

Altruistic and Hedonic Motivations to Write eWOM Reviews on Hotel Experience

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Abstract : The increasing influence of Online Travel Agencies (OTAs) on hotel bookings and the electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) contained in them has been featured by many scientific studies as a major factor in the booking decision. The main reason is that nowadays, in the hotel sector, consumers first come into contact with the offer through the web and the online environment. Due to the nature of the hotel product and the fact that it is booked in advance to actually seeing it, there is a lack of knowledge about its actual features. This makes eWOM a major channel to help consumers to reduce their perception of risk when making their booking decisions. This research studies the relationship between aspects of customer influenceability by reading eWOM communications, at the time of booking a hotel, with the propensity to write a review. In other words, to test relationships between the reading and the writing of eWOM. Also investigates the importance of different underlying motivations for writing eWOM. Online surveys were used to obtain the data from a sample of hotel customers, with 739 valid questionnaires. A measurement model and Path analysis were carried out to analyze the chain of relationships among the independent variable (influenceability from reading reviews) and the dependent variable (propensity to write a review) with the mediating effects of additional variables, which help to explain the relationship. The authors also tested the moderating effects of age and gender in the model. The study considered three different underlying motivations for writing a review on a hotel experience, namely hedonic, altruistic and conflicted. Results indicate that the level of influenceability by reading reviews has a positive effect on the propensity to write reviews; therefore, we manage to link the reading and the writing of reviews. Authors also discover that the main underlying motivation to write a hotel review is the altruistic motivation, being the one with the higher Standard regression coefficient above the hedonic motivation. The authors suggest that the propensity to write reviews is not related to sociodemographic factors (age and gender) but to attitudinal factors such as 'the most influential factor when reading' and 'underlying motivations to write. This gives light on the customer engagement motivations to write reviews. The implications are that managers should encourage their customers to write eWOM reviews on altruistic grounds to help other customers to make a decision. The most important contribution of this work is to link the effect of reading hotel reviews with the propensity to write reviews.

Keywords : hotel reviews, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), online consumer reviews, digital marketing, social media

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