Chapter 14

Content Analysis of Online Visual Merchandising for Indian Online Travel Agents: A Case of Makemytrip and Yatra

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this chapter is to investigate the effect of online visual merchandising elements and identify the relative importance of the various visual merchandising cues to consumers’ visits and booking through online travel agencies. In order to examine the relative importance of the visual merchandising of Indian travel agents, two most popular online travel agents, namely Makemytrip and Yatra, were selected. The data for the content analysis was collected from 100 respondents of each website who have visited each online travel agent namely Makemytrip and Yatra at least once. The respondents were asked to browse and explore the visual merchandising cues of the website and fill in the data at the same time. A detailed content analysis was done for both the online travel agents. For comparing the web portals chi-square has been used. The comparison analysis was performed on basis of various elements in the websites, namely website logo color, website main color, number of filters, bulletin board, comparison tool bar, interaction tool, search bar tools, detail information, custom made service, refund policy indication, number of travel service, ease of payment, image position, etc. A coding sheet was developed and designed to explain the various elements of online visual merchandising for these travel
agent’s portal in order to perform the content analysis. Findings showed the importance of online visual merchandising cues towards online travel agency websites. It also gave implications for online travel agents on how they can use online visual merchandising to attract and appeal consumers and travelers visiting their web portal. The study also reviews an extensive literature on online visual merchandising and presents a detail understanding of online visual merchandising and its elements and how online visual merchandising can be used differently and attractively in different web portals. The result of a chi-square test shows that there is a significant difference in all the factors of online visual merchandising cues. The chapter also gives implications for online travel agents as to how online visual merchandising can be used especially in online travel portals to attract travelers. The findings of the study provide valuable information for online travel agents for developing successful online portals using various web cues that may attract and draw interest of both the online browsers as well as the customers of web travel agents.

INTRODUCTION

The Indian hospitality and tourism industry has developed as one of the vital component for the growth and development amongst the services sector in India. In India, Tourism industry has substantial prospective due to the rich historical heritage and cultural, diversity in ecology, landscapes and places of natural beauty that has been spread across the country. The direct contribution of tourism & hospitality sector which includes the net value of output created by hotels, travel agents, airlines, other transportation services, restaurants and leisure industries that directly support tourists to GDP in 2017 was US$ 71.7 billion and this is expected to increase by 6.9 per cent amounting to US$ 76.6 billion in 2018. Also, it is expected that this direct contribution of travel & tourism to GDP will reach around US$ 148.2 billion by 2027. (Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2017 India, World Travel & Tourism Council, March 2017). In compliance with its GDP contribution, this sector also plays a significant role in job creation. In 2016, the tourism sector directly reported for 5.8 per cent of the total employment in India. This percentage further increased to 8 per cent of the total employment opportunities generated in the country in 2017, which implies providing jobs to around 41.6 million people in India during this period.

In addition, the Indian travel and tourism industry attracts capital investment as well. In 2017, travel and tourism industry contributed to 5.7 per cent of the total national investment i.e. INR2, 387.7 billion (USD35.2 billion) and this number is expected to increase by 2 per cent annum to 52.3 million jobs by 2028. Further, it has been observed that the tourism and hospitality industry is among the top 10 sectors in India that attracts highest Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). According to the data released by Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) 2017, during the period 2000- 2017, the hotel and tourism industry attracted around US$ 10.90 billions of FDI.

Due to the increasing importance of travel and tourism industry, the Indian government has taken several measures to make India a worldwide tourism hub. Some of the major initiatives planned by the Indian Government in recent times are giving a boost to the travel and tourism industry of India. Under Budget 2018-19, the Government of India has allotted around Rs. 1,250 crore i.e. US$ 183.89 million for the Integrated development of tourist circuits under Swadesh Darshan and Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive (PRASAD). In addition, the Government of India is working constantly to realize one per cent share in world’s international tourist arrivals by 2020 and two per cent share by 2025.

Thus, we can conclude that Travel and Tourism industry has a huge potential of employment generation apart of being an essential source of foreign exchange for our country.
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