

**INFLUENCE OF ONLINE CUSTOMER REVIEWS ON
HOTEL BOOKING INTENTION: A COMPARATIVE
STUDY BETWEEN BACKPACKERS VS MASS
ORGANIZED TOURISTS**

**(WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SELECTED BACKPACKERS
VS MASS ORGANIZED TOURISTS)**

By

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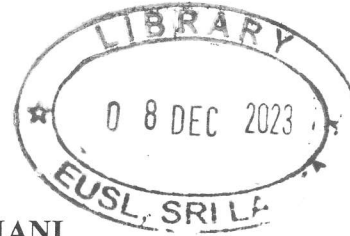
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ABSTRACT

During past decades' tourism industry has grown and deepened diversification to become one of the highest growing industries in the world economy. Modern tourism is focused in developing and encompassing a growing number of new destinations. These factors have made tourism as one of the key drivers in socio-economic progress. Normally consumers like to perceive more risks which associated with purchasing tourism services because they cannot easily evaluate tourism destinations and services before they make the consumption due to intangibility and heterogeneity of tourism services. But with the development of web 2.0 applications and broadband internet consumer-generated media has increased transforming word-of-mouth communications into different types of electronic communities and virtual networks allowing tourists to gain information on different destinations and hotels easier. A lot of opinions on hotels, travel destinations and services are often provided in the form of online consumer reviews. But when it comes to Sri Lankan context, there is lack of information on how backpackers and mass organized tourists use these indicators of online customer reviews to make their purchase decisions. Having recognized this gap, this study was designed to investigate the influence of consumer online reviews on hotel booking intention of backpackers and mass organized tourists. The results indicate that there is Strong Significant positive relationship between customer online reviews and hotel booking intention of backpackers and mass organized tourists.

This research will contribute theoretically to fill the gap of knowledge existing in literature concerning the influence of consumer online reviews on hotel booking intention with special reference to backpackers and mass organized tourists. This study support the identification of elements of online reviews that affect hotel booking intention of backpackers and mass organized tourists. The data were analyzed by using descriptive, correlation analyses and multiple regression analysis. Results indicates that the online customer reviews and hotel booking intention, are high. The results indicate that there is strongly positive relationship between online customer reviews and hotel booking intention of backpackers and mass organized tourists. Finally there is a significant effect of online customer reviews and hotel booking intention. So, this research can be very important for the development of hotel industry in Sri Lanka.

Keywords - Online review, Hotel booking intention, Backpackers, Mass organized tourists

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