

Examining the Dimensionality of Social Media Marketing in Sri Lankan Hotel Industry

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Abstract: Customers when making travelling arrangements, their source for hotels recommendations are the trusted sites through the internet. Star graded hotel are aware of the effects for taking the competitive advantage as the benefits of social media marketing. It is necessary for the hotel to take the direction for attracting of customer have to be measured the significant for utilization of social media. Therefore, in this research examines the appropriateness of social media as a way of marketing to the hotel sector in Sri Lanka and universal sampling was adapted. A requirement of social media is integrating the strategies before implementation for positioning. Therefore, assessed the dimensionality of social media marketing through communication, transaction and distribution and used items were fitted with the Sri Lankan hotel industry.

Key Words: Social media marketing, Sri Lankan hotel Industry, Dimensions of Social media marketing: Communication, Transaction and Distribution

Introduction

The hotel industry made a significant contribution to the tourism industry of the economy and also attracted it as a tourist destination on an international level to the country. Lim (2010) explained that the hotel industry can utilize the networking and social media in which, they know how to engage with customers to identify their requirements. The hotel industry has a possibility to cooperate with the consumers where they can get a vacation experience using these networking sites. Furthermore, he described that social media is moderately new and benefits are great and affordable in which have a possibility to extend the brand reputation quickly.

It may have a variety of advantages of the social media marketing; hotelier and consumers engage with the communications in which the total cost of investment is small but which will direct to the brand reputation of the hotel eventually. One of the basic things of social network is the low cost in which they have to request the time for investment. In order for that, the hotel industry should position obvious aims to use the social networks and there should be the correct marketing strategies to success at the significant business.

Social media as an online marketing tool that is a vital resource for establish a competitive advantage within the hotel industry. For a Developing hotelier guest relationship is essential for the day-to-day activities, as well as future development. Currently, the hotel industry engages with online marketing to match the requirements of the international marketing order; also it highlights the offering services fitting into the existing context when showing the guests' needs and wants. The hotel industry now is considering adopting social media in its resource base view. As a result, they want to keep ahead of the competition. Thus this necessitate investing in the marketing that is fast and new beneficial way of the future for internet marketing

Social media is the only printing, visual and two way communication method that the hotel industry uses for their day to day communication when compared with the other communication methods. As a result, it is easy to address the target customers for the existing vacancies within the hotels. Therefore, top management in the hotels should be involved with the planning methods of technology adoptions to attract more customers for their hotels; as it is based on previous experience, interests, needs, and financial potential of customers. As a result, the utilization of social media construct is vital in improving customer attraction and satisfaction in order to create a competitive advantages within the hotel industry.

Problem Statement

The competition within the hotel industry is continually increasing due to the globalizing environment in which the social media has a vital role for achieving competitive advantage in the competitive business world (Hamid, et al, 2012). Hoteliers can track the number of conversations that take place over a new product or service that is offered by them and can immediately

respond to reviews, comments and feedback. As a service leading industry; the hotels sector has to be very customer-centered.

The usage of the social media has been popularized among the people who are in USA and European countries rather than Asia and Australia. The highest global arrival of tourists was reported as 421,037 who visited from Western Europe in 2013 (Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority,2013). According to the [Case](#) and King, 2013, where they pointed out that in Europe, North American and South American, the people engage with social media at 46 %, 40% and 50 % respectively. The Sri Lankan hotel industry are also centralized with the customers who are from Europe and American countries in which the Sri Lankan hotel industry would have the potential to use social media to promote and popularize their services internationally through online marketing. On one hand, it provides a new way to reach out to the target audience and engage with them. (www.42inception.com). Social media have primarily focused on its use as a marketing tool (Baker and Green 2008a, Hampp 2009). Mainly the internet is used as a marketing tool in major tourism destinations in the Arab region such as Lebanon, Egypt and Syria (AL-Allak, 2010). Identifying the competences for the hotel, it is more likely to survive and stay successful in the markets. Hence, this study analyses the grounds for a dialogue between the Sri Lankan hotel industry and social media as a marketing tool for competitive advantages in which have to examine the dimensionality of social media marketing of Sri Lankan hotel industry.

Research Methodology

This study is cross sectional and the unit of analysis is organizational, due to the testing of the factors of the Hotels. The sample size is 98 which is the universal sampling as a result and data were collected from individual employees who are in the executive grade in the hotels to test the dimensions to achieve the more generalize finding from the hotel industry (Saunders, et al., 2007).It was also noted that, number of social media related studies (Castaneda et al., 2007; Huang and Law, 2003) have used the cross sectional research design method.

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Three sub dimensions; communication, transaction and distribution in which there are 5 items, 5 items and 3 items in the construct respectively. Each item in the social media is measured on a Likert scale of 1 to 5, where a response of 1 strongly disagrees; while a response of 5 indicates strongly agree to the statement. But, web site age is measures on ordinal scale. The descriptive statistics and the inter-item correlation values are given in Table 1.

Examining the Dimensionality of Social Media Marketing: Communication

Based on the mean values in Table 1, there seem to be an agreement in all the 5 statements on social media marketing: communication. The highest correlation for each item with at least one other item in the construct is between 0.3 and 0.9. Hence, all the 5 items correlate adequately in the construct. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value is 0.904 and Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.938 which are considered to be good. A single factor was extracted that explained the 80 % of the variation in the 5 items. The smallest factor loading is 0.719 (> 0.5: Hair at al, 2010).The mean of the 5 item was computed and saved as (MeanFCSC) social media marketing: communication to be used for further analysis.

Table 1: Descriptive Summary and inter-item Correlations for items in SM Marketing: Communication

	Descriptive statistic		Inter-Item Correlation Matrix				
	Mean	Std.Dvi.	1	2	3	4	5
1.Accessing & organizing information	4.14	.352	1.000	.740	.739	.652	.682
2.Interactivity process	4.19	.391	.740	1.000	.810	.782	.780
3.Customer relationship management	4.21	.405	.739	.810	1.000	.791	.782

4. Building brand identity	4.19	.391	.652	.782	.791	1.000	.762
5. Communication cost & time	4.23	.423	.682	.780	.782	.762	1.000

Examining the Dimensionality of Social Media Marketing: Transaction

Based on the mean values in Table 2, there seem to be an agreement in all the 5 statements on social media marketing: transaction. The highest correlation for the each item with at least one other item in the construct is between 0.3 and 0.9. Hence, all the 5 items correlate adequately in the construct. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value is 0.792 and Cronbach's Alpha values the 0.812 which are considered to be good. A single factor was extracted that explained the 58% of the variation in the 5 items. The smallest factor loading is 0.500 (> 0.5: Hair et al, 2010). The mean of the 5 item was computed and saved as (MeanFCST) social media marketing: transaction to be used for further analysis.

Table 2: Descriptive Summary and inter-item Correlations for items in SM Marketing: Transaction

	Descriptive statistic		Inter-Item Correlation Matrix				
	Mean	Std.Dvi.	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1.Sales to customers	4.14	.343	1.000	.594	.534	.427	.407
2.Transaction processing	4.19	.393	.594	1.000	.437	.466	.443
3.Revenues by cross-selling	4.26	.438	.534	.437	1.000	.471	.567

4.Transaction enjoyment	4.22	.415	.427	.466	.471	1.000	.358
5.Transaction cost & time	4.27	.447	.407	.443	.567	.358	1.000

Examining the Dimensionality of Social Media Marketing: Distribution

Based on the mean values in table 3, there seem to be an agreement in all the 3 statements on social media marketing: distribution. The highest correlation for each item with at least one other item in the construct is between 0.3 and 0.9. Hence, all the 4 items correlate adequately in the construct. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value is 0.724 and Cronbach's Alpha value the 0.851 which are considered to be good. A single factor was extracted that explained the 77 % of the variation in the 3 items. The smallest factor loading is 0.728 (> 0.5: Hair at al, 2010).The mean of the 3 item was computed and saved as (MeanFCSD) social media marketing: distribution to be used for further analysis.

Table 3: Descriptive Summary and inter-item Correlations for items in SM Marketing: Distribution

	Descriptive statistic		Inter- item correlation matrix		
	Mean	Std. Dev.	1	2	3
1.Inventories & utilities	4.24	.425	1.000	.637	.622
2.Supply chain	4.35	.478	.637	1.000	.711
3.Distribution cost & time	4.39	.488	.622	.711	1.000

Concluding Remarks

The social media gives a chance to the expected guest the freedom of speech and shearing of their view in which hoteliers can carry on their communication transparently. If the customer can login with their information online in which the hoteliers should maintain the successful and visible promotion for internet marketing.

Social media is playing a fundamental task for marketing and sharing information with each other. It connects people and the exchange of opinions. The hotel industry can create a greater opportunity with social media which is fortunate to all of the hotels in Sri Lanka they truly know how to create for it to take place. Therefore, the hotels are fully aware with the strategies of social media, in which many of the opportunities can be accumulated from the social media.

The hotel industry in Sri Lanka has and focused toward the social media marketing by using the social media as a marketing tool for building long-run relationships with the customer. Utilizes items of the question for communication, transaction and distribution are more appropriate to assess the states of social media marketing in Sri Lankan hotel industry. These findings are in accordance with the argument made byPervaje (2011) and Teece et al., (1997). Eisenhardt and Martin (2000), that emphasis that the new product and development of services are included in the dynamic capability as a result of rapid technological changes that help to enhance the wealth creation in the firms.

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