Assessing Consumers’ Trust of Crowd-Sourcing Based Hotel Rating Systems

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Abstract: In a competitive hotel industry, hotel rating system plays an important role in both customers’ decision making process and serve as an indicator of hotel industry’s service quality performance. Many types of evaluation systems coexist today on the market. Some of them are provided by government or trusted authorities. Some of them are sponsored by various companies in the hotel industry. With the popularity of mobile devices networks in recent years, crowd-sourcing based evaluation system is also gaining popularity quickly. The success of a hotel rating system depends largely on customers’ trust of the system. It is an interesting research topic why customers or consumers would trust certain rating system. It is also interesting to know the different impacts between an authorities sponsored accreditation system compared to a voluntary crowd-sourced online rating system in the process of buying products and services. This study uses an extended Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) model with trust to compose the Hotel Rating System Trust Models. To verify this model, we will collect survey data and use the structural equation modeling (SEM) to assess the trust level among various hotel rating systems. The study intends to distribute at least 412 questionnaires to travelers in Macau. The results can provide insights for some hotel rating system adopters and tourism related industry to understand what relevant factors may affect the travelers’ decision to choose a hotel rating system.

Besides, the results of this study will contribute to all the stakeholders in the tourism industry, including hotels, restaurants, and travel agencies, governments in tourist destinations, and the Chinese tourism enterprises. It aims to discover and verify what factors can affect Chinese tourists’ attitudes when they are exposed to a crowd-sourcing hotel rating system. It also will help rating systems providers to improve the service quality to provide more trusting services for Chinese tourists. This research has expanded into a new research field and can provide a theoretical basis for the future related research.

Key words: Hotel Rating System, Trust, Crowd-Sourcing, Customer’s Decision Making