PERCEPTION OF BUSINESS TRAVELLERS TOWARDS TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF ONLINE TRAVEL PORTALS

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Abstract: The technology has revolutionized the tourism industry today. Many tourism businesses have utilized the power of the Internet to the fullest in their online as well as direct marketing initiatives. The business travellers who are an integral part of the tourism industry are exchanging information than never before as the world is witnessing a drastic shift in online travel space. This study suggests and tests a mechanism to assess the perception of business travellers towards adopting technology while booking their trips. To assess the perception of business travellers regarding technology adoption, 12 variables were selected. Factor Analysis was utilized to reduce these 12 variables into 3 factors. A multiple regression was employed to eventually identify the perception of business travellers towards technology adoption. The ANOVA (F-test) specifies that the scale/ factor i.e. "Responses of Business Travellers" was quite significant. Further statistical Analysis displays that the significant value (p-value) of F-test came out to be 0.000, which means that all three explanatory variables i.e. service, awareness and network are highly significant with respect to the responses of Business Travellers regarding technology adoption.

Key words: Business Travellers, perception, technology, online travel portals

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INTRODUCTION

Business travel in spite of being identified as a big commercial activity today has hardly caught the attention of the academia, government and researchers. It has received limited attention because of its complex nature. Rob Davidson was the pioneer in reshaping business tourism in 1994. Business tourism deals with individuals travelling for their work (Davidson, 1994). It is a highly complex and varied discipline as it has further subdivisions. Out of the many subdivisions the most extensively researched are meetings, conferences, conventions. Davidson did extensive research on this highly critical aspect. Researches indicate that meeting is also part of business tourism (Davidson, 1994). A small assembly is a meeting but a meeting on a large scale is called as a conference in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, called as a convention in the US

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and called congress in the continental Europe. The advent of ICT has transformed the online cyberspace into a vital component of the marketing mix where the consumers and service providers interact with each other. There are many theories that surround the birth of the Internet but the exact year is still unknown. The literatures pertaining to it are also not definitive or complete. In India the Internet was launched on 15th August 1995 by the pioneering works of Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited. The birth of the Internet has opened the door for computer mediated environment (CME) as it has increased the interactivity between various business formations (Chatterjee, 1995). Since the volume of usage of the Internet has increased exponentially it is indispensable to study the online consumer behaviour. Tourism has become a very big business with a global economic contribution of 7.6 trillion USD in 2016 (Statista, 2016). Therefore, it is imperative for the scholarly community to study the tourist behaviour which has drastically changed with the advent of Technology. Tourism industry has emerged as a major economic tool in the world with a direct economic impact of 2.3 trillion USD in 2016 (Statista, 2016).

In numerical terms both in terms of arrivals and earnings it has grown exponentially in the last sixty-five years. The advent of technology has served as a boon for the dynamic tourism industry and it has welcomed the Information Technology sector with open arms. This has become possible as it reduces cost, enhances the service delivery and customer experience. This is the era of competition as businesses are competing against each other to develop and maintain their competitiveness. Tourism Industry is no exception in this dynamic business environment. In order to sustain the businesses, need to attain and apply updated information to help in its management and marketing operations. ICT will be of valuable help in this direction as it will help the businesses to manage information and help to take wise and appropriate decisions. The diffusion of ICT in the tourism industry has profoundly increased and at a remarkable degree (Connolly & Lee, 2006; Singh & Kasvana, 2005). ICT can revolutionize the tourism industry as it can change the outlook of viewing tourism processes, information search, businesses in the tourism sector and competition between them. Those tourism organizations who fail to utilize the tool of ICT will find it hard to manage and achieve their information exhaustive businesses objectives (Law & Jogaratnam, 2005). Tourism organizations need to have a sound understanding of the applications of ICT in this highly dynamic business environment to improve their processes and systems and counter competitiveness.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gefen (2000) studied the importance of corporate websites and their role in brand building. He opined that the faith is an important factor which needs to be built in corporate websites and will in the long run help in building corporate branding. Buhalis & Licata (2002) stated that the array of tourism offers on the web might strengthen some service providers such as Air Carriers and might challenge traditional players such as outmoded service providers which are still in operation. Cho (2002) discussed the importance of the travel websites. The researcher was of the view that the portals should be self-explanatory. The contents of the websites should be catchy and appealing to the prospective travellers such as virtual tours of the desired destination. The virtual display should have an intermix of both audio-visual contents. Glitzy pictures, videos will help in this direction. Kim (2004) said that e- commerce is a blessing imparted to the ever-expanding travel and tourism industry and has come a long way in altering the outmoded way to the technological mode. Wolfe et al. (2004) emphasized that in order to develop trust business organizations can use various instruments in order to increase their client base and this can be done through effective use of advertisements. The knowledge they

can borrow from successful case studies utilized by online travel portals and this will help them to gain an entry into the market share of traditional and brick and mortar travel agencies. Hsu et al., (2007) stated that tourists share their information online due to personal cognition and social influence. Sen & Lerman (2007) opined that one who shares his tourism product knowledge online is an e-fluential tourist and appears as free revealing innovator. Buhalis & Law (2008) stated that Information and Communication Technology has huge impact on many aspects of Tourism. Litvin (2008) was of the view that level of interaction on social media can be Asynchronous or Synchronous. Asynchronous includes blogs, virtual communities, emails, websites, product review sites. Synchronous includes instant messaging, news groups. Garson (2008) emphasized the importance of information pertaining to planning for travel and eventually resulting in booking of trips. Both the researchers were of the view that the contents of the portals and the information it contains bridges the gap between electronic word of mouth and the traditional word of mouth communication pertaining to a destination desired to be visited. Shih (2009) stated that emergence of internet has transformed the tourism industry and the mechanism adopted by the tourists to buy and experience travel related products and the portals which are viewed as a risk to the supremacy of the organization.

Cai et al.,(2009) emphasized that importance of the Destination Management Organizations pertaining to the publicizing and upgrade may change due to the information and communication technology. Mamaghani (2009) studied the behavioral patterns of the travellers. Mamaghani (2009) was of the view that the advent of electronic commerce had an impact on the behavioral patterns of the consumers and they have the switching tendency to other portals if not satisfied with the earlier one. Mamaghani (2009) explained the impact of Information and Communication Technology and electronic commerce on the information extraction pattern of the consumers. Mamaghani (2009) described that the customers with the power of technology have the option to select the portal which has an array of information, easy to use and is user friendly.

Mamaghani (2009) tried to differentiate the facilities available in web based systems and traditional network of service providers. The researcher was of the view that the advent of Information and Communication Technology is to develop trust in the portals so that the customers can derive advantage of technology and use the digital process more in comparison to the traditional service providers. Mamaghani (2009) described the array of information the companies should offer on display to the prospective customers. The researcher was of the view that in order to adopt the ICT and use its advantages to the fullest the company should primarily display the complete array of services on offer, special schemes, add-on facilities which should be all available on the portal to catch the eyes of the prospective customers. Laffey & Gandy (2009) focused on the role of electronic commerce and travel intermediaries in pertinent travel information search. The researcher was of the view that Internet and online intermediaries can design themselves in such a manner so that there is continuous flow of information and cost saving offers which the customers are always on the lookout for.

Qualman (2009) opined that social media is very successful in many countries whereas ubiquitous in some countries. Yoo & Gretzel (2009) said that Online Travel Reviews are considered to be more reliable information than contents posed by tourism bodies. Buss & Strauss (2009) said that social media takes advantage of emotional influence as digitization and feeling online pronounced as dissemination philosophy by the first authors and culture of exposure by the second author. Volo (2009) is of the view that though blogs are in fashion in the beginning of the new millennium but can have disproportionate reach and so dependable as direct conversation and feedback and the

magnitude of genuine travellers contributing and sharing on this medium is a big question mark. Enoch & Grossman (2010) explained that exploratory and descriptive pertaining to the development of theories relating to the contents and electronic social media platforms. Xiang & Gretzel (2010) discussed about the numerous platforms available on social media, virtual communities, position of social platforms in search engines, social media adoption and its impact on destination branding strategies.

Baym (2010) put forward the dimensions of media such as interactivity, temporal structure, social cues which looks into context richness, its reach, mobility, reach out to people irrespective of place, space for recording, reproducing communicative acts. Xiang & Gretzel (2010) were of the view that in comparison to the outmoded mass media tools such as contents in print media and television on social media encourages high level of interaction and usage amid participants. O'Connor (2010) tourism intermediaries benefit a lot from the knowledge created by tourists. TripAdvisors gain commercially through the user generated contributions of the tourists. Christodoulou (2010) was of the view that because of convenience and ease of online booking it has more or less become a norm rather than exception. Munar (2011) opined that the digitized matter and consumer involvement in the portal can be checked to look into the vital scope of improvement in the travel portals. Jacobsen & Munar (2012) focused on the online contribution of the tourists and the limitations of social media. Chiu et al., (2012) reiterated that in the fiercely competitive retail market the importance of knowing the online consumers is on an all-time high. Pertinent literatures in the areas of consumer behavior and decision making will give an insight of the purchase and decision making processes.

According to them it is also imperative to understand the decision making processes that consumers follow. In addition to this the studies on ICT will examine the behavior of online consumers. Some studies of online consumer behaviour have poured in consumer research. Lee et al., (2013) opined that there is a tremendous power game and inequality between the suppliers and Online Travel Agencies but since Online Travel Agencies have a greater reach through the Internet and better understanding of the buying needs of the consumers than the actual suppliers they have the opportunity of exercising a greater bargaining power. Clemes et al. (2014) and Gatautis et al. (2014) deduced that service quality and value have a positive impact on online purchase behaviour. Immonen & Sintonen (2015) reiterated that with the development of the society electronic devices are seen more into operation and therefore it becomes imperative to analyze the factors of technology adoption. Chong et al. (2015) suggested factors to understand consumer behaviour behaviour such as convenience, features of website, adoption and innovativeness. Chang et al. (2016) found that online customers perceived risk has a negative effect on perceived satisfaction and purchase intention. Chen et al. (2017) verified the effects of perceived usefulness and cognitive complexity on the effect of recommended information on the technology adoption intention. Datta et al. (2018) deduced that business travellers value confidentiality, security and product quality the most while choosing the Online Travel Portal to book their trip. Datta et al. (2018) deduced that income and age group influence the online purchase attitude of travellers. Koundinya (2019) deduced that trust, perceived usefulness, convenience and website are significant factors that influence consumers intention to adopt online channels.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The data was collected from 400 business travellers regarding their perception towards technology adoption at Delhi National Capital Region. Descriptive and analytical statistics were used to derive inferences from the data. Both primary and secondary data

were used to present meaningful explanations. A structured questionnaire was chosen to collect the primary data from the business travellers visiting Delhi National Capital Region. In total 400 Business Travellers were surveyed to understand their opinion pertaining to technology adoption through Online Travel Portals. The Data Analysis was carried out through the following steps:

a. Primary Data was collected from business travellers pertaining to availing the services of online travel portals for their trips, whether they are aware of different facilities provided by online travel portals, whether they have availed the services of Travel Portal Service provider for the business trip in the past, whether they are getting good value for their money, whether they receive unique offers from online travel portals, whether they find the timings of these technological interfaces flexible and suitable ,whether they receive discounts from Online travel portals, whether they receive facilities and features in totality on the website, whether they receive all the pertinent information about various services easily through their service providers, whether they perceive that the portal has a good network of service providers, whether they perceive that the travel portal is easily accessible and visually appealing, whether the online travel portals respond to original grievance and take final action on complaint filed by business travellers

b. Descriptive and Analytical Statistics is employed

c. Employing statistical tools

DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND RESULTS
FACTOR ANALYSIS

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (Kaiser, 1974) measure of sampling adequacy was done for applying factor analysis. It was equal to 0.823 (Table 1) that specified goodness of sample greater than 0.5 of acceptable limit. Bartlett's test of sphericity was applied and the data delivered a value of 0.00 which was less than 0.05 and reinforced the rationality of the data for factor analysis.

Table 1. KMO and Bartlett's Test (Responses of Business Travellers)

KMO and Bartlett's Test (Responses of Respondents)		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Adequacy of Sample		0.823
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Chi-Square value	309.342
	Df	10
	Sig.	0.000

Kaiser (1974) endorses that any value of 0.5 arrived through KMO and Bartlett's is acceptable and factor analysis can be applied in this case. If the value arrived is less than 0.5 then we can think of gathering more data. The values arrived between 0.5 and 0.7 are considered to be the average ones, the values arrived between 0.7 and 0.8 are considered to be rather good, and values in the range of 0.8 and 0.9 are considered to be great and values above 0.9 are excellent. In our case the value arrived is 0.823, which is highly reliable and great in nature. Factor analysis is suitable and appropriate pertaining to our data. EFA was carried out on the 12 variables in order to condense the number of variables into factors. The variables are condensed into 3 factors with Eigen value greater than 1 and the total variance explicated being 80.056% and is considered to be good displayed in Table 2.

Variables loaded into three factors have been extracted through Varimax which is the best orthogonal rotation technique as it enhances the interpretability of the factors (Table 3). EFA was carried out for all the 12 variables. These variables are condensed into three different factors which explicated around 80.056 % of the total variance.

The first factor explained about 42.419% of the total variance. The second factor explained about 25.129% of the total variance and third factor explained 12.508% of the total variance. All the three factors explained about 80.056% of the total Variance.

Table 2. Factor Analysis Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

Factor Analysis									
Compo-nent	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.400	45.003	45.003	5.400	45.003	45.003	5.090	42.419	42.419
2	2.859	23.826	68.829	2.859	23.826	68.829	3.015	25.129	67.548
3	1.347	11.226	80.056	1.347	11.226	80.056	1.501	12.508	80.056
4	.876	7.300	87.356						
5	.575	4.793	92.148						
6	.513	4.279	96.427						
7	.237	1.974	98.401						
8	.141	1.179	99.579						
9	.034	.280	99.859						
10	.015	.122	99.980						
11	.002	.020	100.000						
12	-7.818E-16	-6.515E-15	100.000						

Table 3. Rotated Component Matrix Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

Rotated Component Matrix			
Variables/Factors	**Component**		
	1	**2**	**3**
Business travellers avail the services of online travel portals for their trips	.030	**.768**	.114
Business Travellers are aware of different facilities provided by online travel portals	-.031	**.739**	.049
Business travellers have availed the services of Travel Portal Service provider for the business trip in the past	**.781**	.418	-.141
Business travellers are getting good value for your money	.187	**.901**	.138
Business travellers receive unique offers from the Online travel portals	**.908**	.288	.188
Business travellers find the timings of these technological interfaces flexible and suitable	**.756**	-.423	-.331
Business travellers receive discounts from Online travel portals	.102	**.638**	-.621
Business travellers receive all facilities and features in totality on the website	**.934**	.082	.169
Business travellers receive all the pertinent information about various services easily through their service providers	**.968**	.042	.177
Business travellers perceive that the portal has a good network of service providers	.518	.084	**.578**
Business travellers perceive that the travel portal is easily accessible and visually appealing	**.971**	-.102	.155
Business travellers think that the Online Travel Portals respond to your original grievance and take final action on your complaint	.142	.447	**.709**

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization
a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations

Table 4. Identification of New Parameters by factor analysis (Source: Developed from Research)

Factors	Variables					New Parameters
Factor 1	Variable 3	Variable 5	Variable 6	Variable 8	Variable 9 and 11	Service
Factor 2	Variable 1	Variable 2	Variable 4	Variable 7		Awareness
Factor 3	Variable 10	Variable 12				Network

All the 12 variables are condensed into 3 factors. The extraction of the factors was carried out through the Varimax method and through principal component analysis where the Eigen value should be more than 1.

Regression Analysis (Algina & Olejnik, 2003)

The theories and ideologies developed in dealing with sample linear regression (i.e. one explanatory variable) may be protracted to deal with numerous explanatory variables.

Multiple regression equation:

$Y = C + \beta x_1 + \beta x_2 + \beta x_3 + \beta x_4 + \beta x_5 + ... + \beta x_n$

Y = prediction relationship of types of variables towards Service Quality
(**Responses of Business Traveller)**
C = Constant value
ß = Unstandardized Coefficient
$X_1 X_2$. .... = Dimension of independent variable

The Regression Analysis predicts the extent of dependence of various factors as its exploratory variable. This was carried out by statistical testing and utilizing the first result of the regression analysis i.e. ANOVA (F-test). Further, R square value of the regression analysis is calculated to demonstrate the degree to which the explanatory variables explain the dependent factor. The second result of the regression analysis i.e. t-test along with significant value (p-value) indicates the most significant explanatory variable that influences the dependent variable. The R square value of the above model is 0.978, which means the dependent variable **Responses of Business Traveller** is influenced by all these three explanatory variables Service, Awareness and network i.e. 97.8 percent which is a good indicator for establishing travel portal awareness (Table 5).

Table 5. Multiple Regression Summary Output (Responses of Business Travellers)

Multiple Regression Summary Output (Responses of Business Traveller)	
Regression Statistics	
Multiple R	0.989
R Square	0.978
Adjusted R Square	0.984
Standard Error	0.020
Observations	400

Table 6. Multiple Regression (ANOVA)

	Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	84.614	3	28.205	4604.336	.000[*]
1	Residual	2.426	396	.006		
	Total	**87.040**	**399**			

Significant at 1 per cent level

The ANOVA (F-test) indicates that the scale/ factor i.e. "Responses of Business Travellers" was quite significant. All the explanatory variables i.e. three factors for studying responses of Business Travellers regarding technology adoption are quite

significant. Further, table 7 depicts that the significant value (p-value) of F-test came out to be 0.000, which means that all three explanatory variables are highly significant with respect to the explained factor i.e. "Responses of Business Travellers" The above Table 6 determines acceptable result as the significance level of the model is less than 0.01 (1% level). Thus the model employed in this research is considered to be good.

Table 7. Multiple Regression Coefficients (Responses of Business Travellers)

Factors	Coefficients	Standard Error	t Stat	P-value
Intercept	-0.002	0.002	-0.998	0.321
Factor 1	0.194	0.002	100.327	0.000*
Factor 2	0.200	0.012	100.809	0.000*
Factor 3	0.214	0.132	100.574	0.000*

Table 8. Factors and New Parameters developed from Research

Factors	New Parameters
Factor 1	Service
Factor 2	Awareness
Factor 3	Network

Significant at 1 per cent level

Based on the Multiple Regression Output table of "**Responses of Business Traveller**" and its constituent variables, we were able to derive the following equation.

Responses of Business Travellers (Y) = -.002 + 0.194 (F_1) + 0.200 (F_2) + 0.214 (F_3)

It can be further deduced that the increase of 1 unit of delivery of Factor 1(F_1), may incur the raise of 0.194 units in **Responses of Business Travellers** (Y). The highest Beta value indicates that independent variables are the most significant variables towards the dependent variable. From the table 7 depicted above, the independent factor 3 of 0.214 is highest among all. This means that independent Factor 3 has contributed the most and has stronger effect towards the technology adoption as compared to other independent variables. Further, it is seen from Table 7 that the significant value (p-value) of t-test for all items are 0.000, which means that all the three condensed factors arrived through factor analysis are highly significant with respect to the dependent variables i.e. "**Responses of Business Travellers**" (Table 8).

The application of the ANOVA (F-test) indicates that the scale/ factor i.e. "Responses of Business Travellers" regarding technology adoption was quite significant. All the explanatory variables i.e. three factors for studying responses of Business Travellers are quite significant i.e. Service, Awareness and Network. Further statistical Analysis displays that the significant value (p-value) of F-test came out to be 0.000, which means that all three explanatory variables are highly significant with respect to the explained factor i.e. "Responses of Business Travellers regarding technology adoption".

DISCUSSIONS AND FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

Though this study is a modest and earnest effort from the researcher to investigate the online behaviour of Business Travellers in Delhi NCR and it is a herculean task to study all the aspects of this emerging segment due to limited resources and abilities of the researcher and confidentiality issues of the business travellers. Hence the study may not be comprehensive to all situations. The study was conducted with a view to provide an all-inclusive view of the online purchase behaviour of Business Travellers. This study proposed useful strategies for the online travel portals for meeting the online needs of

Business Travellers which is emerging as a very lucrative segment considering its immense revenue generating capabilities. It presented the factors which affect the business travellers purchase behaviour and the requirements of the business travellers while booking their business travel through Online Travel Portals. It also provided few insights on how the online travel portals can address the concerns of business travellers. Online Travel Portals needs to understand the expectations and satisfaction of business travellers on various parameters and thereby focus on improving their facilities.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The study is conducted in Delhi National Capital Region. There are other principal business centers such as Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Mumbai, and Kolkata. The findings of the study may not be generalized to these areas.

2. The data pertaining to this sector is majorly internal in nature and has seldom become public knowledge. The statistics are not maintained uniformly. This made selection of sample very difficult.

3. Online Travel Aggregators are reluctant and hesitant to reveal information pertaining to their data base.

4. No prior major research work has been conducted in this area.

5. The study is restricted to the aspect of travel booking decision pattern of Business Travellers through Online Travel Portals whereas other variables such as personality, attitude, and life-style can be further studied.

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