rating, while the next two models using alternative samples of competent reviewers show significantly smaller magnitude of the effect of the rating (in the neighborhood of -0.45). Overall, the Model 4 and Model 5 explained variance of 54.9% and 54.6% respectively, less effective than the previous formats of value-assuring arguments in Model 1- 3, which is contradictory to our hypothesis. We interpret this result as partial evidence in favor of the notion that the hotel ranking is not affected as much by competent reviewers (i.e., *backing*) as the overall reviewers , which may in fact consist of competing hoteliers or other interested parties who are gaming the system and submitting reviews as lower-level reviewers. Thus, the hotel ranking is very likely to be incrementally boosted by competing hoteliers or other interested parties posting fake reviews and submitting bogus ratings.

Robustness Tests

We testify the results by entering different forms of argument blocks in different orders. The marginal contribution of each feature to the hotel ranking and the incremental change of the R square remain the same, indicating a consistent estimation pattern regardless of the order of model entrance.

In addition, we conduct White (robust) standard errors for analysis to avoid heteroskedasticity. The effect of multi-collinearity is checked with the variation inflation factors (VIFs) for all models (Hair et al., 1995), and the VIFs are below the suggested threshold (VIF<3). We also check the correlation between variables to amend the low power of VIF test in large datasets, and no threat to validity is detected. Thus, the robustness checks lend credence to our findings.

Conclusion And Implications

Hotel reviews are at the forefront of e-commerce in the hospitality industry. This study is interested in examining (1) whether or not the provision of user generated data (e.g., text, image, number) on the hotel review website increases consumers' perceived value in that hotel and (2) what is the most effective form of data presence that can drive the perceived hotel value. The results indicate (1) providing value-assuring arguments that consist of *number only, number plus image, number plus image and text, and number plus image, text and backing* all increase consumers' perceived value of hotels and (2) value-assuring arguments that include *number plus image and text* lead to the highest level (Adj. $R^2 = 68.5\%$) of value perceptions towards hotels, but displaying arguments that contain *number plus image, text and backing* does not. Based on these results, we argue that Toulmin's (1985) model of argumentation is an effective basis for website designers to develop convincing value-assuring arguments and to improve existing value-assuring arguments in hotel reviews.

In addition, our empirical hierarchy regression approach is able to impute which hotel feature(s) are important to leverage the hotel ranking and how one can incrementally quantify contribution of opinions contained in the different features of reviews to the hotel ranking. In particular, numeric features contribute predominantly to hotel ranking. The average rating is a predominant driver of hotel ranking, followed by the total number of reviews received. The extreme ratings (e.g., excellent and terrible ratings) tend to boost hotel ranking, testifying to the argument of asymmetric, bimodal (J-shaped) distribution in prior literature. Furthermore, the image features tend to affect hotel ranking. Facebook "likes" and traveler photos are viable indicators of hotel ranking. Moreover, the textual features stand to influence hotel ranking. Noticeably, hotels with managerial responses and more-readable textual reviews tend to contribute to the upward movement of hotel ranking.

Theoretical Implications

Previous literatures indicate that consumer reviews indicate business performance (e.g., Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006; Dellarocas et al., 2007; Duan et al., 2008; Liu, 2006; Ye et al., 2009). However, these studies focus only on the numeric variables representing the valence and volume of reviews. In this study, we posit that the information embedded in consumer reviews cannot be captured by a single scalar value. Rather, we argue that consumer reviews are multifaceted and hence, the textual and image content of consumer reviews is an important determinant of consumers' choice, over and above the valence and volume of reviews. By doing this, we bridge the gap between the qualitative nature of review content and the quantitative nature of the hotel popularity indicated by the hotel ranking. The same approach can also be generalized to, and empirical findings can be compared with, the hotel review studies on other social media platforms such as Expedia and Yelp.

Managerial Implications

Our results have several managerial implications. Most hotels have a mix of attributes that can be objectively evaluated prior to purchase and subjective attributes that are harder to quantitatively evaluate. One of the interesting applications of our multi-dimensional review and features-based approach is that it allows us to incorporate easily, into quantitative models, hotel attributes that were inherently qualitative and hence difficult to measure and incorporate into the model estimation. Using our approach, it is now possible to infer the weight that consumers put on such features. For example, managerial responses contribute to hotel ranking, suggesting that hotel practitioners should actively facilitate communication with consumers on the consumer review website. Given that the total number of reviews received drives the hotel ranking, hotel managers may want to launch advertising campaigns to draw public attention, as well as encourage the consumer reviews using incentives. As we have demonstrated the effectiveness of Facebook "likes" in leveraging the hotel ranking, hotel managers should consider adopting a social media strategy that directs the online word-of-mouth towards the benefit of the hotel. Several tactics include linking the hotel's Facebook fan page with the Facebook "likes" that appear on the TripAdvisor review site. Once a consumer "likes" a reviewed hotel, the data will be transmitted to the hotel's Facebook fan page as real-time news feeds and updates. Such a pooling of consumers' activities across different social media platforms can serve as "free" advertising for the hotel and will help magnify its popularity among today's tech-savvy consumers.

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Appendix

We collect 56,284 individual consumer reviews for 1,055 hotels across five cities in Texas (i.e., Austin, Houston, San Antonio, Dallas, and Fort Worth) from TripAdvisor.com. This data is extensive in the sense that it contains ten-year consumer review data from September 3, 2002 to March 23, 2012. The consumer review data are supplemented with hotel characteristics retrieved from the individual hotel company websites. Specifically, for each hotel, our dataset includes observations from two sources:

(1) Consumer review data. We obtain all of the posted reviews on TripAdvisor up to the end of the study period using fully automated parsing.[5] Consistent with previous literature on consumer reviews, we retrieve three types of consumer review data that can influence the hotel popularity:

[5]"Fully automated parsing" refers to the approach used to collect information from a website. Technically, we develop two crawlers using Ruby: 1) to download automatically the web pages of hotel reviews and other hotel information from TripAdvisor and 2) to remove the HTML formatting from the text and then transform it into an XML file that separates the data into records (the review) and fields (the data in each review) in an automated fashion using a pre-coded computer program on the local machine. We use the crawlers to retrieve all

(i) Numeric feature. The use of numeric review metrics has dominated a considerable body of consumer review research. Consistent with prior studies, we use "number of reviews received" (Ghose & Ipeirotis, 2011), "average rating" (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006), "travel rating distribution" (Chen et al., 2004), and "number of travel tips received" to represent the numeric feature mined from consumer reviews. "Number of reviews received" indicates the total number of reviews written by consumers for a hotel. "Average rating" is the aggregate rating for each hotel as a unique symbol shown on top of each hotel review page. "Travel rating distribution" indicates the number of reviewers' rating across a 5-point scale ranging from "excellent" to "terrible". "Number of travel tips" is the total number of trip tips written by prior consumers for each hotel.

(ii) Textual feature. Given that the actual quality of reviews plays an important role in affecting product sales (Ghose et al., 2011; Ghose & Ipeirotis, 2007), we look into two text-style features, "readability" and "objectivity," as the evaluating criteria. "Readability" is a proxy for the difficulty when reading online reviews. Specifically, we count the number of words, number of characters, and number of sentences to compute a specific readability metric, the Automated Readability Index[6] (Senter & Smith, 1967), for each review. In addition, we use "presence of managerial responses" to indicate the objectivity of reviews. TripAdvisor allows service providers or product manufacturers to submit managerial responses to consumers' reviews. Prior studies show that managerial responses provide an objective assessment of a consumer's actual experience with a product or a service by confirming (or rejecting) the description in the reviews (e.g., Ye et al., 2009).

(iii) Image feature. In addition to the professional photos posted by the hotel properties, TripAdvisor allows consumers to post their own pictures of the property. As a natural extension of consumer review content, "number of traveler photos" is included as an indicator of the image feature. We also collect data on "number of Facebook 'likes'" as featured on the hotel review page to indicate whether the reviewer is a "fan" of the hotel, i.e., whether she "likes" the hotel based on her experience with it.[7]

In addition, we retrieve reviewer competency data. Prior studies have shown that the social identify information of reviewers in an online community shapes the community members' judgments of the products and services (Forman et al., 2010; Ghose & Ipeirotis, 2011). In other words, it is very likely that the prevalence of reviewer disclosure of identity information is associated with changes in product sales (Forman et al., 2008). Therefore, consistent with prior work, we include five types of identity disclosure information by the reviewer to indicate reviewer competency: "reviewer status" (O'Mahony et al., 2010), "number of review contributions" (Ghose et al., 2011), "number of 'helpful' votes" (Mudambi & Schuff, 2010), "travel with TripAdvisor since", and "number of cities visited."

(2) Hotel characteristics data. The hotel characteristics are broadly defined as hotel class, number of rooms, number of amenities, average room price, and hotel style. "Hotel class" is an internationally accepted standard ranging from 1 to 5 stars, representing low to high hotel grades. "Number of rooms" is the aggregation of guest rooms in the hotel property. "Number of amenities" is the aggregation of a hotel's internal amenities, such as "indoor swimming pool," "free high-speed Internet," "fitness center," "wheelchair access," "pets allowed," etc. "Average room price" is the mean of the upper and lower room rates as shown on the hotel's page. "Hotel style" indicates the travel occasion each hotel serves. Consistent with the travel occasions categorized by TripAdvisor, we differentiate the hotel styles as family, couple, business, solo, and friend. Since hotel-characteristic information is not listed explicitly on the TripAdvisor website, we retrieved it from the individual hotel company websites.

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available UGC information for the designated 100 hotels. For each hotel, we obtain all of the posted reviews. Each consumer review is analyzed and selected review features are recorded.

[6] The Automated Readability Index (ARI) is a readability test designed to gauge the understandability of a text. The formula for calculating the Automated Readability Index is $4.71\left(\frac{\text{characters}}{\text{words}}\right)+0.5\left(\frac{\text{words}}{\text{sentences}}\right)-21.43$. Past research has shown that easy-reading text improves comprehension, retention, and reading speed, and that the average reading level of the US adult population is at the eighth grade level (White, 2003).

[7] TripAdvisor implemented the Facebook "like" icon in April 21, 2010. The "like" icon is a button that enables consumers to indicate their favorite hotels and share them with their network of friends on Facebook and TripAdvisor. With this icon, consumers can see the lodging preferences of their friends on Facebook as well as how many people "like" a hotel that they are researching. (http://www.tripadvisor.com/PressCenter-i2137-c1-Press_Releases.html)

The different data sources are then merged to create one comprehensive dataset summarizing the variables of interest for all hotels. The dataset we used in our analysis is the set of hotels at the intersection of the two sources. This means that the hotel pool includes those hotels that should have information available on consumer reviews at TripAdvisor and specific hotel characteristics retrievable from hotel websites.

Search Visibility and Online Social Presence for Bed and Breakfasts

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Abstract

This study examined the extent to which the Bed and Breakfasts sector of the industry uses social media tools (Facebook and Twitter) and whether this use had any effect on how B&B websites appeared on the three major search engines. We aimed to find differences in how B&Bs ranked across search engines (Bing, Google and Yahoo). B&B names were specifically entered in search engines to see if they showed up on the first page of search engine results, then on social media sites to see if they had a page. This study revealed that B&Bs' low visibility affected their rank across search engines. It also revealed the need for B&B investment in search engine optimization to improve search engine visibility.

Keywords

Online Presence, Social media marketing, web 2.0, web marketing, Search Engine Optimization, Bed and Breakfast marketing

The Effects of Tourism Advertisements on Viewer's Attention and Arousal: A Visual persuasion Mental Imagery Processing

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Abstract

This study compared visual to verbal systems in terms of mental imagery-processing in a modality concept. A within-subjects experiment was conducted in which 42 participants engaged in six, 60-second high-imagery audio and visual text destination ads. The heart rate and skin conductance were obtained during exposure to the ads. Self-reported mental imagery processing, arousal, attitudes toward ads, and behavioral intentions were also obtained after exposure to each ad. There was no significant difference between two different types of ads in heart rate, while arousal by using skin conductance was greater for visual text ads compared high-imagery audio ads. This study found imagery processing, arousal, attitude, and behavioral intentions were greater during visual text ads than those during high-imagery audio ads.

Keywords

Attention, Arousal, Heart rate, LC4MP, Mental imagery processing, Skin conductance.

Leveraging Streaming Video Technology to Enhance Learning: Acceptance, Use, and Academic Outcomes of Technology Adoption

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Abstract

The popularity of Web-based Lecture Technology (WBLT) embedded within Virtual Learning Environments (e.g. Blackboard) is becoming more commonplace in higher education. However, little research examining the acceptance and effectiveness of video supplementation exists. Short topic review videos designed to assist student exam preparation were embedded into the website for an undergraduate Hospitality Management course. This longitudinal study utilizes existing technology acceptance constructs to determine their impact on behavioral intention. Results reveal that of performance expectancy, effort expectancy, and social influence, only effort expectancy is significantly related to behavioral intention. Additionally, academic (grade) outcomes related to use of the videos were assessed. The results show various positive relationships between technology adoption and academic outcomes, which offer important implications for instructors and administrators alike.

Keywords

Pedagogy, Technology, Acceptance, Behavior, Expectancy

The Michelin Restaurant Review System as Perceived by Undergraduate Hospitality Students Studying in the United States: A Pilot Study

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Abstract

Current European research shows Michelin reviewed restaurants are examples of benchmarking of the hospitality industry. This pilot study attempts to determine United States-based undergraduate hospitality students' knowledge of the Michelin system as well as their view of the system's importance within the overall hospitality industry. Using a sixteen response questionnaire, hospitality students were surveyed on a university campus after core hospitality courses. The researchers concluded little knowledge of the Michelin system and little significance between quantities of years worked and the system's importance to the industry. Statistical significance between sophomores and seniors and their perceptions of the Michelin system was found. The study would be beneficial to hospitality education programs and their graduate preparedness for the hospitality industry.

Keywords

Michelin, competences, hospitality education, service quality

Where Are We Now? A Study of Minority Student Enrollments in Hospitality Programs.

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Abstract

The hospitality industry is globally recognized and is one of the world's largest employers. This has allowed the field to employ individuals who are both culturally and ethnically diverse. What is concerning is that hospitality education is not following this same pattern of ethnic diversity. The purpose of this study is to analyze the current percentages of minorities in hospitality education against Dr. Bosselman's findings in 1994. In order to do this, the 24 universities in the original study were analyzed. The populations of interest were: African Americans, Native Americans, and Hispanics. This study found that minority students are still underrepresented in hospitality education. This study also found that this underrepresentation has not changed much over the past 23 years.

Keywords

Diversity, Hospitality Education, Minority, Enrollment, Recruitment, Retention, Barriers, Institutional Commitment

Does Awareness and Involvement Affect Value Perceptions and Willingness to Pay for Green Hotels by Generation Y?

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Abstract

Today, hotel industry is becoming more competitive and the protection of the environment is one issue that businesses can't overlook. Moreover, generation Y is becoming a significant part of lodging consumer segment. Previous studies have pointed out the influence of awareness and involvement on consumer behavior. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the determinants of awareness and involvement on willingness to pay more for green hotels and Generation Y value perception toward such accommodation. A structural equation model has been estimated and findings support the hypothesis. Additionally, theoretical and practical implications are being discussed before the article concludes with limitations and directions for future research.

Keywords:

green hotels, generation Y, awareness, involvement, willingness to pay, value perception, structural equation model (SEM)

Consumer Perceptions of Green Practices in Hotels: An Exploratory Study

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Abstract

This exploratory study seeks to find out which green practices of hotels consumers perceive as most important and how likely the perceptions differ based on the type of consumers, their frequency of hotel stays per year, and broad categories of environmental management practices. Practices such as "Using energy-efficient light bulbs", "Educating the staff about environment protection and social responsibility", and "Recycle bins in back of the hotel" are perceived as most important. Leisure travelers, as opposed to business travelers, rated practices significantly more highly in general. Additionally, energy management was evaluated as the most important green category. As such, this study serves as a guideline for practitioners regarding which practices to implement and advertise.

Keywords

Green practices, environment-friendly, green hotel.

Consumers' Pro-Environmental Behavior and Its Determinants in the Lodging Segment

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Abstract

This research examined customers' pro-environmental behavior (PEB) in hotel settings. Based on a survey with a sample of 537 participants representing a broad range of demographic strata, this study identified seven dimensions of PEB manifested in hotel settings and examined the associations of traveler characteristics and psychological determinants with the seven PEB behavioral types. The results show that hotel customers display the least PEB when compromise of personal comfort is involved. The results detect no difference in PEB between frequent and novice leisure travelers. However, frequent business travelers demonstrate greater level of PEB than novice business travelers. The findings further suggest that the major determinant of PEB in hotel settings is non-environmental concerns. Theoretical and practical implications also are discussed.

Keywords

Pro-environmental behavior, green behavior, sustainability, hotels, lodging.

In Word and Deed: The Promise and Process of Corporate Greening

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Abstract

This study considered the implications of hotel enfranchisement for attaining third-party environmental certification. In-depth interviews with a hotel owner and management team centered on opening and operating a franchised property, and simultaneous efforts to achieve Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification. Interview transcriptions were coded independently by three researchers and relevant categories identified. Study findings reveal that overall, strong support from corporate headquarters was evident. Necessary changes in corporate operating and control systems, however, were implicated. Streamlining systems to facilitate paperless procedures and environmental monitoring, for example, were proposed. Finally, partnering with suppliers that are actively implementing environmental initiatives was a further suggestion that holds considerable promise both at the corporate level and well beyond the hotel industry.

Keywords:

Sustainable initiatives, hotels, enfranchisement, environmental certification

Determinants of Capital Expenditures in the U.S. Lodging Industry

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Abstract

U.S. hotels' 2012 capital expenditures will total $5 billion, up 33 percent from 2011, according to the most recent study conducted by New York University. Successful hotel performance depends on the ability of asset managers to foresee capital expenditures, thus it is essential for managers to be informed of the factors that influence capital spending. The purpose of this research is to identify the determinants of capital expenditures in the U.S. lodging industry. This research is motivated by two major factors. The first is related to previous research that highlights the importance of capital expenditures to the firm. Second, only a limited amount of research has examined the determinants of capital expenditures.

Keywords

Capital expenditures, lodging, determinants

An Examination of the Relationship between Hotel Stock Performance and Operational Efficiency

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between hotel stock performance and hotel operational efficiency in the U.S. hotel industry. Using the financial data of publicly traded hotel companies, this study will examine hotel operational efficiency by performing Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) on fixed assets, operating expenses, long-term debt, and earnings before taxes; and attempt to identify possible relationship between efficiency and stock performance by regressing the results of DEA on stock returns of the selected hotel companies. The findings of this study are expected to provide hotel practitioners with explanations on hotel stock price fluctuations form the operational angle, and help investors predict future trends of stock performance using financial statements.

Keywords

Hotel industry, efficiency, Data Envelopment Analysis, regression, stock performance.

An Investigation of Casino Social Impact using Data Envelopment Analysis

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the social impact of the gaming industry by using Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) technique to integrate casino financial information and social factors. DEA is a benchmarking method that has been commonly used in hospitality related research. This study will perform DEA on slot coin-in, table drop, employment opportunities, and crime rates to benchmark casinos' social impact given the amount of money wagered in casinos. Data from a total of sixty-five casinos in three Midwestern States will be examined. The findings of this study are expected to fill the research gap by providing empirical evidence of casino social impact and help practitioners better understand their current situation and strategically develop future movements.

Keywords

Casino social impact, Data Envelopment Analysis, gaming industry.

Financial Effect of Airline Alliance

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Abstract

Airline industry alliances are one of the most successful strategies benefiting these businesses. However, research argues whether airline alliances are actually good for these companies. This study investigates the effect of airline alliances in terms of profitability, including return on assets (ROA), return on equity (ROE), and profit margin (PM). This study conducted independent t-test and multiple regression tests. According to the independent t-test results, the profitability of non-alliance airline firms was higher than those of alliance firms. This study used the fixed-effect and random effect model based on the Hausman test and contained ROA, ROE, and PM as exogenous variables. There was no statistical significance with dummy variables (alliance =1, non-alliance =0) when controlling for firm size and leverage (debt-to-owner's equity ratio). Results of this study suggest that the airline business financial performance in this sample was not significantly influenced by alliances, when companies with alliances were compared to the non-alliance group.

Keywords

Airline, alliance, profitability

Substance Abuse among Undergraduate Hospitality Management Students: An Assessment of Experiences with Drug and Alcohol Use

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Abstract

Employees of the food and beverage industry have been linked to prevalent drug and alcohol use. Such behaviors can have severe negative impacts on both the individual and organizational level. This phenomenological study seeks to gain an initial understanding of how these issues affect hospitality students who work in the food and beverage industry, and to discern what types of experiences may lead to the use and abuse of illegal drugs and alcohol. Through this understanding, professionals may help to lower the potential risk of students using and abusing these substances.

Keywords

Alcohol, drug abuse, students, hospitality, food and beverage.

The Impact of Health and Pro-environmental Behaviors on College Students' Organic Food Purchase Intentions using Structural Equation Modeling

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Abstract

Organic food consumption has significantly increased among college students and use of organic food became a mainstream in college dining services. The purpose of this study is to investigate the factors that affect the decision-making process for organic food purchase intention with a sample of college students. The Theory of Planned Behavior model was used as a fundamental theory. Since the major reasons for consumers to buy organic food were health and environmental concerns, students' health behavior and pro-environmental behavior were also incorporated in the model. The results might be useful for college dining services managers to develop better marketing strategies.

Keywords

Organic food, college students, theory of planned behavior, college dining

The Full-Service Dining Experience: An Assessment of the Generation-Specific Determinants of Customer Loyalty

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Abstract

The unique characteristics and values associated with different generational cohorts are often identified as important components of the consumption decision. Our research analyzes generation-specific perceptions of the full-service dining experience in terms of atmospherics, food quality, service quality, price fairness, and brand image. In addition to identifying significant differences among generations in terms of experience ratings, we use logistic regression to identify the differential impacts of each of the five dining experience factors in determining customer loyalty. By identifying the moderating role of generational affiliation in the development of customer loyalty, we provide a new set of considerations for both scholars and practitioners interested in full-service restaurant consumption behavior.

Keywords

Generation, full-service restaurant, customer loyalty, dining experience.

Measuring Labor Costs in School Meals

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Abstract

National School Lunch Program (NSLP), serving over 5.3 billion lunches annually, is a major segment of the food industry. While food costs are routinely recognized by NSLP operators, labor costs are often not recognized or charged to the program. Under current practices, labor is allocated on a straight line basis to meals, and operators are not able to discriminate meals with high labor costs from those with lower labor costs. Time-Driven Activity-Based Costing (TDABC) will be employed to measure the costs of labor required to produce a meal in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), and to compare these results to allocated labor costs. Results of this research will affect make-versus-buy decisions, menu planning, scheduling, and budgeting in the NSLP.

Keywords

National School Lunch Program, Time-Driven Activity-Based Costing, Labor Costs.

Overcoming Barriers to Farm to School Program Implementation through Training of Hourly School Foodservice Employees

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Abstract

Nutritional guidelines for school nutrition programs now require more fruits and vegetables be offered. Farm to school (F2S) programs offer opportunities to improve school nutrition programs and source produce locally. However, research has shown that barriers exist for F2S program implementation. The purpose of this study is to further assess barriers to F2S program implementation (from hourly employees' perspectives), develop and implement a training intervention, and assess effectiveness of the training. The goal of the training will be to help schools overcome barriers when implementing F2S programs. Observations and survey questionnaires will be used; descriptive statistics including frequencies, means, t-tests, and ANOVA will be calculated. Results will include identified barriers and the impact of training on those barriers.

Keywords

Farm to School, Nutrition, Barriers, Training

Exploring Food Safety Practices in Childcare Centers in Kansas

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Abstract

Research exploring food safety practices of employees has been done in a multitude of settings, including restaurants, healthcare, and schools. However, limited research has been conducted in childcare centers, a segment serving a population highly susceptible to a foodborne illness. The purpose of this study is to explore food safety practices of childcare center staff in Kansas. Kitchen and classroom observations will be conducted in 10 childcare centers. Demographic information will be collected from employees. SPSS (v. 20.0) will be used to analyze observation and questionnaire data. Comments, open ended questions, and observational notes will be compiled and organized by common themes. Results of this study will provide bench line data about this area of practice.

Keywords

Childcare, foodborne illness, safe food handling, young children and foodborne illness, hand washing, food safety training

The Use of a Social Network Site in Culinary Education

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Abstract

Social network sites have become an important part of our everyday life. Studies have been conducted on the value of general social network sites (SNS) like Facebook and Twitter in academia, but no studies have been conducted on the value of niche SNS in academia. With students from a culinary class at the University of Missouri, this study explores how a SNS could be valuable in several aspects of the course. This study takes existing paper based homework and transition it into Spicipe, a food centric SNS. By evaluating student attitudes toward a paper system pre and post treatment, this study was able to conclude that there is a statistically significant difference between the two systems. Students showed preference for the SNS system.

Keywords

education, social network site, culinary, value, learning preference, Spicipe

The Moderating Effect of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) on the Relationship Between Hotel Employees' Job Satisfaction and Service Sabotage Behavior

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Abstract

Previous research suggested that job dissatisfaction may lead employees engage in service sabotage behaviors in the service encounter. Given this, a quality relationship of a manager with employees, or leader-member exchange (LMX) relationship, has significant implications for preventing service sabotage because manager's transactional and/or transformational leadership has been considered the process of influencing people to change their attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs towards organizational goals. Therefore, it can be hypothesized that LMX may change the strength of the linear relationship between employees' level of job satisfaction and service sabotage. The purpose of this study is to examine the moderating effects of LMX on the job satisfaction and employee service sabotage relationship in the hotel setting.

Keywords

Leader-member exchange, job satisfaction, service sabotage

Does Role Stress Have Different Effects on the Job Outcomes of Hotel Managers With Different Levels of Education?

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Abstract

By examining job outcome, this study attempts to determine whether role stress affects hotel managers with and without college degrees differently. This study will focus on hotel managers working in the state of Iowa. Sample hotels will be identified using AAA travel guides. A self-report on-line questionnaire will be used for data collection; and a SEM model will be developed for each group. The results of two SEM analyses will be compared to understand possible differences between hotel managers with and without college degrees. The findings of this study are expected to fill the gap of literature in role stress and job outcomes related studies in the hospitality industry and provide practitioners with empirical evidence for scientific decision making.

Keywords

Role stress, role conflict, role ambiguity, job performance, job satisfaction.

The Effects of Sleep on Performance of Undergraduate Students Working in the Hospitality Industry

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore the effects of undergraduate student sleep quality and quantity on job performance and academic performance. A comparison will be made between students who are working in the hospitality industry, students who are working in another industry, and students who are not working. The sample is drawn from all undergraduate students at a university located in the Midwest; total undergraduate enrollment is 23,990. An online self-report questionnaire will be distributed mid-semester. The Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index, recorded student GPAs, and a reliable job performance evaluation scale will be used to measure study variables. Descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alpha, t-tests, and multiple linear regression will be used to analyze data.

Keywords

Sleep, job performance, academic performance.

Understanding Career Change and Turnover Cross Culturally

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Abstract

The aim of the proposed study is to explore the effects national culture has in influencing the rates of career change and turnover within hospitality. The study will go beyond the current hospitality literature that discusses turnover by taking the first steps towards determining the rate at which managers change careers. As hospitality organizations become evermore globalized, learning the cultural elements of new labor markets that establishments compete in will be paramount to successful operations. The proposed study will examine how the level of individualism in a culture moderates the effects of turnover and career change.

Keywords

Career Change, Turnover, Individualism, Collectivism

Toward a Broader Understanding of Online Hotel Reviews: The Reviewers' Perspective

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Abstract

As technology continues to develop, the online reviews become a more convenient way for customers to share their experiences and views. Moreover, the online hotel reviews affect potential customers' travel decisions. This study examined the role of perceptions of attributes formative of the hotel experiences and reviewer-related variables on the current ratings of hotel online reviews selected from TripAdvisor.com. The attributes include the reviewers' characteristics, which were not systematically studied by earlier research. The result of this study brings important implications to both academic researchers and industry decision-makers. It leads them a multidimensional view of rating hotels and helps them develop various strategies according based on different needs of customers with various characteristics.

Keywords

Online reviews, hotel industry, hotel ratings.

An Investigation of the Big-Five Model of Personality in Relation to Theme Park Wait Time Applications Use

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Abstract

Theme park Wait Time Apps (WTA), a new form of mobile social networks based on user-generated content, are designed to help users get easy access to actual ride wait-times so as to avoid those rides that have long lines. This study aims to investigate how personality is related to mobile social media use in the form of theme park WTAs by integrating the Big-Five Model. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) will be used to assess the relationship between the use of theme park WTAs and personality. The findings of this study can be used as references for travel-related companies to understand personality difference for using WTAs and further market and design mobile applications to better meet the demands of customers.

Keywords

Big-Five Model, mobile applications, personality, user-generated content

Simultaneous Impacts of Internationalization and Hotel Performance: An Examination of the Relationship between DOI and ROA

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Abstract

The global economic recession between 2008 and 2009 seriously impacted on hotel performance worldwide. Facing challenges of uncertain economic conditions, international hospitality corporations need to reassess their international strategies to ensure successful operations in international markets. However, the extant literature not only lacks in offering sufficient evidence on the impact of financial performance (ROA) on the degree of internationalization (DOI), but also fails to reach conclusive consensus on the impact of DOI on financial performance (ROA) in the hospitality industry. Thus, this study is designed to examine, comprehensively from a simultaneous perspective, the relationship between DOI and Financial Performance among US hospitality corporations and hopefully to shine some light on this topic for both academics and practitioners.

Keywords

Internationalization, financial performance, hotel and restaurants management

Impression Management and Organizational Citizenship Behavior: An Investigation of Other Orientation

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Abstract

Other orientation represents the extent to which employees value and hold concern for the well-being of other people (De Dreu & Nauta, 2009; Meglino & Korsgaard, 2004). Other-oriented employees are valuable assets that the hospitality industry cannot afford to lose. This study will investigate the moderating effect of other orientation upon the relationship between impression management and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). Cross-sectional research design will be adopted. Self-reported surveys will be conducted frontline employees in 10 luxury chained hotels in China. Limitations and future research direction will also be discussed.

Keywords

Other orientation, impression management, affiliative organizational citizenship behavior (affiliative OCB), challenging OCB

Value Created Through Consumer Engagement Using Social Networking: A Case Study of Luxury Boutique Hotels

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Abstract

Social media becomes a norm for marketing in the hospitality industry. This study will investigate the value of creating electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), specific customer engagement efforts the company undertake, and impact of eWOM on branding and service recovery through social media websites in the luxury-boutique hotel sector. The researchers will select a convenience sample and use qualitative techniques to assess two luxury boutique hotel brands with their 86 units. NIVO software will be used for analysis. The researchers will suggest best practices in engagement and service recovery efforts via social networking sites, specifically: *Foursquare, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter.* The results will allow practitioners to consider their use of social networking in customer engagement.

Keywords

Customer engagement, Social networking, eWOM, Service recovery

A Study of a State-Funded Local Brand for Specialty Food Products- A case of Oklahoma

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Abstract

Even though a state-funded local branding campaign has become a common trend in the U.S and the brand logos and catchphrases are widely used among regional specialty food vendors lately, there has been a lack of research about the state-funded brands themselves. In this study, relationships among brand loyalty, brand personality, and consumers' personality traits are examined using the Oklahoma state-funded local brand. By utilizing the study results, local specialty food vendors and local food marketing coordinators in the state governments might be able to make more effective and efficient marketing strategies.

Keywords

Local food, state-funded local branding, brand personality, personality traits, brand loyalty

What Motivate Consumers to Adopt Mobile Tour Guides?

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Abstract

Mobile tour guides (MTG) have emerged as a new tool of improving tourist experience. To successfully extend the applications of the new tool, destination marketers need understand motivation factors of tourists to adopt MTG. The purpose of this study is to explore factors that affect customers' willingness to embrace the usage of MTG. Structural Equation Model (SEM) will be employed to test the validity of the conceptual model. This study will provide a theoretical foundation of consumer adoption of MTG and suggest strategies for MTG design.

Keywords

Mobile tour guides, technology acceptance model, ease of us, consumer adoption

The Influence of Social Networking Sites on College Student Consumers in the Foodservice Industry

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Abstract

Many industry practitioners have shown increasing interest in Social Networking Sites (SNS) because they provide opportunities for strengthening customer relationships. Especially, SNS has been viewed as an important platform for communications with college student consumers. The purpose of this study is to identify intrinsic and extrinsic factors that determine college students' attitudes toward SNS and the impact of SNS on their purchase intentions in restaurants. This study will assist industry practitioners to better understand the market segment of college student consumers and accordingly suggest strategies for social media marketing.

Keywords

Social networking sites, motivation theory, social identity theory, purchase intention

The Direct and Indirect Impact of Price Fairness on Customer Loyalty in the Hotel Industry

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the direct and indirect impact of price fairness on customer loyalty in the hotel industry by investigating the relationship between price fairness, customer satisfaction, trust, and customer loyalty. The study employs a causal research design with a cross-sectional and scenario-based survey questionnaire. The target population of the study is frequent travelers in U.S. who have stayed at the same hotel brand at least three times in the previous year. Descriptive statistics and structural equation modeling will be used for data analysis. The results of findings will provide hotel practitioners and researchers a better understanding of how customers respond to price changes related to customer loyalty.

Keywords

Perceived price fairness, customer satisfaction, trust, customer loyalty, hotel industry

Who is Really Getting Buzzed at the Club? Drug Abuse among Nightclub Employees

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Abstarct

There is a growing demand for understanding the dominance of drug abuse among workers in the United States. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration reports that the hospitality industry ranks the highest among the surveyed employees, with 2 of its sectors ranking in the top 3. Myriad studies have been conducted to examine alcohol abuse in the hospitality industry, yet drug use in the entertainment sector is severely understudied, especially in regards to employee versus patron use. Research will be conducted to gain a greater understanding as to why nightclub employees are engaging in this behavior. The purpose of this study is to use social learning theory to investigate nightclub employee drug use.

Keywords

Nightclubs, drugs, employees

Preferred Recreational Activities and Wellness Amenities of Female Resort Vacationers: Relationship to Motivations

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Abstract

A concept of wellness tourism and recreational activity is highly recognizable in this century. However no previous study looks at these two concepts together. This study intends to investigate wellness needs and motivation as a relation to preferred recreational activities/wellness amenities among female resort vacationers. The Leisure Motivation Scale of Beard and Ragheb and the seven categories of recreational activities and wellness amenities developed from previous researches are used as data collection methods assessing motivations and preferences among two hundred full-time female employees who have been or would like to go to resorts on their vacations. The study outcomes bear implications for resort product development and delivering vacation restoration through recreational activities and wellness amenities.

Keywords

Recreational activities, wellness, leisure motivation, female resort vacationers, restoration

Influence of Tangible and Intangible Factors on Customers' Satisfaction and Loyalty Regarding Online Tourism Websites as Perceived by Generation Y

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Abstract

In the tourism industry, electronic services have become generally recognized for their importance to online tourism companies as well as to offline firms. This study will examine the effects of two tangible elements: ease of use and web design aesthetics, and three intangible factors: transaction cost, security of website, and brand reputation on Generation Y customer satisfaction and loyalty for tourism websites. This study will also confirm the relationship between satisfaction and customer loyalty among Generation Y tourism website customers. The results will provide useful information for investigating which factors are critical in eliciting customer satisfaction regarding tourism websites. Additionally, the study will provide meaningful information for developing a perspective regarding marketing strategies to strengthen businesses in the tourism industry.

Keywords

Tourism websites, ease of use, web design aesthetics, transaction cost, website security, brand reputation, satisfaction, and loyalty

A Qualitative Study of Wine Tourism Development in the South Plains of Texas

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Abstract

This research proposes to qualitatively investigate wine tourism businesses in the South Plains of Texas. The area has been identified as conducive to growing wine grapes, and several operations in the South Plains have expanded their business to include tourism. Five wine tourism businesses that have been in operation for at least ten years will be interviewed to identify why they entered the tourism field, constraints faced during their operation, if their business model has changed from the original concept, and motivations behind the changes. Data obtained may identify potential pitfalls and further the development of wine tourism operations.

Keywords

Wine tourism, agritourism, sustainability

The Long-term Impacts of 2008 Olympic Games on Beijing's Tourism Industry

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the long-term impacts of 2008 Beijing Olympic Games on the tourism industry of Beijing. Interviews were conducted with a few professionals, suppliers, and Beijing residents. Destinations compete for the opportunity of hosting the Olympic Games because of the long-term positive impacts the event brings. The professionals and residents were interviewed to explore how the long-term impacts of the Games can be maximized for the destination hosting the event.

Keywords

2008 Olympic Games, Beijing, tourism, impacts, stadiums, convention.

Hotel Millennials Expectancy of Total Compensation

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Abstract

A satisfied hotel workforce has been linked to employees who are compensated fairly. This study will investigate hotel Millennials expectancy for total compensation in large upper-scale chain hotels. Victor Vroom's expectancy theory of motivation will serve as the framework to better understand the Millennials expectations of compensation. The researchers will collect data from a cross-sectional survey to obtain information on Millennials compensation preferences, work environment fit, and expectations of value-oriented relationships. Through simple random sampling, Millennial employees in large upper-scale chain hotels in three regions of the United States will be asked to participate. The research will provide practitioners in the lodging sector and hospitality educators an understanding about the Millennials expectations of total compensation.

Keywords

Millennials, Compensation, Benefits, Motivation.

A Day in the Life of a Select-Service General Manager

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Abstract

This exploratory study will examine the routines of General Managers (GMs) in select-service hotels. The purpose of the study is to ascertain GM perception of their weekly and monthly routines in terms of how much time they are spending on each of their responsibilities, the current challenges they face, and whether their jobs truly reflect their job descriptions. Personal interviews will be conducted with ten GMs of select-service hotels within a mid-western city.

Keywords

General managers, select-service hotels, hospitality, and responsibilities

Environmental Attitudes and Lodging Preferences: An Appreciative-Consumptive Approach

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Abstract

This study investigates how environmental attitudes affect lodging attribute preferences. It is postulated that consumers with more ecocentric environmental attitudes will be more likely to prefer appreciative attributes, whereas those with more anthropocentric and apathetic attitudes toward the environment will be more likely to prefer the consumptive attributes of the lodging experience. In that no scales address consumer preferences for appreciative-consumptive attributes in the lodging context, the authors develop an initial instrument based on work in related areas. This research can help managers prevent wasting resources on aspects of the lodging experience that certain customer groups do not perceive as an important, and contribute toward understanding how environmental attitudes feed into parts of consumers' lives not typically considered by researchers.

Keywords

Appreciative; consumptive; environmental attitudes; lodging attributes

An Analysis of Hotels' Responses to E-Complaints on Facebook-Validating the Justice Theory in Social Network

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Abstract

An increasing number of hotel companies have set up their Facebook Fan Pages (FFP); and FFP has become a new platform for hotel companies to handle e-complaints. Using the Justice Theory to measure customers' satisfaction on hotel companies' complaint handling practices, this study aims to investigate the impact of hotel companies' responses on customers' perception of service recovery. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) will be used to validate the application of the Justice Theory in assessing the effectiveness of hotels' e-complaint handling process on FFPs. The findings of this study are expected to help hoteliers better understand the potential factors that influence customer satisfaction with online service recovery and better use hotel FFP as a platform to improve overall service quality.

Keywords

E-complaint, Facebook fan page, service recovery, the Justice Theory

The Effects of Hotel Lobby Servicescape on Perceived Service Quality, Perceived Value, Satisfaction, and Behavioral Intentions

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Abstract

As a money-saving marketing tool, servicescape has been widely discussed in marketing literature. However, only a few studies have examined its influences within hotels. The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of servicescape on perceived service quality, perceived value, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions in the hotel industry based on the S-O-R paradigm. Structural equation modeling (SEM) will be used to analyze data. The results will help hotel managers predict guests' behavioral responses by managing servicescape dimensions. In addition, they will reveal the influences of servicescape, therefore contributing to the literature by filling a gap in the research.

Keywords

Behavioral intentions, perceived service quality, perceived value, satisfaction, servicescape.

Investigating Guest Experience and Satisfaction with Hotel Animation

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Abstract

Research investigating animation services and their role in satisfying consumers is at its beginning stage. Much needs to be assessed when it comes what the guest experiences with animation programs are and how they contribute to the guest satisfaction and future revisit intention. The purpose of this research is to develop a measurement mechanism to uncover resort guest experience with animation services and its relationship to their overall satisfaction. The role of an animator in facilitating the social and interactional dynamic of resort guests will be assessed. The outcomes of this research will help resorts in evaluating the quality of their current animation service provisions and the role of animation services in cultivating brand loyalty.

Keywords

Hotel animation, animation programs, animators, guest experience, satisfaction

Generation-Y: Perceptions and Awareness of Green Restaurant Practices

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Abstract

In response to growing consumer demand for sustainability initiatives and environmentally friendly products and services, the foodservice industry has begun to implement 'green' practices. One consumer segment pushing the demand for green is Generation Y. The current study surveyed 250 Generation Y college students enrolled at a large university in the Southeastern U.S. to better understand their perceptions, awareness level, and willingness to pay for green practices in foodservice operations. Results showed that respondents were supportive of green practices and willing to pay slightly more, but agreed they could be better informed about current practices. Implications for practice are discussed.

Keywords

Generation Y, consumer perception, green practices, sustainability, foodservice

Mobile Applications from Hotel Companies

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Abstract

With emergence of smartphones, the Internet accessibility and mobility were remarkably increased; so many travelers book a hotel room using a smartphone. Accordingly hotel companies and online travel agencies have offered mobile applications (apps) for their guests who use a smartphone. However, hotel companies still do not provide competitive mobile apps compared to online travel agencies. The study was designed to investigate what factors influence hotel guests in choosing mobile applications, what kinds of functions and information hotel guests are interested in depending on the timing of need and gender. In the results, the researchers found that very few respondents have used mobile apps from hotel companies. In addition, there were statistically significant relationship between choosing mobile apps and temporal situations and choosing mobile apps and gender differences.

Keywords

Hotel, online travel agency, mobile application, smartphone

Recessionary Impacts on the Exotic Dancing Industry in Las Vegas

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Abstract

This study highlights the conflicting beliefs related to recessionary impacts on the exotic dancing facet of the vice industry. Specifically, this study focuses on the viewpoints of the exotic dancers, as their perspectives provide a greater understanding of one facet of this business. Through this phenomenological approach, researchers were able to identify impacts felt by the recession and if these impacts presented any cautionary issues for business owners to be aware of during times of economic downturn (i.e. increased incidence of illegal activity, decreased quality, influx of entertainers entering the industry, etc.).

Keywords

Exotic dancers, recession, adult entertainment, vice, Las Vegas.

What Job Applicants Perceive as More Fair and Valid Test for Selection: General Mental Ability or Personality

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Abstract

The article aimed to examine validity and fairness that job applicants perceived of general mental ability (GMA)- and personality- based selection tests. Graduating students were given examples of the measures of the big five personality test and examples of GMA test and they rated the validity and fairness of each big five personality and GMA items. Conscientiousness, Emotional stability, and Extroversion were perceived more valid than GMA for hourly paid positions. For managerial positions, only Conscientiousness was perceived more valid than GMA while GMA was perceived more valid than openness to experience. None of the five personality traits were perceived as more fair test than GMA. The implication of these findings for procedures of applicants selection are discussed.

Keywords

employee perception, general mental ability, personality

Consumers' Experiences of Cafe Visits: Where I can be me

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Abstract

Adopting a qualitative approach, this study explores how individual consumers make sense of their coffee shop experiences. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with consumers who live in the Northeastern United States and go to coffee shops on frequent basis. To conceptualize the common patterns emerged in the data, we adopted a Grounded Theory approach to extract the first and second order data to form our interpretations. Our findings revealed that during coffee shop visits, consumers experience a process of identification with both the people and the place of the coffee shop. This identification process, together with another process of expectation confirmation, contribute to consumer's loyalty to the coffee shop. Further, discussions, limitations and future directions for research are offered.

Keywords

identity, coffee shop, consumer loyalty.

Understanding Chinese Resort Consumers: Linking Personal Values with Activity Participation

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Abstract

Resort, an important service-oriented leisure product, is a rising star of the hospitality industry in China. However, relatively little is known about the Chinese resort consumers, a promising market segment with unique cultural dispositions. The study aims to fill the gap by investigating Chinese resort consumers through the linkage between personal values and activity participation during resort vacations. Using the canonical correlation analysis, it was found that group-oriented values were positively tied to indoor and more structured activities such as shopping and playing indoor games while the increase in self-oriented value orientations was highly correlated with participation in more adventurous outdoor amenities. Both theoretical contributions and pragmatic implications for resort management in China are discussed.

Keywords

Resort, Chinese consumer, resort activity, personal values.

The Impacts of Customer-to-Customer Interactions (CCIs) on Hospitality Experience

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Abstract

By sharing the physical environment with other fellow customers, customers' unavoidable interactions with each other, directly or indirectly, form an integral part of their hospitality consumption experience. While previous studies offered valuable insights into interaction-related issues across different contexts, the majority of them focused on an individual incident and only a few studies were conducted in the hospitality setting. The present study aims to provide a phenomenological account of how customer-to-customer interactions (CCIs) and service provider-to-customer interactions (SCIs) jointly affect hospitality customers' experience in an interactive manner from both employees' and customers' perspectives. A qualitative approach using in-depth interviews is proposed to attain the objective, followed by a discussion on the expected contributions.

Keywords

Customer-to-customer interactions (CCIs), service experience, restaurant.

The Relationship Between Guest Satisfaction and eWOM in the Hotel Industry: The American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) Model Approach

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Abstract

To succeed in the hotel industry, hotel operators cannot ignore the importance of guest satisfaction. When product or service quality does not meet hotel guests' expectations, guests begin expressing their unpleasant feelings to other people. If guests are satisfied with products or services from the hotel, they will recommend or repurchase those products or services. This study aims to measure the relationship between hotel guest satisfaction and Electronic-Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) communications by applying the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) model. Results will show which antecedents have an impact on guest satisfaction or dissatisfaction in the hotel industry and what motivates hotel guests to write an online review after either a satisfactory or unsatisfactory experience.

Keywords

Hotel, ACSI, Guest Satisfaction, eWOM

Online Comment Behavior: The Case for Review of Popular Comments Websites on US Luxury Hotels

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Abstract

Employees make mistakes and all service encounters do not go exactly as planned. Since it is almost impossible to satisfy everyone every time, it is important to pay attention to customers' opinions since they provide useful information to managers when they are evaluating their hotel's performance. More and more potential hotel customers are reviewing comments made by previous guests on websites and blogs before making a decision about where to stay. By knowing what to look for in these reviews, hoteliers can evaluate their performance in order to provide better customer service to future guests. However, despite this fact, little has been written on how hotel guests use websites to share their experiences. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the comments posted by hotel guests on the TripAdvisor website.

Keywords:

E-Comments, e-WOM, TripAdvisor, Service Quality

Evaluation of Utilizing Guest Speakers in Hospitality and Tourism Programs

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Abstract

This paper addressed the issue of utilizing guest speakers in hospitality and tourism programs. The objective of the current study was to explore students' perceived importance level and performance level of utilizing guest speakers. The study was conducted at a large state university in the Southwestern United States. Using importance-performance analysis, ten attributes of utilizing guest speakers were classified on the IPA grid. The findings suggest helpful information to educators in hospitality and tourism programs when they utilize guest speakers in their classes. Moreover, they can properly utilize guest speakers as an effective learning method in hospitality and tourism programs. Limitations of the study and future study are also addressed.

Keywords

Hospitality/tourism programs, guest speaker, importance-performance analysis

Effectiveness of Asset and Cost Retrenchment in the Restaurant Industry

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Abstract

Restaurant industry is fiercely competitive and has a high failure rate. During the recent economic turbulence restaurant industry experienced a sales declined creating cash-flow problems for restaurant operators. In turn, restaurateurs responded by reducing labor, cutting off expenses, and closing branches. The purpose of retrenchment strategies is to revive the failing business. However, firms have to make the right decisions while implementing retrenchment strategies in order not to hinder their future development. This study investigates how retrenchment strategies affect long-term firm performance. Mainly, this study examines the effects of cost and asset retrenchment in the restaurant industry. Findings of this study may indicate best practices for the restaurant industry when recovering from a financial turbulence.

Keywords

Retrenchment, asset reduction, cost reduction, turnaround, recovery

Duration And Convexity: Uncovering The True Maturity And Price Yield Relationship

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Abstract

This study aims to examine duration and convexity concepts for non-callable and single corporate bonds. By utilizing DVO1, Macaulay and Modified Durations, and Convexity equations for those bonds, this paper unveils the true maturity of the bonds *(Duration)*, true relationship between bond prices and yield to maturity *(Convexity)*, and hedging strategies based *(DVO1)* on estimated duration and convexity.

Key Words:

Duration, convexity, price& yield to maturity

Forecasting Iowa Gaming Volume A Comparison of Four Time Series Forecasting Methods

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Abstract

While Autoregressive Integrated Moving Average (ARIMA) method has been recognized as the best performing method on gaming data; some studies found that simpler methods often outperform more complex ones. The purpose of this study is to compare the performance of ARIMA, Artificial Neural Networks, Simple Moving Average method, and Naïve method on forecasting monthly Iowa gaming volume following the recent recession. Forecasting errors in multiple forecasting horizons will be examined to further understand each method's capability in short- and long-term forecasting. Given that no known study has been identified that focus on similar topic, the findings of this study are expected to fill the gap of literature by providing initial empirical evidence of gaming volume forecasting.

Keywords

Time series, ARIMA, ANN, simple moving average, naïve, Iowa casinos, coin-in, table drop, seasonal effects, forecasting horizons.

The Dual Impact of Value Added Marketing

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Abstract

This study explores and compares the dual impact of advertising on firm value (stock return) for major tourism segments: hotels, restaurants, car rental companies, airline companies, and cruise lines during a 25 year window between 1987 and 2011. The impacts are studied in both product as well as financial market. VAR is used to systematically investigate the direct and indirect effect of advertising. In addition, the moderating effect of franchise and mediating effect of profits and analyst coverage are also examined.

Keywords

Advertising, market returns, product market, financial market, time series

Segmenting the Global Lodging Industry: An Application of the Modern Portfolio Theory in Hospitality

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the current development of global lodging industry and explore whether the lodging industry can sustain future growth opportunities through diversification. Smith Travel Research (STR), a leading hospitality research company, classifies the lodging market into 6 segments based on average room rates in which it falls. Using longitudinal dataset of performance measurements (e.g., revenue per available room) obtained from STR, the optimal hotel segment mixes will be identified through the use of modern financial portfolio theory. The different growth stages of the lodging industry within and between developed countries and developing countries will also be compared by segment. The results will shed light on diversification strategies of the lodging industry and provide investment directions for hoteliers.

Keywords

Lodging industry, segment diversification, optimal hotel segment mix, modern financial portfolio theory

Perception of International Students on Restaurant Tipping: Comparison among Chinese, Korean and Indian

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Abstract

Tipping is a vital part of the economy. Millions of workers, especially in restaurants depend heavily on tip income. Since the United States has the world's largest international student population, the present research will ascertain perceptions of international students on restaurant tipping by analyzing important factors affecting restaurant tipping behaviors of international students from China, India and South Korea. By understanding these behaviors, restaurant management can better train their tipped service providers in how to provide better service to these groups which will hopefully lead to repeat customers.

Keywords

Restaurant tipping, international student (Chinese, Indian and Korean), tipping behavior.

What Factors can Affect Customers' Behavioral Intention toward Healthy Foods?

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Abstract

This study seeks to determine what factors can affect customers' behavioral intention toward healthy foods. To determine the elements involved in healthy food choices, four dimensions: intrinsic factors, extrinsic factors, personal factors, and emotional factors, will be developed according to focus group interviews and the findings of the literature reviews. Also, this study investigates the moderating effect on the relations among the variables by using demographic sources. The results will provide a basis for investigating characteristics about healthy foods and which factors can be critical for deriving positive satisfaction and behavioral intention toward healthy foods. This study will offer useful information for foodservice companies for developing marketing strategies to better understand people's behaviors toward healthy foods.

Keywords

Healthy foods, intrinsic factors, extrinsic factors, personal factors, emotional factors, satisfaction, and behavioral intention

How Successful is the Operation of Organic Food in the Restaurant Industry?

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Abstract

One of the popular trends in more recent years is the link between healthier lifestyles and the consumption of organic food and beverages in the restaurant industry. Because so many people have consumed organic food and beverages, many restaurants have capitalized on the surging popularity of organic food by changing their menu items and replacing conventional food with organic food. This study will investigate the perspectives of several Miami-area restaurants that use organic food. The research will use case study method to conduct in-depth face to face interviews of several restaurant owners. It seeks to discover how successful the use of organic food is in these particular establishments.

Key Words:

Organic food, restaurant industry, case study method

Attitudes and Behaviors of School Foodservice Directors about Food Recalls

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore United States school foodservice directors' attitudes about food recalls and determine existing recall practices. The online survey used for data collection will consist of three sections: attitudes, behaviors, and demographics. The survey will be randomly distributed to 3,083 school foodservice directors across the United States with a goal of 370 responses. Statistical analysis will be completed using SPSS (v. 20.0). Frequencies, means, and standard deviations will be calculated. Multiple regression analysis will be used to explore relationships between attitudes and behaviors of school foodservice directors towards food recalls. The results of this study will help improve recall practices in schools to meet the needs of school foodservice operators.

Keywords

Food recalls, food safety, school foodservice.

An Examination of Survey Response Rate Levels in Hospitality and Tourism Research

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the response rates for surveys used in hospitality and tourism research. By reviewing a large number of published empirical studies, this study will investigate the response rates of various methods on data collection and socio-demographic characteristics of population. Meta analysis will be employed to compare data obtained by exploring sixteen hospitality and tourism journals. Based on the results, this study will suggest optimal/acceptable response rates based upon factors which can be used to determine response rate in hospitality and tourism research. This study will contribute to theoretical foundations of research in hospitality and tourism and provide future researchers with a guide for determining adequate response rate levels.

Keywords

Interview, questionnaire, response rate, survey

Factors Influencing Hospitality Employees' Organizational Commitment

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Abstract

Building on Social Exchange Theory (SET), this study aims to examine factors influencing hospitality employees' organizational commitment. This research seeks to determine whether internal service quality, perceived organizational support, and leader-member exchange have any relationships with employees' organizational commitment. The questionnaire has been developed based on SET and a comprehensive review of the literature, and it has been modified to fit the hospitality industry. The results will lead to an understanding of what influences hospitality employees' organizational commitment.

Keywords

Organizational commitment, Hospitality industry, Internal service quality, Perceived organizational support, Leader-member exchange, Social exchange.

Promoting Creativity of Service Employees Using Contextual Factors in Hotel Industry: The Mediating Role of Psychological Empowerment

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Abstract

Although creativity of service employees plays an important role in organizational performance, little empirical research has been conducted to investigate the antecedents of employee creativity in the hospitality industry. Drawing from self-determination theory, this study proposes and tests an integrative model in which contextual factors (relationship with supervisor and relationship with co-workers) are important factors in predicting employee creativity through psychological empowerment. Data will be collected from hotel employees and supervisors in South Korea. The implication for hotel managers and researchers will be also discussed.

Keywords

Creativity, service employees, contextual factors, psychological empowerment

Motivating Senior Staff in the Hospitality Industry

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Abstract

"Senior employees" can be defined as those who are over age 50 and as individuals who have been employed by the same organization for five years or more. A major problem that hospitality industry management faces is how to motivate senior staff in today's economic environment so that employee turnover is reduced. The purpose of this study is to determine which motivational factors are the most effective in retaining senior employees in both managerial and non-managerial positions. This study aims to identify the motivational factors influencing senior employees and the potential differences among the factors based on ethnicity and gender.

Keywords

Hospitality Industry, Motivation, Employee Turnover, Senior Employees

Issues Faced By Multinational Hotel Human Resource Managers in China

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to investigate Human Resource Managers' perceptions of HR management issues in China's multinational hotel industry. These issues include how hotel Human Resource Managers deal with the hiring, training, and retaining of qualified staff, and the other specific issues facing multinational luxury hotels in China, including tension between local policies and parent company policies, and cultural differences between corporate and nation. The researcher plans to interview at least ten Human Resource Managers in luxury hotel properties in China. The findings from this study will offer Human Resource Managers new insights, which could be used to proactively help hotels select the right employee, offer proper training, reduce turnover, and reduce conflicts between different policies and cultures.

Keywords

Human resources, China, hospitality, hiring, training, turnover, cultural difference.

Training Evaluation Using Kirkpatrick's Model: A Case Study

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Abstract

Training is one human resources development practice found in most organizations; however, little attention has been given to the importance of training evaluation. Using Kirkpatrick's evaluation model, this case study examined the training evaluation activities carried out at one training company in the Midwest. The challenges the company encountered when evaluating training were identified, and recommendations were provided to improve training evaluation effectiveness. The challenges were the difficulties in accessing and evaluating knowledge acquired from training, behavior changes, and business outcomes. Some of the recommendations included standardized evaluation forms, standardized needs analysis, and interventions from the trainee's manager before and after training.

Keywords

Training evaluation, case study, challenges in evaluating training

Determinants of Hotel Customers' Acceptance and Use of Near Field Communication-Enabled Mobile Devices

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Abstract

Smart-phones are now being equipped with Near Field Communication technology (NFC-technology) and they have been increasingly attracting attentions and interests not only from industry marketers but customers in the mobile industry. This brings alert to hospitality business with the strong needs of understanding on how customers perceive and react to NFC-technology. This study attempts to investigate the likelihood of hotel guests' willingness to use NFC-technology and the determinants of acceptance on NFC-technology based on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). The findings of this research will add value to the research stream due to lack of research on NFC-technology based products and services and will suggest practical management implications to make the best usage of NFC-technology within the hospitality businesses.

Keywords

Near Field Communication technology, Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Personal innovativeness, Perceived Risk, Personal contact, Technology discomfort, Perceived self-efficacy

Advance Mobile Technology: A text message as a Keycard?

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Abstract

The revolutionary modern-age consumer considers the availability of mobile technology to be essential to daily function. The lodging industry has been a forerunner in the development, adoption, and implementation of new technologies to enhance business operations and consumer satisfaction. This study will adapt the Technology Acceptance Model to test consumer perceptions and acceptability of advanced mobile technology in hotel operations through the use of an encrypted audio room keycard. Structural equation modeling will be employed to test the likelihood of consumers and hotel managers to implement this innovative development in the advancement of consumer technological acceptance. Findings from this research could provide insight and valuable guidance to managers regarding the future of hospitality mobile technology.

Keywords

Mobile technology, TAM, lodging, keycard, smartphone, consumer acceptance

Customer Mistreatment and Organizational Citizenship Behavior among Frontline Restaurant Employees: The Role of Regulatory Focus

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Abstract

Despite of the prevalence of customer mistreatment, very limited literature has focused on studying it. This aim of the present study is to examine the effect of customer mistreatment on organizational citizenship behavior among frontline restaurant employees. The research will also investigate the buffering role of employees' regulatory focus against the negative impacts of being subjected to customer mistreatment on employees' organizational citizenship behavior. Using a purposive sampling method, we will select 400 frontline employees from 15 restaurants to participate the survey. We will mainly adopt confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling to analyze the data.

Keywords

Customer mistreatment, organizational citizenship behavior, regulatory focus, frontline restaurant employees

Strategic Intuition in Hospitality Organizations: A Systematic-Strategy Formulation Model" (SSFM)

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Abstract

This study aims to integrate different views on intuition as an effective process to formulate strategies. Intuition has been studied in its distinctive forms such as ordinary intuition that is considered a feeling, expert intuition, which considers expertise as essential element to action, and strategic intuition, which manifests creative ideas as flashes of insight that the brain produces as a normal function. Strategic intuition has not been studied as a process that determines how leaders formulate innovative ideas in the hospitality and tourism industry. This study aims to fill the gap in the field by proposing a strategy intuition model. Suggestions are proposed to evaluate how intelligent memory works and how strategic intuition may be cultivated in hospitality and tourism companies.

Keywords:

Intuition; intelligent memory; strategy formulation; organizational thinking; thought process; intuition frames, strategic management

Incorporating Patriotism into Promotional Messages to Attract Senior Customers. A Case in the Food Service Industry

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Abstract

Previous studies have suggested that a significant percentage of seniors are patriotic considering their historical background. Thus, incorporating patriotism into promotional messages could be a strategy to attract this aging customer group. The purpose of the study is to investigate whether military discount advertising serves as a moderator in the relationship between restaurant quality factors and senior customers' attitude towards a restaurant and their purchase behavior. The researchers will collect 200 completed surveys in a causal dining restaurant of Florida. The results of the study will provide industry practitioners strategies of incorporating patriotism into marketing activities, specifically for the senior customer segment. It is also anticipated that patriotism can be included as a potential component of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

Keywords

Patriotism, Customer attitude, Purchase behavior, Corporate Social Responsibility.

Motivations of Live and Online Gamblers in the United Kingdom

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Abstract:

This research examines motivations of recreational gamblers, both live and online, by attempting to create a motivation segmentation of gamblers in the United Kingdom (UK). The UK has legalized gambling throughout the country, and unlike other jurisdictions, the activity is everywhere; it is not restricted to particular counties, states or locales. It is of academic and industry interest as to whether this widespread availability affects the motivations of gamblers. In addition, this research adds to limited extant motivation literature by focusing on recreational gamblers, rather than the oft-researched problem or at-risk gambler populations. This study, currently underway, uses an online survey design to measure gambling motivations along validated motivational scales (Cotte, 1997; Jang et al., 2000; Lee et al.; 2006; Loroz, 2004; Neighbors et al., 2002; Tarras et al., 2000), to be factor- and cluster-analyzed with respect to demographic and behavioral variables.

Keywords:

gambling, United Kingdom, motivations, factor analysis, cluster analysis

Applying an Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) to Evaluate Hotels' Social Media Marketing Strategies: The Case of Facebook

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Abstract

This study aims to identify important attributes of hotels' Facebook pages in an effort to determine how consumers perceived these characteristics. There is limited research regarding consumers' expectations and satisfaction with hotels' Facebook presence as well as perceptions about the performance of hotels on Facebook. A survey containing questions related to aspects of hotel Facebook pages will be developed and conducted in this study. By applying an Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA), this study will highlight how important browsers believe specific Facebook traits to be and whether hotels are living up to the expectations of their target markets. Also, it will contribute to the academic field by pioneering the IPA technique in social media marketing research.

Keywords

Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA), Hotel, Social media marketing, Facebook

Examining Local Slot Machine Players' Loyalty: Behavioral and Attitudinal

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Abstract

This study is aimed at examining the importance of casino attributes including emotional attachment which has received little attention in previous gaming research. The research will be conducted to assess the effects of all attributes on local slot players' loyalty in two aspects: behavioral and attitudinal. An intercept survey will be used at local places such as malls and DMVs (Department of Motor Vehicles) in South Florida. Factor analysis and structural equation modeling will be employed to explore the casino attributes affecting local casino patrons' loyalty. The results of this study will help casino operators understand their local slot players better and target them more effectively. The current study will also provide a framework for future researchers.

Keywords

Slot players, casino attributes, behavioral/attitudinal loyalty, casino operations, casino marketing

The Role of Subjective Well-Being in Relationship Marketing

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Abstract

In service industry, the enhancement of seller-buyer relationship can be conducted by services. Successful relationship marketing in service industry also ensures the effectiveness of service-profit chain. Accordingly, how to combine relationship marketing and service-profit chain is worth to be explored. In this study, Subjective Well-Being (SWB) is applied to measure employee satisfaction in service-profit chain. The purpose of this study is to explore the role of employee SWB in relationship marketing. There are three objectives of this study: (1) Detecting effects of employee SWB on relationship quality; (2) Explaining the mediating mechanism of service quality between employee SWB and relationship quality; (3) Clarifying the differences in developing customer-employee and customer-company relationship quality.

Keywords

Subjective well-being, relationship quality, relationship marketing, service quality.

International Volunteer Tourism and Intercultural Sensitivity: The Role of Interaction with Host Communities

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Abstract

This research attempts to understand the change in voluntourists' intercultural sensitivity (IS) as a result of international volunteering experience, to investigate how the level and quality of interaction with host communities influence this change, and to explore how personal and trip situational factors affect the relationship among interactional level, quality, and change in IS. The Bennett's (1986) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) and a two-dimensional measure of contact quality are utilized to assess the degree of change in IS resulting from international volunteering. The study models the conceptual relationship among IS, level and quality of interaction, and situational variables. The findings will allow voluntourism organizations to provide better volunteering experiences that optimally enrich volunteers and benefit host communities.

Keywords

Volunteer tourism, voluntourism, intercultural sensitivity, DMIS, contact quality.

Virtual and Hybrid Meetings for Generation Y: Using the Delphi Method to Determine Best Practices, Opportunities and Barriers

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Abstract

This paper utilizes the Delphi technique to determine best practices, opportunities and barriers regarding virtual and hybrid meetings involving Generation Y. An expert panel of meeting planners has been consulted for this study and through several rounds of sequential questionnaires, a group consensus will be formed with regard to virtual and hybrid meetings for Generation Y (born between 1981 and 2000 and ranging from 12 to 31 years of age). Based on these meeting planner's perceptions, this study will deduce a catalog of information addressing the needs and concerns of Generation Y attendees and their willingness to attend and participate in virtual and hybrid meetings. This collective agreement is a pilot study for further research on this subject.

Keywords

Virtual, Hybrid, Meetings, Generation Y, Best Practices.

Towards a VBN theory of Sustainable Tourism Behavior

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Abstract

Conventional tourism is often intertwined with the availability of a clean natural environment with a supplement of a hospitality industry. However, current tourism has come across new challenges due to an increased number of visitors and their detrimental impact on the environment. For that, the national parks have begun to recognize the need to establish a sustainable strategic approach to developing tourism in national parks. This paper aims at examining the determinants of sustainable tourism behavior in the national parks, and to analyze factors explaining these green behaviors. To know potential national park tourists' values, beliefs and norms, which are vital to the creation of a sustainable tourism management of national park, VBN theory will serve as a conceptual framework.

Keywords

VBN theory, national park, green consumer, environmentally friendly, sustainable tourism, environment

Investigating the Influence of Resident-Tourist Interaction Quality on Residents' Attitude towards Tourism Development

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Abstract

This research aims at understanding how intergroup contact quality could affect residents' emotional solidarity and their attitudes toward tourism development. Different from previous literature, this research will be conducted in Hong Kong, a typical Asian setting, and emphasize intergroup and intercultural differences. Three hundred Hong Kong residents will be randomly selected and surveyed. It is expected that this research could provide an alternative perspective of understanding residents' attitude. Destination Marketing Organizations could use the results to mitigate potential conflicts and frictions between residents and tourists and gain better support from the local community for tourism development.

Keywords

Residents' attitude, intergroup contact, coordinated management of meaning, emotional solidarity, Hong Kong,

Using Knowledge Management to Increase Use of Sustainable Tourism Business Practices: a Case Study for Indiana

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Abstract

Sustainable tourism practices are applicable to all forms of tourism, regardless of scale (Lu et al., 2009). However, scholars argue that the dissemination of knowledge and application of these practices is flawed and do not specifically address the issues behind the lack of practice. In cooperation with DMOs in Indiana, an online survey was distributed to Lafayette/West Lafayette and Columbia and Hamilton counties. Initial survey results revealed that management would consider making their business sustainable if managers could learn of inexpensive ways to do it. In an effort to learn more about sustainability, respondents were consulting Internet-based "do-it-yourself" instruction materials. Learning preferences were analyzed under knowledge management theories to more thoroughly understand how individuals can learn about sustainable tourism practices.

Keywords

Sustainable tourism practices, knowledge management, adoption, managerial knowledge.

Content Analysis in Search of Green Advertisements in Hospitality and Tourism Magazines

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is measuring the current percentage of hospitality print advertisements with environmentally responsible claims in various travel magazines: Conde Nast Traveler, National Geographic Traveler, Food and Travel, and Destinasian. A total of 829 hospitality advertisements have been spotted and screened for green claims or messages. Typical advertisers were hotels, restaurants, airlines, travel agents, and cruise lines. Only 29 out of 829 (3.5 %) advertisements had green message in them. These 29 green ads have been described in detail and their photographs have been indexed in the appendix. The reasons for such a small percentage (3.5%) of green advertisements have been speculated. A taxonomy of six categories to classify each green advertisement have been suggested with examples.

Keywords

Green hospitality advertising, environmentally friendly advertising, sustainable tourism.

Top Hotel Companies on Facebook

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Abstract

Social networking sites have become an essential part of any hospitality business. Social media is a relatively new phenomenon, which has equated to scarce research on its benefits. By utilizing the evaluation criteria from Song and Zahedi (2005) that are typically used to assess websites and factors considered important for all business-related Facebook pages, an evaluation of each hotel's Facebook page may be established. A content analysis of the top-ranked 100 hotels in the country (by number of rooms) will be used to rank each page. Data will be collected over two months and will include how many times a company's page had been "liked", how many people are talking about the page and specific characteristics established by Song and Zahedi.

Keywords

Facebook, social media, hotel, social networking

Identifying Effective Methods for Hotel Occupancy Forecasting

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Abstract

Forecasting accuracy is of paramount importance to the hotel industry as operational and investment decisions hinge on projected occupancy and revenues. However, the nature of the industry makes market demand difficult to predict; and various results have been presented in existing literature. Therefore, using five-year weekly occupancy data of hotels in ten U.S. geographic markets, this study attempts to examine how different time series forecasting methods, alone or combined, perform differently in differently forecasting horizons . Five forecasting methods that have been commonly used in the hospitality industry will be examined. The study will also test the quality process cumulative sum control chart (CUSUM) technique for identifying major trend shifts in time series data.

Keywords

Time series forecasting, combined, occupancy, simple exponential smoothing, moving average, weighted moving average, autoregressive moving average, ARIMA, ADLM, ECM, VAR , CUSUM.

Consumer Evaluation of Vertical Brand Extension in the Lodging Industry: Relationships among Brand Trust, Brand Loyalty, and Brand Extension.

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Abstract

In this study, relationships among brand trust, brand loyalty and brand extension will be examined. It has been found that brand trust which has two dimensions: brand reliability and brand intensions, has an impact on brand loyalty and brand extension. Also, brand loyalty is related to brand extension. However, there has been a lack of research on a holistic model of consumer evaluation of brand extension in the hospitality industry. Thus, this study investigates consumer evaluation of vertical brand extension in the lodging industry. A survey method will be applied. Structural equation modeling will be used to test hypotheses.

Keywords

brand, vertical brand extension, brand trust, brand loyalty, lodging industry.

Investigating Perceived Hotel Experience Quality: A Cross-Cultural Comparison of Chinese and American Consumers

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Abstract

This study will examine the hotel experience and perceived experience quality cross culturally by comparing the perspectives of Chinese and American tourists. By investigating the differences between these two groups in perceptions of hotel experience quality on attribute, interaction, and experiential dimensions, and testing the relationship between perceived hotel experience quality and overall satisfaction, this study will be able to explain how culture will shape hotel guests' subjective judgments of hotel experience on different levels. Also, since international hotel brands have invested efforts in catering to customers from specific geographical markets, this study will provide insights for industry practitioners to design culture-oriented hotel offerings from the experiential perspectives.

Keywords

Experience economy, hotel, cross-cultural comparison, China, United States

The Effects of Experience Perceptions on eWOM of U.S. Hotel Guests in American and Chinese Five-star Hotels

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Abstract

In the hospitality industry, the change of information technology has led to an increase in online reviews written by guests. Through analyzing the content of online reviews, this study aims to investigate the differences in word usage of U.S. guests' electronic word of mouth (eWOM) communications regarding the different perceptions of their experiences with American and Chinese five-star hotels. It also investigates the impact eWOM has on the postpurchase behaviors of the guests who write the reviews. Content analysis will be applied to collect and classify words used in the online reviews. The results of this study are expected to assist American and Chinese five-star hotel managers to adapt their managerial strategies in various departments within the hotels.

Keywords

China, eWOM, Experience perception, Five-star hotel, Post-purchase behavior, United States.

What Affects the Amount of Restaurant Customers' Tip?

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between the amount of tip and its predictors: bill size, the big five personality types, meal type, food quality, atmosphere, service quality, customer gender, server gender, customer hospitality experience, ethnicity, and alcohol consumption. For this research, a survey of southeastern undergraduate students is conducted to collect information about customers, servers and customer tipping behaviors. The data is analyzed using a multiple regression analysis method.

The results of this research supply to compare how much each predictor of tipping behaviors affects the amount of tip, and to indicate what the most influential factor is. The detail information about tipping behaviors will be helpful for restaurant managers to manage servers and understand customers.

Keywords

Amount of tip, Customer/ Server Gender dynamics, Personality traits, alcohol consumption

Understanding Consumer Engagement in Online Travel Communities

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Abstract

The term "consumer engagement" is extensively used in the digital era. It is believed that engaged consumers play an important role in products/services referral and recommendation, new product/service development and experience/value co-creation. Although the notion of consumer engagement sounds compelling, it is not fully developed in theory. Different interpretations coexist, resulting in confusion and misuse of the concept. This study attempts to define consumer engagement and develop a conceptual framework of consumer engagement, addressing antecedents of consumer engagement in the context of online travel communities. With focus on the interactive and experiential nature of consumer engagement, the model expands current understandings of consumer engagement and provides insights for hospitality and tourism businesses regarding how to engage consumers through online communities.

Keywords

Consumer engagement, online travel communities, online community experience, community identification.

Is Firm Performance Predicted by the Importance of Marketing and Technology Use? An Examination of SMEs in the Sector of Tourism Services

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Abstract

This work attempts to identify whether the degree of importance given to marketing and the use of technology in the firm are able to predict the performance of SMEs in the tourism services sector. By employing structural equation modeling, the authors examine the main effects of the variables hypothesized as predictors, as well as the mediating role of technology use in the relation between importance of marketing and performance. The empirical results suggest that importance of marketing and technology use do not predict SMEs´ performance, nor a mediation of technology use exists. However, it was found that importance of marketing has a significant, direct effect on the extent to which SMEs use technology in their operations (.59, $p < .05$).

Keywords

Tourism services, SMEs, marketing, performance, technology.

Examining the Relationship between Price Gap and Hotel Performance within and across Online/Offline

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Abstract

The primary objectives of this study are (1) to investigate the relationship between online (offline) price gap and hotel performance, and (2) to examine the effect of price gap between offline and online channels on hotel performance. Our findings show that a decrease in online price gap has a positive impact on hotel performance. In order to enhance hotel performance, hotel managers should manage the pricing strategies for multiple online channels; in addition, hotels should pursue price transparency policies across different online channels. On the other hand, the results show a positive relationship between offline price gap and performance. Customization and bundling strategies for offline channels are also suggested to enhance the overall profitability of firms.

Keywords

Price gap, online/offline channels, hotel performance, price transparency

Praising about Your Loved Brand

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Abstract

Marketers pursue positive post-consumption behaviors such as positive word of mouth, wiliness to pay premium, and repurchase intention. Previous studies have shown that people relate to brands similarly to how they related to people, and that the applicability of the relationship metaphor to brand consumption is valid. The study proposes that brand-loving consumers will have more positive word of mouth when they show more emotional attachment, self-brand connection, and brand attitude. Brand loving consumers who self-claims that they have loving relationship with the brands will be participating in the study. The results of the study offer significant implications for hospitality marketers. Also, an additional avenue for future research in hospitality will be discussed.

Keywords

Brand relationship, brand love, emotional attachment, self-brand connection, brand attitude

The Relationship between eWOM Motivation and eWOM Behavior in the Restaurant Industry

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between eWOM (electronic Word of Mouth) motivation and positive eWOM behavior in the restaurant industry. The study employed a descriptive and causal research design using a cross-sectional and sample survey. An Online survey was conducted using the database through Center for Hospitality and Tourism Research (CHTR) at Oklahoma State University. The respondents were U.S. frequent travelers who are included into the database and who provided feedback or comments online about their restaurant experiences in six months. 198 responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics and a multiple regression analysis. The results indicated that concern for others, social benefit, and venting negative feelings were significantly related to the positive eWOM behavior while self-enhancement and helping company were not.

Keywords

Electric Word of Mouth (eWOM), eWOM motivation, eWOM behavior, restaurant industry

Gender and WOM after Positive Service Encounters

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Abstract

Word-Of-Mouth (WOM) provides essential information about a firm to consumers, usually helping them decide whether or not to purchase from a firm. Therefore, positive WOM is important for the firms to attract new customers. This study focuses on the gender difference in positive WOM behaviors after customers experiencing positive emotions in service encounters. By applying the emotion regulation theory of positive emotions, this study aims to examine the underlying mechanism of gender differences in WOM behaviors. The results would assist companies to better understand the individual differences in participating in positive WOM behaviors and implement strategies accordingly to enhance the impact of positive WOM generated by the companies' successful service delivery.

Keywords

Word-of-Mouth, positive emotions, emotion regulation, service encounters.

Factors Determining US College Students' Sustainable Food Consumption Behaviors Toward Locally-Sourced Restaurants Using the EKB Model

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Abstract

It is now widely recognized that sustainable food consumption is one of the most important keys to sustainable development (Duchin, 2005). Sustainable food consumption and environmental protection remain related ideals for people, with sustainable food consumption constituting a practice to solve the problems of environmental damage in order to achieve sustainable development. College students are one group who have also come to recognize the importance of sustainable development and the need to conserve resources (Horovitz, 2006). With the rise of international environmental protection, the concept of "sustainable food consumption" has gradually emerged as an important issue that needs to be addressed.

This study aims to identify factors that impact sustainability and to assess food choices or options that promote sustainability on university/college campuses in the United States. Moreover, the study will attempt to develop recommendations for the implementation of feasible practices that would motivate college students to make food choices that would in turn promote sustainability on campuses. The results will help with an understanding of the sample's motivations and consumption patterns of sustainable consumption. This in turn will give marketers and academicians insight into this profitable and important market segment.

Keywords

Sustainable food consumption, college-aged consumers, EKB model

The Moderating Role of Bundling in Fairness Perception of Pricing in Revenue Management

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Abstract

Most hotels use demand-based revenue management practices that changing room rates only based on the demand. These practices might alienate customers due to the perception of unfairness. Motivated by the Prospect Theory, authors identify two factors--similarity and reference price--that influence customers' fairness perception of pricing in revenue management. Then authors propose two hypotheses to explain that bundling can moderate unfairness perception of pricing in revenue management by manipulating these two factors. To test the hypotheses, an experiment will be conducted. The collected data will be analyzed by using SPSS. A one-way ANOVA will be conducted to analyze the data.

Keywords

Fairness perception, revenue management, bundling, prospect theory.

To Determine the Antecedents of Travelers' Attitudes towards Destination Green Behavior

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Abstract

The attitudes towards pro-environmental behavior have been an interesting research topic in social science fields. This study aims to broaden the attitude research by examining the antecedents of specific attitudes by using Awareness of Consequences, Ascription of Responsibility, Environmental Knowledge, and Destination Residents' Green Practices to predict people's attitudes regarding the specific pro-environmental behaviors in travel destination. It is expected to enrich the attitude research based on TPB model (Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005).

Keywords

Travelers' Attitudes, Destination Green Behaviors, Antecedents.

Would Non-Price Energy Conservation Nudges Work Towards Hotel Guests' Pro-Conservation Behavior?

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Abstract

There is ample evidence in the literature that energy conservation "nudges" providing feedback to households on their own and their neighbors' home electricity usage change consumers' conservation behaviors. The purpose of the study is to provide insights on understanding and leveraging the opportunities of implementing energy conservation in hospitality operations. As shown by a nudge program by utility companies, hotel brands can develop their own energy conservation nudges by providing guests with current usage and by sharing an average amount of energy consumed per room (single or double occupancy) or per person with other guests. When integrated with current loyalty programs, the effectiveness of energy conservation nudges will be enhanced by rewarding greener guests with points and making them feel good about their energy conservation efforts.

Keywords

Nudge, Energy Conservation

Willingness to Pay for an Innovative Eco-Themed Children Amenity in Hotels —— A Quasi- Discrete Choice Experiment Model

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Abstract

Even there are many attempts in lodging industry of taking various initiatives to contribute to environment protection, there is still lack of research on how to design and embed eco-concept into hotel service and amenities design to maximize the marketing profit. Our subject of inquiry is hotel children amenity, and we try to develop children service in hotels by introducing eco-concept as the focus for activity and amenity design. This is an on-going research project, as part of which, in this article we are particularly interested in exploring charging issues accompany with this novel product by investing guests' willingness to pay. We are conducting a field study by establishing a real prototype in hotel and on-site experiment to examine guests' willingness to pay under different price settings. In presenting a creative prototype designed and operated embedding eco-concept, we demonstrate the potential contribution of design practice to an interdisciplinary research program delivering understanding on innovation, product design, environmental protection, and marketing strategy concerns in the hospitality industry.

Keywords

Product design, price strategy, hotel management, children amenities, eco-concept

The Case of Hotel Operating Practices Influencing PET Bottled Water Consumption: An Analysis of Bottled Water Serving and Plastic Bottle Recycling in Miami Florida Hotels and Resorts

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Abstract

PET bottled water leads soft beverage market growth. However, PET bottled water also has been a major research object for sustainability due to its low recycling rate. As 'Green Meetings' have become a classification of meeting planning, event professionals have been suggested to stop using PET bottled water in order to produce sustainable meetings. This research seek to identify different bottled water related operating practices existing in different lodging categories, particularly practices in sales, catering and recycling areas, in Miami, Florida hotels and resort facilities. The paper addresses relationship between hotel operating practices and bottled water on site consumption, and explains how differences in hotel operation may change consumers' behavior.

Keywords

Bottled water, PET, recycling, meeting, and Miami lodging.

The Relationship between International Expansion and Firm Performance: An Empirical Investigation of U.S.-based Publicly Traded Restaurant Firms

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Abstract

As globalization has grown, service industries are rapidly expanding into the international market. Despite the rapid growth of international expansion in service industries, academic research on examining the relationship between international expansion and firm performance of restaurant firms are still at an initial stage. Prior studies have shown conflicting findings. This study aims to examine whether there is an association between international expansion and firm performance of U.S.-based publicly traded restaurants firms. The research hopes to provide insights and assistance to both academics who have struggled with inconsistent results and to company strategists operating the international restaurant firms. With better knowledge, managers are able to decide when and how to implement such expansion and ultimately achieve the optimal level.

Keywords

International expansion, Firm performance, Restaurants

The Effect of Cross-border Competition and a Recession on Atlantic City Casinos

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Abstract

Atlantic City casinos have been affected by a recession and legalized gaming in Pennsylvania at nearly the same time. This study evaluates the effect on casino revenue of the 2007 to 2009 recession and the addition of four new casinos in Pennsylvania that are all within 100 miles of Atlantic City. If casino management is going to offset the effect of increased competition, they need to understand how much revenue they are losing to competition and how much to the recession over which they may have less control.

Keywords

Cross-border competition, Recession, Atlantic City casinos

Profit-driven M&A and Growth-driven M&A: U.S. Restaurants Perspectives

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Abstract

Mergers and acquisitions (M&A) are often considered as an effective growth strategy. Meanwhile, a profitable growth is the ultimate goal of an acquiring company. To achieve this goal, an acquiring company commonly endeavors through growth-focused M&A or profit-focused M&A. However, growth and profit is a controversial subject and they do not always move together in the same direction. This study would like to answer the question about which M&A, profit-focused or growth-focused, is more advantageous to achieve the profitable growth for the U.S. restaurant companies. This study will extend previous researchers' finding that profit-focused restaurant firms are more likely to achieve profitable growth than growth-focused one, by examining the phenomenon in the M&A context.

Keywords

Growth-driven M&A, profit-driven M&A, U.S. restaurants, profitable growth.

Seeking an Optimal Speed in International Expansion: U.S. Restaurant Industry Perspective

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Abstract

As globalization of the world economy has intensified and more and more firms go international, the speed of international expansion became arguably one of the most important time-based dimensions. The question of "how fast," however, has not gained enough attention among the hospitality literature so far. Given conflicting perspectives with regard to the impact of international expansion speed on a firm's performance, this study argues that neither too fast nor too slow international expansion is beneficial in maximizing a firm's financial performance. Therefore, this study aims to find the optimal speed for international expansion that maximizes a firm's financial performance. U.S. restaurant firms are the focus of the current study in response to their active adaptation in international expansion strategy.

Keywords

Internationalization, Speed, Tobin's Q, U.S. restaurants, Financial performance

Developing a Hotel Investment Decision model - An Application of Artificial Neural Network

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Abstract

Fast growth of China's hotel industry has led to overdevelopment. Many hotels have been suffering from low occupancy and showing sluggish performance. The purpose of this study is to develop a hotel investment decision model for China's hotel industry using Artificial Neural Networks. This study will use four indices developed based location, economy, diversification, and relationship measurements as input variables and Earnings before Interest & Taxes as output variable for model development. Data from 177 upscale hotels opened in 2010 in twelve relatively developed metropolitan areas in China will be used. The findings are expected to provide hotel practitioners and investors in China with an effective and efficient tool for more scientific investment decision-making.

Keywords

China hotel industry, upscale hotels, investment decision making, Artificial Neural.

Predictors of Perceived Restaurant Innovativeness and Innovative Outcomes in Chain Restaurants: Moderating Roles of Age and Gender

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate diners' perception of innovativeness based on their total dining experience. Specifically, the objectives of this study are: (1) to investigate the impacts of perceived innovativeness of quality and customer satisfaction on overall perceived restaurant innovativeness: (2) to examine the effect of price fairness and risk aversion on perceived restaurant innovativeness: (3) to test the impact of perceived restaurant innovativeness on brand equity and behavioral intention; and (4) to identify the moderating effects of age and gender on the relationship between the drivers of innovativeness and perceived restaurant innovativeness. These results will provide a basis for investigating which factors are critical in eliciting development of perceived restaurant innovativeness and which have innovative outcomes.

Keywords

Restaurant innovativeness, chain restaurants, brand equity, behavioral intention.

The Determinants of Royalty Rate in U.S. Restaurant Franchising

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Abstract

The goal of this study is to examine the determinants of royalty rates in U.S. restaurant franchising. The business-format franchising has been dominant in U.S. restaurant business. Even though franchise business has grown up rapidly, some conflicts of interests between franchisor and franchisee still exist. Accordingly, this paper investigates how to make an optimal agreement to minimize the controversial issues between two parties. In particular, we focus on royalty rates which play an important role in restaurant franchising contract. To understand that framework in regard to the effect on royalty rates, we examine many independent variables such as agency cost, size and service type.

Keywords

U.S. restaurant franchising, Franchise fee, Royalty rate, Agency cost

Food Trucks vs. Brick-and-Mortar: A Case Study Exploring the Difference Between the Two Concepts

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Abstract

Gourmet food trucks are hitting the streets in major cities across the United States delivering a unique culinary experience to the customer. Food trucks have the ability to go to the customer, versus waiting for the customer to come to them, such as with a brick-and-mortar restaurant. Starting a food truck is a low-cost, low-risk solution to breaking into the restaurant industry, especially compared to brick-and-mortar restaurants. The proposed study describes the case of a food truck business, where the owners expanded to a brick-and-mortar establishment, examining the differences in managerial functions between the two types of operations. The results of this case study can be used by future restaurant entrepreneurs and business owners looking to start a food trucks.

Keywords

Food truck, brick-and-mortar, restaurant, case study, managerial function, entrepreneur

Identifying Sanitation Conditions Influencing Consumers' Behavioral Intention in Full-service Restaurants

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Abstract

Sanitation has become one of the most important factors for consumers when they consider where they dine out. The objectives of this study are to explore the consumers' perceptions of observable sanitation conditions and prior knowledge about a restaurant's sanitation and how these influence consumers' behavioral intention to visit full-service restaurants based on the theory of planned behavior. This study will also look at different demographic group's perceptions and behavioral intention. The expected results of this study will demonstrate which conditions have a greater impact on consumers' behavioral intention. By evaluating the relative influence of prior information and sanitation conditions, this study will also contribute to a greater understanding of the relative importance of these factors in restaurant sanitation.

Keywords

Sanitation factors, Behavior intention, Theory of planned behavior, Attitude, Subjective norm, Perceived behavior control

Consensus between Professional, Semi-Professional and User-Generated Restaurant Reviews

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Abstract

Consumers have the ability to choose from many different types of restaurant reviews: professional reviews, semi-professional reviews and user-generated reviews. All are fundamentally different in that a trained journalist writes professional reviews, an editorial committee curates semi-professional reviews, and diners themselves create user-generated reviews. In having three distinct types of reviews available, it is important for both consumer and restaurateur to know the level of consistency among them. Information quality, argument quality, and source credibility have proven to have direct influences on customers' perception toward usefulness in the virtual platform. In order to determine the level of consistency between reviews a content analysis will be used to examine patterns within the reviews.

Keywords

Reviews, Restaurant, Restaurant Critics,, Information Quality, Source Credibility

Determinants That Influence College Students In Considering Hospitality Business As Their Major: A New Model

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Abstract

College students have many decisions to make during their years at an institution of higher education, but one of the most significant and impactful on their lives could be which major they choose. The purpose of this study is to empirically test a new theoretical model in understanding determinants in freshman and sophomore students' decision-making process of choosing Hospitality Business as their major. A proposed conceptual model incorporates the construct of Self-Authorship into the existing framework of The Theory of Planned Behavior. The secondary focus is on understanding how those determinants vary in importance across select demographic variables and between groups in the sample. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) will be used.

Keywords

Hospitality, choice of major, theory of planned behavior, self-authorship.

LMX Differentiation and Unit-Level Performance And its Impact on Customer Perceived Service Quality in the Restaurant Industry: the Moderating Role of Organizational Justice Climate

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Abstract

LMX differentiation refers to the degree of within-group variation that exists when a leader forms special relationship with different employees (Henderson, Liden, Glibkowski, & Chaudhry, 2009). Despite the importance of LMX differentiation in LMX theory, scant research has investigated the effect of LMX differentiation on employee attitude and behaviors in the hospitality industry. Therefore, this study expands upon previous research by examining the buffering role of organizational justice climate between LMX differentiation and service employee attitude and behaviors. Second, this study investigates whether unit-level employee performance translates into customers' perceived service quality. The sample of this study will be drawn from service employees from various departments in hotels in United States. The implications of the findings will be discussed.

Keywords

Leader-Member Exchange (LMX), LMX differentiation; Organizational Justice Climate; Service Quality, Hotel Industry

Employees’ Perceptions of Effective Selection Methods in Service Industries

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Abstract

The purpose of the study is to explore the influence of different selection methods on employees' perceptions of their jobs, organizations, and turnover intention in service industries. A questionnaire will be utilized to measure the interrelationships between selection methods, job and organizational characteristics, and intention to leave. Service employees play important public and intangible roles to deliver products and services to customers. This study will be important in explaining the correlation between selection methods and employees' job awareness, thereby having considerable impact of choosing effective selection methods.

Keywords

Selection methods, job characteristics, organizational characteristics, turnover intention, service industries.

Examining the Moderating Effect of Self-Efficacy on Work Engagement of Hospitality Employees

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Abstract

The purposes of this study were to confirm whether supervisor support and organizational support could enhance employee work engagement in the hospitality industry and to examine the moderating role of self-efficacy on the impacts of supervisor support and organizational support on work engagement in the hospitality industry.

Keywords

Self-efficacy, work engagement, supervisor support, organizational support.

Life Satisfaction of Hospitality Employees: Examining Work Engagement as an Antecedence and Intent to Leave as a Consequence

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the impact of life satisfaction on hospitality employees' intent to leave and to investigate the influence of work engagement on hospitality employee's life satisfaction.

Keywords

Work engagement, life satisfaction, intent to leave, hospitality employees.

Investigating Relationships between Internal Marketing Practices and Employee Organizational Commitment in the Foodservice Industry

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Abstract

In the U.S. labor market, dramatic increases in part-time employees and turnover rate in the foodservice industry are a problem for human resource management. Investigating how to retain valuable employees and motivate them for better performance is helpful. The objectives of the study are (a) to investigate how internal marketing practices in the foodservice industry affect employee commitment to their organizations, (b) to explore how employee organizational commitment positively or negatively influences their attitudes, and (c) to test whether there is a difference in commitment level to the organizations between part-time and full-time employees. The results of the current study will suggest significant theoretical contributions as well as critical managerial and organizational implications.

Keywords

Internal marketing, organizational commitment, turnover intention.

Assessing the Underlying Factors which Influence Employees to Trust Technology

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Abstract:

Often, when an organization decides to adopt new technologies, decision makers within the organization are required to increase their knowledge and skills for the implementation of the technology to be fully successful. However, often these individuals are not willing to embrace these new technologies and the changes that may come along with them, resulting in wasted resources. Specifically, revenue management systems are one of the top technologies underutilized by organizations. Since firms invest substantial capital in implementing revenue management technologies, understanding the underlying factors which influence decision makers' judgment and trust towards the information provided by the technology should be a top priority for organizations, and thus, the topic of this research.

Keywords:

Revenue management, human computer interaction, technology anxiety, artificial intelligence

Users' Acceptance of Online Food Ordering: Applying the UTAUT Model

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Abstract

The web-based service is changing the food industry slowly but surely. Online food ordering is growing in popularity among both restaurants and customers. However, little is known about how technological interaction in restaurants affects customer evaluation and behavior. In this research, the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) was applied to explain customer adoption of online food ordering. The authors examined the role of UTAUT variables including performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating in restaurant industry by structural equation model based on a web-based survey. The authors also tested the effects of four moderators (gender, age, experience and voluntariness of use) on customer adoption of online food ordering.

Keywords

Online food ordering**,** Unified theory of acceptance and usage of technology (UTAUT)**,** Self-service technology

Retrieving Money from the Table –Gentlemen's Clubs Operational Maximization as Adopted from Markowitz's Modern Portfolio Economic Theory

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Abstract

Following the hospitality management research path of another formally taboo topic within the realm of libertarian hospitality, casino gaming, a rationale is provided for the examination of an economic theory based business accountability of gentlemen's clubs.

Unique aspects of the gentlemen's club business provide an opportunity to not only borrow and re-configure established hospitality managerial techniques (from casino gaming research) and adopt established economic theoretical and practical understandings, but also bridge a theoretical and applied knowledge gap.

The desire to isolate variance for the purpose of determining operational optimization between adult entertainment venues performing (Reynolds, 2003) "on the frontier" and "without capacity maximization (via portfolio selection)" (Markowitz, 1958) has been expressed by industry; subsequently, research is warranted.

Keywords

Gentlemen's Clubs, Markowitz's Modern Portfolio Theory, Applied Information Economics Process

Creating a Strategic Relationship with OTAs to Drive Revenue

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Abstract

Hoteliers are often frustrated by the significant fees charged for bookings OTAs, and they try to encourage more direct bookings that circumvent the OTA system. However, there are billions of dollars of room revenues are generated by OTAs every year; and many companies in other industries sell their product through multiple channels. It seems logical that having a good relationship with OTAs should drive hotel revenue more efficiently. The purposes of this research is to identify how hotel revenue managers should work with OTAs; address the gap in the literature examines OTAs' and hotel firms' relationships; and provide hotel revenue managers with guidelines on how to create a strategic relationship with OTAs.

Keywords

Revenue management, online travel agents, relationship

Investigating Internet Based User Generated Content and Its Influence on Hotel Brand Image and Consumer Intent to Purchase

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Abstract

Electronic word-of-mouth has a powerful influence on consumer purchase decisions. Internet hotel booking sites include customer reviews to aid consumers in their information search and reservation choice. The purpose of the study is to examine how user generated content (UGC) influences consumers' brand preference and their intent to book. A sample of 200 participants will be asked to view branded hotel sites corresponding to their favored brand with neutral or negative UGC in order to determine if the level of purchase commitment is modified based on its inclusion. ANOVA is used to measure the UGC's strength of influence on purchase intent. The results will indicate the relative importance of managing UGC for hotel brands in order to maintain customer loyalty.

Keywords

user generated content; brand image; purchase intention; e-Word of Mouth.

Experience Based Marketing Utilizing Mobile Applications: Consumer Receptiveness of Geo-Targeting Through Mobile Devices

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Abstract

The expansion of the portable electronic industry, more specifically smart-phone and tablet devices, which connect to the internet wirelessly have transformed the way in which hospitality providers and consumers interact. Wireless portability allows individuals instantaneous access to web generated content and firms' mobile applications. While countless studies exist measuring the willingness of consumers to utilize these features, this study aims to bridge a gap in the literature by measuring willingness to receive push notifications while at a property. This research is designed to identify the potential for hospitality properties to send highly customized offers via portable devices to travelers while on property solely.

Keywords

Push Notifications, M-Marketing, Experience Marketing, Relationship Marketing.

Hare and Tortoise: How Does Price Changing Pattern Affect Perceived Sell-Out Risk and Expectation of Future Prices

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Abstract

This study aims at examining consumers' expectation of future room rates and perceived sell-out risk in a more realistic context by introducing two conditions: different price changing patterns and interaction between price-moving trends and price patterns. It is important for hotel managers to understand the impact of different price-changing trends and patterns because price changes can directly affect consumer perception and behavior. Also, adjusting price-changing patterns may be an effective and convenient approach that hotel managers can use in managing demand. We propose two hypotheses. First, leaping price change pattern has greater effects on consumers' perception of future room demand. Second, price-changing patterns moderate the effect of price-moving trend on consumers' perceived sell-out risk and expectation of room rate.

Keywords

Room rates, dynamic pricing, consumer perception, risk

The Impact of Consumers' Culture on the Effectiveness of Scarcity Messages

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Abstract

Previous research has shown that scarcity messages generally enhances consumers' preferences, choices and satisfaction of products due to increased perception of product quality, value and uniqueness (Cialdini 1993; Parker and Lehmann 2011; Suri, Kohli, and Monroe 2007, van Herpen, Pieters, and Zeelenberg 2009). However, there is lack of theoretical discussion on scarcity effects in different cultural context. This research examines the impact of culture on consumer attitudes of different type of scarcity signals. As consumers from independent culture are more favorable towards unique products, they generally have more positive attitude towards products that signals scarcity message due to supply. However consumers from interdependent culture will have more positive attitude towards products that signals scarcity message due to demand.

Keywords

Culture, scarcity, consumer behavior, different culture, signaling scarcity, type of scarcity message

Notable Napa: Determining the Competitiveness of Wine Tourism Regions from a Supply Perspective

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Abstract

The Napa Valley has gained international acclaim in the wine industry. However, Napa's global reputation is strikingly asymmetrical to the domestic reality of its tourism. The value of Napa's path of success remains a trove of untapped information that has not fully been realized by research in the hospitality and tourism field. The objective of this research study is to unpack the critical success factors of Napa that contribute to the area's rise, growth, and unique competitiveness on both the domestic and global scopes of wine tourism destinations. This research seeks to provide practical value for suppliers of developing regions to gain insight and theoretical value in contributing to the nascent field of wine tourism research. A 12-question open-ended survey instrument was dispersed to interviewees selected based on their expertise as well as recommendations from industry leaders of Napa wine tourism, then followed by semi-structured interviews.

Keywords

Wine tourism, tourism, supply, critical success factors, Napa, Napa Valley

Research Productivity of Professionals by Academic Rank in Tourism and Hospitality

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to apply an authorship analysis of Sheldon (1991)'s work to determine if her argument that a group of full professors continue to contribute the most publications in academic professional journal in hospitality and tourism. The study will show the research productivity according to the ranking of academic rank/positions of researchers in tourism and hospitality in the U.S. To identify research productivity of professionals, four professional journals not only listed in the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI), but also credited as most historical and traditional in tourism and hospitality field, *Annals of Tourism Research*, *Journal of Travel Research*, *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, and *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research* are selected.

Keywords

Authorship, Research Productivity, Tourism and Hospitality.

A study of the Relationship between the Perceived Importance of Honeymoon Destination Attributes and Travel Lifestyle: A Case in Korea

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Abstract

To contribute to a better understanding of the honeymoon destination choices of engaged couples in Korea, this study will explore the relationship between the perceived importance of destination attributes and travel-related lifestyle. A survey will be conducted of potential Korean honeymooners attending representative wedding exhibitions in Korea during the survey period and planning their honeymoon for the upcoming year. Data on the couples' perceived importance of destination attributes, travel-related lifestyles, sociodemographics, and traveling characteristics will be collected and analyzed using exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and one way analysis of variance (ANOVA). This study can help practitioners establish optimum marketing strategies for developing honeymoon packages and promotions by gaining a better understanding of the factors that affect the destination selection process.

Keywords

Honeymoon, Destination Attribute, Travel Lifestyle, Korea

Pricing Determinants: Independent vs. Chain-Affiliated Hotels

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Abstract

The lodging industry currently implements various pricing strategies to draw customers and to survive in the competitive environment. These strategies are affected by several factors, such as seasonality, market-level demand and competition, and brand affiliation. Previous research indicates that independent and chain-affiliated hotels showed different financial outcomes due to brand-behavioral effects on their daily pricing decisions. Thus, independent and chain hotels may vary in their implementation of pricing strategies that are adjusted to different factors. The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to uncover important factors in pricing decisions of independent and chain-affiliated hotels, respectively. Managers involved in pricing decisions, and revenue management in hotels in Honolulu, Hawaii will be surveyed to identify the most influential factors to pricing decisions.

Keywords

chain-affiliated hotel, independent hotels, internal and external factors, pricing decisions

The Memorable Tourism Experience: Antecedents and Consequences

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Abstract

In the past decade, Pine & Gilmore predicted an emerging era of an experience-based economy. Within such a context, positive memorable tourism experience is of critical importance, because it is a highly reliable reference for tourists, and can effectively influence their motivation, involvement, and future behaviors. This study aims to identify the antecedents and outcomes of the memorable tourism experience. More specifically, the purpose of this study is to develop and test a theoretical model that explains the interrelationships among four constructs: expectation disconfirmation (on both servicescape and social interaction), memorable experience, satisfaction, and storytelling behaviors. The study results will have both theoretical and managerial contribution in creating memorable tourism experience.

Key Words

Memorable tourism experience, Expectation disconfirmation, Satisfaction, Storytelling behaviors.

The Meeting-Planner and Hotel Relationship: An Inter-Organizational Collaboration Perspective

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Abstract

While previous research has recognized the importance of the relationship between MPs and hotels to the MICE (Meeting, Incentive, Convention, and Exhibition) industry, these studies have been primarily conducted in the context of negotiation that highlights the negative aspect of the relationship. Rather than relying on transaction-based exchanges, the present research took a relationship-based exchange approach and viewed the relationship in a bi-directional way. In-depth semi-structured personal interviews were conducted to examine the relationships between MPs and hotels through the lens of inter-organizational collaboration. Three major operating mechanisms of inter-organizational collaboration, inter-organizational governance, inter-organizational communication, and inter-organizational learning, will mainly be discussed in this study.

Keywords

Meeting planner-hotel relationship, inter-organizational collaboration

Mega-renters: How are they and how do they operate?

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Abstract

This study investigates individuals who own a substantial amount of timeshare weeks or points for the purposes of renting to 3rd parties for income. Academic research evaluating whether the timeshare product is a good investment posits that it is not and should only be used for one's personal enjoyment.

The intent of this exploratory multi-case study is to investigate individuals who operate in this context to answer the research questions of who are they and how do they operate as actions of mega-renters can materially impact yield management efforts of timeshare companies. Academic literature, timeshare company program documents related to reservations and cancellation policies are utilized to develop a conceptual model illustrating how mega-renters may operate.

Keywords

Yield management, Timeshare, Lodging rentals

Multinational Hotel Groups Awareness of Local-centric Service: A Case of China

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Abstract

In order to arouse brand awareness and secure market positioning, leading hotel brands are making changes in an effort to adapt to local consumer needs, wants, and expectations. The purpose of this study is to discuss how those hotel groups may develop in a sustainable way in emerging countries, such as China, to preserve their brand positioning and culture as well as develop the local-centric service recognized by local customers. The study aims to achieve this purpose by answering the research question: how are multinational hotel companies balancing their strategic expansion plans within the context of local-centric product and service expectations? The results and implications of this study will be generated from a case study of one country- China, but have its reference value to all the emerging countries.

Keywords

Multinational, emerging markets, China, Hospitality Trends, customer satisfaction

Can Environmental Knowledge and Concern Nudge Customers' Green Hotel Choice?: The Roles of Trust and Commitment in Intentions to Stay

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Abstract

As society has become more concerned with environmental issues, the hotel industry has expanded its efforts to deal with eco-friendly issues and to modify its behavior to address those concerns. Hotel marketers must first understand what factors would explain customers' behavioral intentions for green products. In fact, trust and commitment are integral factors in building successful relationship marketing and they contribute to promoting efficiency, productivity, and effectiveness. However, no study has addressed the relationships that trust and commitment have with environmental knowledge, concern, and intentions to stay in a green hotel. This study aims to investigate whether trust and commitment mediate the relationship between consumers' environmental knowledge and concern and their intentions to visit green hotels.

Keywords

Environmental knowledge, environmental concern, green hotel, trust-commitment theory

Online Reviews and Hotel Recovery: How Hotel Responses to Online Reviews Effect Image, Customer Satisfaction, Intent to Stay and Intent to Return

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Abstract

Online guest reviews have become an important facet of consideration when guests decide on a hotel. Similarly, research has been done that shows a correlation between guest satisfaction and hotel responses to complaints. However, little research has been done to show how guests respond to hotel recovery via online travel review sites such as Tripadvisor.com. By responding to damaging online reviews, hotel management is limiting the power provided to customers while simultaneously controlling the type of exposure the hotel receives on the Internet. Specifically, this study will investigate how hotel image, customer satisfaction, guest intent to return and new guest intent to stay are influenced by hotel managers' responses to negative online guests' feedback.

Keywords

Online reviews, intent to stay, loyalty, image, customer delight.

Predictors Of Service Quality In A Hotel Restaurant

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Abstract

In the restaurant business, sales may be used as a proof of satisfaction, the more satisfied customers, the more sales restaurants get (Hwang & Zhao, 2010). In a hotel perspective, since F&B is one of the main revenue generators and also one of the most costly departments, choosing right ingredients and serving in a right way with the right prices are crucial in ensuring the success of the restaurant. In addition, as dissatisfied customers engage in a variety of complaint actions like engaging in private complaint behaviors such as word-of-mouth communication to friends and relatives and ceasing to patronize the restaurant which may even end up not to visit the hotel. Therefore in order to address to demand with the matching offerings, understanding what influences customer satisfaction will help to determine the success and failure factors for your own business (Wu & Liang, 2009). Given this, the primary focus of this paper is to determine the predictor of service quality in a hotel restaurant.

Keywords

Hotel restaurant, success factors, failure factors, service quality.

A Content Analysis on Tourists' Online Profile and Behavior at Social Network Sites

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Abstract

This study is a content analysis on tourists' online profile and behavior at tripadvisor.com, one of the most popular social network sites for travelers in the Unites States. In order to fill in the knowledge gap between fast growing tourism SNS and insufficient studies in this field, the research has several purposes: 1) understand online tourists' profile and behavior, 2) explore online tourists' satisfaction, revisit intention, e-word-of-mouth, and other online involvements, and 3) categorize fundamental elements of online tourists' behavior and intention into a few bigger factors which fit into a comprehensive framework for future studies. The results indicate that baby boomers represent the majority of tripadvisor.com reviewers. And most sophisticated tourists are in general satisfied with their travel experiences.

Keywords

Online tourists, social network sites, tourists' behavior, revisit intention, e-word-of-mouth, satisfaction

Visitors' Perceptions of Alabama as a Tourist Destination

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between cognitive and affective destination image of Alabama and visit/revisit and recommendation intentions as moderated by destination experience. Three hundred thirty-seven responses were collected through an online survey and analyzed by using SEM. The results of the study indicated that visitors' cognitive image involved two aspects: natural/cultural attractions and urban attractions. The overall image of Alabama, which was positively affected by cognitive and affective image, significantly influenced visit/revisit and recommendation intentions. In addition, the moderating effect of destination experience had a significant effect on the relationship between cognitive image (urban attractions) and overall image. The findings of this study recommend practical implications to destination marketers regarding repositioning of Alabama image.

Keywords

Destination image, visit/revisit intention, recommendation.

An Empirical Study of the Spring Break Market: A Comparative Analysis of Florida Destinations

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Abstract

The U.S. college student market generates approximately $15 billion annually on domestic and international travel. In particular, more than 2 million college students travel during the spring break season (Reynolds, 2004). This research analyzed student perceptions of key spring break destination attributes. Responses were subjected to the Principal Component Analysis that generated six dimensions with 24 attributes: Breaking Away, Sun and Beach, Safety and Hygiene, Psychological Distance, Price and Value, and Social Exploration. Based on respondents' assessment of the above dimensions, an Importance-Performance Analysis (Martilla & James, 1977) was conducted to compare the most visited destinations identified by respondents. The study findings may provide valuable implications for destination marketing practitioners to improve their destination's appeal to this highly competitive market.

Keywords

Spring break, Florida, importance-performance analysis, principal component analysis, destination image, travel motivation.

How Voluntary versus Mandatory Service Gratuity Affects Menu Price Perception

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Abstract

This paper extended framing research on the surcharge of a partitioned price by studying whether presenting the same service gratuity either as a voluntary tip or as a mandatory fee induces different price perceptions. In the context of Sunday brunch evaluation, we showed that participants perceived a menu price with 15% customary tipping as less expensive than the same price with a 15% mandatory service gratuity. More important, nonparametric bootstrap tests of the indirect effects indicated that participants' use of surcharge information and perceived surcharge fairness acted in parallel and with similar strengths as mediators of the relationship between surcharge policy and menu price perception. Theoretical and managerial implications of the findings and future research directions are discussed.

Keywords

Price partitioning, Perceived expensiveness, Price fairness, Surcharges, Mediation

The Role of Daily Green Practices in the Theory of Planned Behavior Regarding Travelers' Destination Green Behavior

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Abstract

A widely used model in pro-environmental behavior research is the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) in which past behavior has been considered to be an important additional construct for the TPB (Ajzen, 1991). However, researchers emphasize that past behaviors have significant residual effects on later behaviors (Beck & Ajzen, 1991). Instead of using general past behaviors, this study uses daily green practices to predict future green behaviors in destination, which can solve the common error problems between the past behaviors and other constructs in the model.

Keywords

Theory of Planned Behavior, Daily Green Practices, Travelers' Green Behaviors.

Exploring Attendees' Experience Factors at Exposition

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to compose experience factors of the exposition attendees. The research about the attendees' experience is still stagnated although the exposition is a fast-growing business in the hospitality and tourism industry. Previous research have suggested that understanding how customers' memorable experiences are formed is very crucial to attract, satisfy, and retain customers. This study will review existing studies related to the experience economy concept and exposition attendee's experiences. Accordingly, the dimensionality of experience factors in the exposition setting including education, interaction, entertainment, and hedonics will be examined.

Keywords

Exposition, attendee experience, experience factor, experience economy

How Customers React to Financial Decisions Made During Natural Disasters: Corporate and Property-Level Signaling

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Abstract

Since the hotel industry is highly affected by natural disasters, hotel corporations are presented with an opportunity to participate in Corporate Social Responsible (CSR) behaviors during/after natural disasters (e.g., donations to a recovery fund). Do customer attitudes change if a hotel increases room rates (at the property level) in response to increasing demand that may occur during a disaster? This research employs a 2 x 3 factorial design (corporate level explicit CSR vs. property level implicit CSR) to examine customers' attitudinal and behavioral responses to hotels' CSR activities during/after a disaster. The findings from this research will aid managerial understanding of customer responses to CSR behavioral trade-offs during extreme events.

Keywords

Customer Response, CSR, Disaster, Quasi Experimental Design

Communication Preferences of Private Club Members Based on Generational Differences

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Abstract

Members of private clubs are changing and technology combined with a shifting membership age demographic are major factors prompting clubs to review their communication processes. Using constructs of the Media Richness theory, this report will study communication preferences of four generational groups of private club member (Traditionalist, Baby Boomer, Generation-X, and Generation-Y); the purpose is to help clubs make informed decisions about their communication practices based on the generational mix of their members. With results from this study, club professionals will be able to change the way they communicate with their members and provide improved member satisfaction through communication effectiveness.

Keywords

Private clubs, club industry, generations, Media Richness theory, communication, Traditionalist, Baby Boomer, Generation X, Generation Y, Millenials.

Impact of Geographical and Product Diversification on Hotel REITs' Risk and Value Performance

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Abstract

Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) are expected to make stable return due to their relatively low correlation to changes of market condition. However, hotel REITs are found to carry relatively higher risk compared to other types of REITs. Given that geographical diversification and product diversification are core strategies that hotel companies frequently adopt, this paper empirically examines whether or not hotel REITs' risk can be reduced when their portfolio of properties is diversified geographically and product-wise. This paper also examines hotel REITs' value performances considering possible additional costs involved in diversification.

Keywords

Geographical diversification, product diversification, hotel REITs, risk, value performance, Tobin's Q.

Does Revenue Diversification through Franchising Affect a Restaurant Firm's Performance? Application of Entropy Measure

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Abstract

Franchising that is one of revenue diversification strategies has been employed as a way to improve performance in the restaurant industry. However, research on the effects of franchising on firm's risk and return has been limited. The purposes of this study are 1) to examine the effects of revenue diversification through franchising on both firm's financial performance and risk and 2) to investigate the optimal mix of franchising strategy in order to maximize portfolio performance and minimize risk. Using individual firm's sales data, the entropy represents the degree of revenue diversification. The findings are useful to restaurant executives who need to make decisions about the level of franchising.

Keywords

Franchising, diversification strategy, performance, risk, entropy measure, restaurant firms

Ownership Structure and International Diversification in the Hotel industry

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Abstract

This study aims to fill a gap by investigating the relationship between types of ownership and a firm's strategy, in particular, a degree of a firm's international diversification in the hotel industry. Types of ownership are categorized by family ownership, institutional ownership, and managerial ownership in the study. The sample of the study is publicly traded hotel and motel companies (except casino hotels) and the time period of data is from 2004 to 2011. The descriptive statistics and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) are used for data analysis. The results of the study will help practitioners better understand how corporate governance affects the firms' strategic decision making regarding international diversification.

Keywords

Family ownership, institutional ownership, managerial ownership, international diversification, hotel industry

Comparing Operational Efficiency between Macau Casinos and Las Vegas Casinos - A Data Envelopment Analysis

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Abstract

The monopoly lasted for decades in Macau gaming industry ended in 2001. Macau opened its gaming market for international bidding. In 2002, Macau government issued gaming licenses to two Las Vegas based casinos: Las Vegas Sands and Wynn Resorts. Data suggest that the operations of Las Vegas based casinos in Macau and Macau local casinos differ from those in Las Vegas at many levels. This study will use Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) to examine, compare, and rank the operational efficiency of casinos in Macau and Las Vegas. Eleven casinos in Macau and seven casinos in Las Vegas will be examined. The outcome of this study will help practitioners understand strengths and weaknesses of each casino and strategically improve operational efficiency.

Keywords

Macau, Las Vegas, casinos, Data Envelopment Analysis, operational efficiency.

The Import Demand for Well-being Fruits in South Korea and Strategy for Menu Development

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Abstract

With regard to well-being diet trends, people have been interested more healthy foods and their selected preferences have reflected their choices for foods. And, the demand for the fresh fruits with the high percentages of antioxidant ingredients such as raspberry and kiwi has been significantly increased. This study explores the total demand for fresh raspberry and kiwi imported from the major import countries that South Korea has imported fruits from. This study aims to identify the price elasticities of the imported raspberries and kiwis by applying Marshallian demand systems and testing the Almost Ideal Demand System Model (AIDS) and its extended analysis. The findings from the results will contribute when managers in hotel and restaurant businesses develop a well-being menu planning strategy.

Keywords

Well-being diet trends, AIDS model, Price elasticity, Marshallian Demand Elasticities, Menu development

American College Students' Perception towards Chinese Restaurants in the United States: Factors Affecting Their Willingness to Patronize Chinese restaurants

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Abstract

The number of Chinese restaurants is more than the total number of all McDonald's, Wendy's and Burger King domestic outlets combined. Since Chinese restaurants are receiving unprecedented popularity among American college students in the United State, the present research will identify the key attributes including culture factors that will affect American college students' willingness to patronize in Chinese restaurants. By understanding the key attributes, restaurant management can better adjust their food quality, service, or dinning environment to fulfill the American college students' needs and wants.

Keywords

Chinese restaurants, American college student, food quality, service quality, atmospherics, culture involvement.

Customers' Behavioral Intention Related to Vegetarian-Friendly Restaurants

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate customers' behavioral intentions related to vegetarian menu options using the theory of planned behavior and the impact vegetarian-friendly restaurants have on vegetarian as well as non-vegetarian customers' restaurant selection process. Three hypotheses related to the relationship between vegetarian consumption attitudes, vegetarian subjective norms, perceived behavioral control and vegetarian consumption behavioral intention will be tested using a survey posted on some popular restaurants review website such as Yelp, Zagat, Urbanspoon etc. Hypothesized relationships among the TPB constructs (as illustrated in the Framework) will be investigated using sequential multiple regression. One-way ANOVA tests will be used to examine associations of demographic characteristics with their vegetarian consumption behavioral intention.

Keywords

Vegetarian, restaurants, Theory of Planned Behavior.

Assessing the Impact of Active and Passive Nutrition Message Delivery in a Quick-Service Restaurant Setting: An Application of the Theory of Planned Behavior

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Abstract

Objectives. This research assesses the different impacts of active and passive nutrition information messages on consumers' purchase behavior.

Method. The experiment will be conducted in a quick service restaurant in a Midwest University. Two different ways of presenting nutrition information will be used, with treatment 1 being the verbal suggestion and treatment 2 being the printed material. Questionnaires will be handed out to gather the related information.

Anticipated findings. ANOVA will be used to analyze the data between groups. Hypotheses include that treatment 1 will have bigger influence on participants' purchase behavior when compared to treatment 2, and that both treatments 1 and 2 will have bigger impact on participants' purchase behavior when compared to the control group.

Keywords

Nutrition labeling, active message, passive message, the theory of planned behavior, subjective norms.

Sustainability in Food Purchasing: A Study of Managerial Perceptions of Feasibility in Small Scale Restaurants

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Abstract

The terms sustainability and going green are now recognized as mainstream in current literature and research. The National Restaurant Association encourages businesses to become more environmentally and economically sustainable. Some recent studies have indicated that food service operations that incorporate sustainability are more desirable to consumers. However, there is little research addressing how and where restaurants receive their food supply. This study addresses the feasibility of independent restaurants in a larger West Texas community being able to incorporate sustainability concepts into their food purchasing operation, as well as management perceptions about sustainability. The information gathered from this study will fill a gap in the current literature concerning sustainability in the food purchasing process as well as provide useful information for food service operators.

Keywords

Sustainability, restaurant, food purchasing, management

Chef’s Preferences for Locally Sourced Food: Market-Driven or Intrinsic Values

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Abstract

As consumers’ knowledge of locally sourced foods continues to grow, restaurants are beginning to reconsider the source of the foods they use. This exploratory study will examine the buying practices of chefs in small, independent restaurants. The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of the reasons why a chef chooses to purchase local foods. Personal interviews will be conducted with 10 chefs, from different independently-owned restaurants in the mid-west. Qualitative procedures, including content analysis, will be used to analyze the data.

Keywords

Chefs, independent restaurants, local food, hospitality, purchasing.

Exploring Undergraduate Hospitality Students' Pre-entry Career Expectations

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Abstract

When an employee is recruited by an organization, the employee forms a set of beliefs and obligations, known as a psychological contract, which shape the relationship with the organization. The purpose of this study is to explore the career expectations of undergraduate hospitality students prior to entering their career. The survey for this study will consist of three sections: attitudes, future career plans, and demographics. A minimum of 370 questionnaires will be collected in-person from hospitality students at two universities and two community colleges in the Midwest. Results will be analyzed using SPSS 20.0. This study will provide hospitality recruiters with a better understanding of the expectations of future employees, which would allow for better preparation when recruiting.

Keywords

Pre-entry career expectations, undergraduate students, psychological contract, hospitality program

The Influence of Hotel Manager Asymmetric Behaviors towards Customers versus Employees over Front-desk Employee Emotion

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Abstract

This study is to examine the influence of hotel manager asymmetrically favorable behaviors towards customers (out-group favoritism) versus employees (in-group favoritism) on front-line employee emotion. We use favoritism theory and affective event theory (AET) to indicate the existence of hotel manager discrepant behaviors in front of the two stakeholders, customers and employees, and the emotional influence of these behaviors on front-desk employees. Unlike the extant studies about causes of employee emotional change, this study would expand the research inspiration from the perspective of the unidirectional manager-employee interaction to that of the tripartite manager-employee-customer one.

Keywords

Employee emotion, leadership, affective events theory, favoritism.

Hospitality Employees' Attitude on Adopting New Technologies at Work

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Abstract

With advancement of technology, hospitality companies utilize technologies to attract and retain their guests. Therefore, employees working in the hospitality industry are required and expected to learn the new technologies in order to perform the tasks. Building on theory of planned behavior and technology acceptance model, this research aims to examine how perceived useful, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norm influence employees' intention to adopt new technologies at work. The data from this research can be utilized to learn employees' attitude on new technologies when the use is mandated.

Keywords

New technologies, TPB, TAM, Employees, Hospitality Industry.

The Effect of Transformational Leadership on Behaviors and Performance of Service Employees

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Abstract

Behaviors of customer service employees have crucial role due to the interactive nature of services. Especially, extra-role behaviors, discretionary behaviors of service employees, are crucial for a successful service delivery. Leaders have an important role to influence these service behaviors of employees. However, it is the transformational leadership that enhances extra-role service behaviors. Transformational leaders motivate employees by allowing them to have an impact on their jobs. Therefore, psychological empowerment is one of the distinguishing characteristics of transformational leaders. As a result, the purpose of this study is to understand the effect of transformational leadership on extra-role service behaviors and proactive performance of service employees in the restaurant industry and to analyze the mediating role of psychological empowerment.

Keywords

Transformational leadership, psychological empowerment, service behaviors.

Exploratory Assessment of Authentic Leadership of the Korean Casino Managers

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Abstract

Today's casino gaming business in South Korea is highly developed. While revenue growth is a priority for gaming managers in South Korea, there is growing concern about the leadership qualities of managers and the perceptions that employees have about their managers. The purpose of this study is to determine the extent to which casino gaming managers possess the qualities of Authentic Leadership (AL), and how AL affects manager performance measured by the employee turnover and retention. Data will be collected from an online survey administered to managers and employees who directly report to the managers. The findings in this study will be extremely useful to casino managers, senior managers, and owners seeking to improve manager performance though AL.

Keywords

Authentic leadership (AL), casino mangers, South Korea.

The Impact of Mobile Device Usage Policies on Employee Engagement: A Study of Generation Z in the Hotel Workplace

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Abstract

As a new generation, Generation Z, is about to prominently enter the workforce, now seems to be the time to analyze and amend any HR policies and practices which may adversely impact this particular group. This study postulates that failure to do so could result in a reduction in employee engagement, and thus, a continuation of the high turnover issue. It seeks to determine whether a ban on mobile device usage in the workplace does in fact lower employee engagement. This will be done through studying Generation Z employees in hospitality companies which ban mobile device use as well as similar companies which do not.

Keywords

Mobile Device Policy, Generation Z, Employee Engagement

The Role of Technology as a Service Interaction Component in Hotel Guests' Experience

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Abstract

There has been rich research on the concept of experience, which can be dated back to the 1970s. However, there is still no clear consensus on its definition and association with another critical marketing concept of satisfaction. This study provides a broad discussion on the conceptualization and creation process of satisfaction and experience. The goal is to determine whether those two concepts are overlapped or distinguished. A framework is proposed to distinguish the two concepts based on the role of cognition and emotion. Furthermore, technology is incorporated in the model as a tool in creating experience. The model is proposed to be tested among hotel guests. This discussion serves as a conceptual background for examining technology-human interaction and experience creation in hotels.

Keywords

Experience, Satisfaction, Technology, Hotel Guests

The Spatial Impact of Hurricane Ike on the Hotel Industry

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Abstract

This research aims to explore the impact of natural disasters, specifically hurricanes, on the accommodation industry. Despite the catastrophic results of hurricanes, many economists have found a positive relationship between natural disasters and some economic sectors, underscoring the uneven distribution of impacts of natural disasters. In this study, the hotel industry is expected to demonstrate capacity for a positive relationship with natural disasters because hotels play an important role in accommodating evacuees and disasters-related personnel during/after disasters. This research investigates how Texas hotels' daily occupancy rate, ADR, and REVPAR changed during 2008's Hurricane Ike. Using GIS methodology, the spatial impact of Hurricane Ike on the hotel industry is investigated.

Keywords

Hurricane Ike, Spatial Economics, Occupancy Rate Change, ADR Change, GIS

The Relationship between Personality Types and Reinforcement & the Effect of Positive Reinforcement on Employees' Post-Performance

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Abstract

While the trend of providing reinforcement to attract and recognize employees for their performance is increasing, few studies have been done to actually identify how and why hotel employees prefer one type of reinforcement over another. The purpose of this study is to determine if any relationship exists between employees' reinforcement preference and their personality type. Similarly, this study will also explore if positive reinforcement has any impact on the post-performance of employees. Regression analysis will be used to assess the findings which can provide an insight to the hotel industry to design an effective reinforcement program that may influence the performance of employees of different personality types.

Keywords:
Reinforcement, personality types, post-performance

Exploring the Impact of Servant Leadership on Subordinate Performance: Evidence from Five Star Hotels in Taiwan

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore and mainly focuses on the servant leadership of superiors and subordinate's work outcomes in Taiwan's five star hotels. This study is to achieve two objectives as follows: first, the subordinate's work outcomes in Taiwan's five star hotels under the influence of superiors with servant leadership style; second, whether gender differences make any difference in the choice of styles of leadership. Using exploratory factors analysis and prior research studies, the instrument with six dimensions for measuring subordinate's work outcomes will be defined. Implications for leaders and decision makers will be included along with suggestions for future research.

Keywords

Servant leadership, hotel industry

Examining Visitors' Primary Reasons Attending a Festival and Sources of Information: A Case Study in Grapevine, TX

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Abstract

Since festivals can impact on the development of local communities, it is essential for destination marketing and festival organizers to understand visitors' information, such as primary reasons of attending festivals and the sources of information. For the current study, 419 samples were collected from a medium-sized regional festival in the U.S. The data indicated that there were significant differences between various visitor groups with respect to their primary reasons to visit festivals and sources of festival information. While results showed that Word of Mouth was the most frequent source of information used by festival visitors, there was an increasing application of internet channels to attain festival related information. This study enriches the literature of tourism research on festival visitors' information searching behaviors and their primary reasons to visit a festival.

Keywords

Festival, tourism, primary reasons, sources of information.

A Study of SoLoMo Consumption in Hospitality: What Drives Users to Purchase

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Abstract

In this study we investigate the current social media and mobile marketing practices of today and how the hospitality industry, specifically hotels and restaurants, are responding to the changing marketing landscape. We document the SoLoMo (social, local, mobile) marketing trends that are sweeping the market and attempt to identify key factors behind what is driving consumers to purchase or take advantage of these offers. Using the Elaboration Likelihood Model we attempt to discover what cues and paths the consumers are taking to arrive at their decision, specifically if they are taking a central, or a peripheral, path. This study intends to help the hospitality industry formulate a list of best practices for SoLoMo marketing.

Keywords

SoLoMo marketing, social media marketing, mobile marketing, elaboration likelihood model

Predictors of Consumer Purchase of the Vacation Ownership Product

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine which variables that are commonly considered in owner segment studies serve as predictors of whether marketing prospects buy or do not buy a vacation ownership, or timeshare, product during a sales presentation. Vacation ownership marketing and sales expenses, as a percentage of the products' cost, range between 39 to 50%, making variable selection all the more critical in terms of marketing dollars spent. The study's aim is to help identify these variables that can determine a consumer's propensity to make a purchase of a timeshare product, so marketing managers can allocate their limited resources to focus more on consumers that exhibit these characteristics.

Keywords

Vacation ownership, Timeshare, Marketing, Buying intention, Discriminant analysis, Multiple regression.

Stakeholder Perspectives about the Impacts of Tourism: Shapotou Desert, China

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Abstract

Tourism can have positive and negative influences on local community. Such influences can be especially pronounced in the environmentally sensitive area. A local community has a close-knit relationship with the tourism industry. Much research has determined that only after the local community has received sufficient benefits, the residents raise their environmental consciousness through their involvement in the business of tourism. However, whether the local community gets the maximum benefits is in question. The purpose of the current study is to examine the perception of the local community toward the development of tourism. The study will investigate how local people who work in tourism industry perceive the benefits and how they perceive the changes after the development of tourism.

Keywords

Impacts of tourism, stakeholder perspective, Shapotou desert in China, ecotourism principle.

The Effects of Atmospherics on Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty

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Abstract

In this document we investigate the direct effect of restaurant atmospherics on service quality, customer satisfaction, and behavioral intention in the restaurant industry. An extensive literature review was conducted to operationalize the dimensions of restaurant constructs. Data were collected from a full-service restaurant in a Southern city in US, and confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling were then performed to confirm underlying structure of each study construct and to test causal relationships between exogenous (i.e., atmospherics) and endogenous variables (i.e., service quality, food quality, customer satisfaction, and behavioral intentions). The results of this study will suggest several theoretical and managerial implications in the restaurant industry. Also, the results will further enhance the effectiveness of marketing and operation strategies.

Keywords

Restaurant atmospherics, service quality, customer satisfaction, behavioral intention.

How the User Generated Content is Used in the Marketing Strategy of DMOs

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Abstract

In today's competitive global landscape, DMOs face the challenge of understanding the demands of consumers with hints from information left by potential consumers online. The main objective of the research is revealing the influence of User Generated Content (UGC) on the DMOs' marketing strategy, with a focus on understanding the manner in which DMOs use UGC to design segmentation, targeting, and positioning strategies. This study also examines how to complete the feedback loop between consumers' experiences and the design of new marketing strategies. Thus, this study helps DMOs to improve marketing strategies, with the potential to attract more consumers and heighten the interest to visit specific attractions.

Keywords

Destination Marketing Organizations; destination marketing strategy; user generated content, online reviews.

An Investigation into Factors Affecting Choice of Hospitality Accommodations by Collegiate Football Teams in the NAIA Division when Traveling for Away Games, and its Impact on Team Performance

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Abstract

The field of sport tourism as it relates to traveling collegiate sport teams has not been fully analyzed, with most studies to date focusing on the economic impact of traveling fans on destination taxes, employment and income multiplier. This study focuses on the hotel industry, and investigates the benefits derived to both the product (accommodation establishment) and the consumer (collegiate sport team). The main objective is to encourage collegiate administrators to choose accommodations, that would provide student athletes with the facilities and conditions that would give them the best chance of achieving their ultimate goal; winning. This research will also provide hotels a marketing opportunity of satisfying this niche market, especially in periods when demand is low.

Keywords

Collegiate sport, Economic impact, Hotel competitive advantage, Sport tourism

Assessment of the U.S. Travelers' Destination Image of Thailand

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Abstract

Thailand is one of the world's most popular tourist destinations; however, it has not been successful in capturing the U.S. travel market. A key factor that affects travel decisions and behavior is the destination image (DI). Previous research suggested that DI varies among travelers' by country of residence. Thus, the purpose of this research is to measure the U.S. travelers' perception of attribute and holistic images; functional and psychological characteristics, and uniqueness regarding the DI of Thailand. The combination of closed-ended and open-ended survey questions will be used to examine DI and traveler perceptions. The expected outcome will offer meaningful suggestions to help develop an effective Thailand's tourism marketing plan for U.S. travelers.

Keywords

Destination image, destination marketing, Thailand, tourism, tourism organization, travel agency, U.S. travelers, tourism marketing, tourism management.

Crafting Customer Experience through Cultural Theming: A case of A Case of a Cultural Themed Hotel in China

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Abstract

Customers are looking for personal and memorable hotel experience in the experience economy. Theming is emphasized as a mean to transform service into unique experience (Pine & Gilmore, 1999, 2002). Themed hotels are emerging in the market, and adopting cultural theme is among the popular choices. It requires a holistic perspective to manage the cultural hotel experience in dynamic process. However, issues related to cultural customer experience management in themed hotel have received limited attention. This research explores processes of an abstract and intangible cultural theme being transformed into contextualized customer experiences in the cultural themed hotel setting. Case study is used as research approach. Data collection is conducted in a cultural themed hotel in China.

Keywords

Customer experience, customer experience management, themed hotel, cultural theme, authenticity, employee internalization

Effects of a Social Unit on Tourism Demand

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Abstract

The current study examined the effects of a social unit (i.e. household) on tourism demand as well as the influence of external economic changes (e.g. gas price fluctuations) and auto vehicle technology development (i.e. MPG improvement) on tourism demand. To detect the effects of group variable on tourism demand, Hierarchical Regression Model (HLM) was used. According to preliminary analysis results, 90% of total variance of regression model comes from the changes in the family variable. However, OLS results didn't detect and reflect the effect of household on drive tourism. This study provided empirical evidence to support that a social unit affects tourism demand.

Keywords

Drive tourism, Family travel, Hierarchical Regression Model, Multilevel modeling, Tourism demand

Blazing a New Trail?____Chinese Hotel Firms' Path to Internationalization

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Abstract

While abundant works (i.e. Uppsala model, Product Life Cycle model) has focused on the developed country firms' internationalization, limited study has explored the process of emerging country firms' internationalization and their different motivations and paths of foreign expansion. Recently hotel firms from emerging market such as Taj Hotels, Oberoi Group, Jinjiang are expanding to foreign countries rapidly. It is imperative to explore the trajectories and entry methods they employ to enter the global market. This study proposes four steps of Chinese hotel firms' internationalization and the corresponding entry methods for each step. The study also discusses the factors that drive the hotel firms to internationalize. Case study method, content analysis and matrix analysis will be utilized to conduct this study.

Keywords

Path of internationalization, Chinese hotel firms, case study, content analysis, matrix analysis.

Hotel Manager’s Perception on Sustainability

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Abstract

Sustainability has been critically discussed over last decades. Environmental issues may have accelerated those concerns. And it became a critical assignment in many aspects: e.g., brand image and resource management. The current study will attempt to examine hotel manager’s perception on sustainability because they play a critical role in the decision making process. In addition, the current study will examine whether there are any significant differences in manager’s perception between hotels in different levels. The instrument was composed of two sections: demographic and fifteen perception questionnaires. The data will be collected from hotel managers in Taiwan. An analysis of Variances (ANOVA, #922) will be employed for statistical group comparison. It is believed that the results of this study will provide comprehensive and valuable information.

Keywords

Sustainability; sustainable system; hotel, managers’ perception; Taiwan

The Effectiveness of Franchising for Franchisors in the Lodging Industry: A Strategic Group Perspective

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Abstract

Franchising has been considered to be one of the critical success factors in the lodging industry. However, we still have no conclusive answer to which area of concern (resource scarcity, agency problems, and risk) is most closely related to the effectiveness of franchising. The purpose of this study is 1) to understand which concern would be the most influential in a firm's decision to franchise and 2) to investigate the effect of the presence of concerns about a firm's internal competency on the relationship between franchising and performance by using strategic group approach. This study will help managers and owners in the lodging industry to understand how firms with a particular concern would most benefit from increasing the degree of franchising. This study will also contribute to the body of knowledge since it reveals whether dominant franchising explanations are held and which theory is the best supported to explain the franchising-performance relationship in the lodging industry.

Keywords

Franchising, strategic group, lodging industry, performance

The Effects of Plural Ownership Forms On Performance and Risk in the Lodging Industry

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Abstract

This paper attempts to fill a gap by investigating which plural ownership form is the most effective in terms of performance and which organizational form offers the lowest risk to the franchisor in the lodging industry. There are three common types of lodging ownership and management: franchised, managed, and company-owned/operated. Their co-existence under the same brand is called plural form, and it is the most popular structure in the lodging industry. This study attempts to answer whether a plural form franchise has an advantage over a single form in the lodging industry and what is the right plural form in ownership and management structure to increase efficiency of businesses. The results of this study will help lodging companies find out appropriate forms to expand their business and to create a competitive advantage.

Keywords

Plural form, franchising, management contract, risk, performance, lodging industry

Towards a Career Change Model in Hospitality

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Abstract

This paper's purpose is to deepen our understanding of why young hotel managers change their careers. Grounded theory was employed to explore the factors that are a part of that decision. Through open-ended interviews with people who have changed careers, a model explaining their behavior has been developed. The findings contrast current literature regarding career change, showing that job satisfaction and professional identity were not key factors. Dissatisfaction with career progression and work to life conflict were found to be significantly important. This paper contrasts current literature by focusing on behavior rather than intentions to better understand the phenomenon and seeks to identify the key reasons why young hotel professionals change their careers.

Keywords

Career Change, Turnover, Job Satisfaction, Professional Identity, Career Progression, Work Family Conflict

Cost and Benefits of Agritourism in China---- Through Land Sublease

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Abstract

The study used qualitative methods to investigate the perceptions of local people toward the land sublease for agritourism in Huangbu Village, China. 20 randomly selected participants were interviewed using the laddering technique. Then the data was analyzed based on the ground theory. The results showed that all the 20 participants hold negative perceptions toward the land sublease, three main themes which influencing the participants' perceptions emerged: (1) costs of land sublease; (2) benefits of land sublease; (3) other spiritual factors. The study provides suggestions for the local tourism decision-making sector to recognize the residents' importance and increase further participation of the locals in the development of agritourism.

Keywords

land sublease, agritourism, qualitative studies

A SWOT Analysis on Business Model of Online Travel Industry of China

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Abstract

Online travel industry has expanded largely and various business models have been created with the widely used internet and diversity tourists' consumer behaviors. This paper studies rather developed online travel enterprises and then does SWOT analysis after classifying business models, which aims to offer suggestions for related online companies. Based on the SWOT analysis of different business models, this study points out that the trend of the development online travel industry. There are positive prospects for the development and problems in advance. And the process of online travel in China will achieve a new development while combining with the actual of tourism and innovating boldly. However, the limitation of this study is lack of quantitative data analysis.

Keywords

online travel, direct selling, agent, OTA, search engine.

Acknowledgement

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Tourist Perspectives of the Authenticity at a Heritage Destination: South Luogu Hutong in Beijing, China

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Abstract

The present study examined tourist perceptions toward historical authenticity of South Luogu Alley, a famous Hutong in Beijing with more than a 700 year history but under reconstruction in recent years. The reconstruction of many historical heritages raises the issue about authenticity in tourism. However, tourist perceptions toward authenticity in heritage tourism after change or reconstruction are still mostly unknown. In this study, important differences in perceived authenticity were found based on different demographic factors of tourists, including monthly income, previous visit times to South Luogu Alley, gender, and educational level. The research also revealed that motivations affect tourist requirements for authenticity in heritage tourism.

Keywords

Authenticity, tourist perception, heritage tourism, Hutong culture in Beijing, South Luogu Alley.

Is the Event Industry Ready For Social Responsibility? An Analysis of Current Industry Perceptions.

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Abstract

The event industry acknowledges a need for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives in event planning, yet previous research states social responsibility is not an important selection factor. The purpose of this study is to identify the feasibility of CSR as an event industry initiative. This study was cross-sectional and data were collected via email surveys. The study population included companies on the 2011 Fortune 500 list for demand population and Destination Marketing Organization representatives for the supply population. In total, 85 questionnaires were returned from both populations combined leading to a 8.8% response rate. Results of this study also suggest that there is a positive perception of CSR but a less positive attitude towards CSR's usefulness in planning events.

Keywords

Social Responsibility, Event Planner, Destination Marketing Organization, CSR Perceptions, CSR Definition, Stakeholders

The Role of Social Media as a Pre-Process Stage Service Encounter

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Abstract

Although social media has received much attention in research, as various channels have rapidly developed, there are limited studies that investigated the effect of social media as a service encounter. The purpose of this study is to understand the role of social media as a service encounter in pre-stage and examine the effect of social media on customers' motivation and purchasing decision. This research will test hypothetical relationships and find evidences that social media affects customer behavior as a service encounter during the pre-stage. Finding of this study will contribute to the growing body of hospitality research on social media. Also, this research will help the managers to understand customers' behavior on social media, and develop appropriate marketing strategies.

Keywords

Social media, Service encounter, Customer motivation, Purchasing decision

A Cross-Cultural Comparison of Nonverbal Communication on Tipping

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Abstract

In the restaurant industry, several million restaurant servers largely depend on the tips customers leave for the delivery of service (Azar, 2007; Lynn, 2003). Therefore, it is extremely important to understand the factors that may influence tipping behavior of restaurant customers. The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of nonverbal communication on customer tipping behaviors and investigate the cultural differences of nonverbal communication on customer tipping in the restaurant industry. Data will be collected from casual-dining customers of Eastern and Western heritage in the United States. This study will contribute the importance of cultural differences and understanding the impact of nonverbal communication on customer tipping behaviors.

Keywords

Nonverbal communication, cross-cultural, tipping

Tipping Behavior in Oklahoma Restaurants: Comparison between Local vs. Foreign Customers

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Abstract

This study aims to identify any possible differences or similarities between the wait staffs' perception on tipping behavior of customers based on their residency and their actual tipping behavior. At the same time, the study will attempt to determine the actual causes that influence the tipping behavior of such customers based on their tipping knowledge and their demographic profiles. The findings will be beneficial for the restaurants to take necessary actions to improve the tipping behavior of the immigrant customers based on the identified causes, train their wait staffs to better serve such customers and improve the operations' profitability by focusing on identified factors.

Keywords:

Tipping behavior, restaurant, local, foreign, customers

Generation Y's Attitude towards Green Hotels: The role of Environmental Responsibility, Health Benefits, and Cultural Difference

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Abstract

With the importance of greening the environment for today and in the future, in the lodging industry, the environmentally friendly green hotels will be a growing niche. Few empirical studies have been done about the young generation's attitude toward green hotels across different cultures. Thus, this study examines the effects of environmental responsibility (ER) and health benefits on attitudes toward green hotels. More importantly, this study attempts to examine the moderating role of cultural difference between Korean and American Generation Ys on the relationships between ER, health benefits, and green hotel attitude. In order to examine these relationships, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), as well as multiple group analysis in Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), will be undertaken.

Keywords

Green hotels, Generation Y, Environmental Responsibility, Health Benefits, Cultural difference, CFA, Multiple group analysis.

Exploring Brand Loyalty: Residents and Non-Residents' Perceptions of Locally-Owned Versus Multinational Hotel Brands in Nigeria

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Abstract:

This study aims to investigate the differences, if any, between residents and non-residents' brand loyalty towards locally owned and multinational hotel brands operating in Nigeria. According to previous literature, higher market share can be attributed to consumers' brand loyalty. This paper attempts to determine if Nigerian residents are more likely to patronize familiar local hotel brands, or rather choose multinational hotels in Nigeria. Interchangeably, are non-residents more likely to patronize familiar multinational hotels, or are they more likely to select locally branded Nigerian hotels? The questionnaire incorporates selected relevant attributes that will be used in a scenario-based research, in order to control the effect of branding. This research will add to branding studies, and enlighten future capital ventures.

Explanation and Justice in Customer Complaint Handling: The Role of Regulatory Focus

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Abstract

Drawing on fairness theory (Folger & Cropanzano, 1998, 2001), this study examines the effects of different types of explanations (justifications and excuses) on justice and customer satisfaction with complaint handling. Customers' regulatory focus will also be tested whether it changes the associations of explanations and justice. Adopting a 2 x 2 between-subjects factorial design, we will use a scenario-based method to test the hypotheses. The findings will encourage the hospitality organizations to provide truthful and honest explanations in service recovery.

Keywords

Explanations, justifications, excuses, justice, regulatory focus, customer satisfaction, complaint handling, fairness theory