Name

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Subject

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Digital revolution: is it killing retail travel business?

Introduction

The current research aims at determining the impact of digital resolution on the retail travel business. This section explains the research methods adopted for the study and identifies survey conduction techniques. The research methods are selected by considering the purpose of the study. A primary survey is conducted that relies on a self-administered questionnaire. A face-to-face interview is used for obtaining the responses of the participants.

Methods

Qualitative methods are capable of providing a deeper understanding of social phenomena and direct access to the detailed insights that are needed from the participants. The chosen participants hold adequate knowledge on the digital revolution and provide better insights related to its association with the travel business. The study has selected three participants who acquire significant knowledge of the retail industry and travel business (Amaro and Duarte).

Qualitative research is conducted that targeted three participants including; the Associate Dean and Director of Undergraduate Programs and a field-oriented case researcher spanning marketing management, international issues and non-profit business strategy. The second participant is an internationally renowned marketing, advertising and entertainment executive with diverse experience in all facets of the marketing industry. The third participant is a professor of Marketing and Business, New York, where he is finishing his doctoral studies. He has close to 40 years of corporate experience, including travel and tourism, banking and finance, as well as in the non-profit sector. He has published extensively.

Interviews

Structured interviews are used for the inquiring the selected participants and obtaining their views on the digital revolution’s impact on the retail travel business. The interview organized for the study contains verbally administered questions that include concerns regarding technology and its implications. The purpose of the research interviews is to target a focus group and study their perceptions, beliefs and motivations. A similar set of questions are asked from each participant that leads to improved understanding of the phenomena. The purpose of interviews is to listen to the responses of the participants and attentively for acquiring more relevant information.

Results

**Theme 1: Impacts of technology on people’s life**

The first question inquired information about the impacts of technology on people's life. The first participant replied: “AI is gradually being incorporated into what companies do and has brought and will bring many changes, including changes in the types of jobs that are available and the skills necessary to do them”. The participant accepted the increased dependence of society on technology. Second participant: “In just about every way. We communicate through technology. We shop through technology and we find information through technology”.

The third participant responded: “It has turned society, especially the younger generations, into a permanently connected consumer”. This indicates that all participants have agreed with the changing role of technology and its impacts on the people.

**Theme 2: Extent to which the digital revolution affected the traditional retail travel business**

The first participant responded by saying, “the travel agency business was first transformed when the internet empowered consumers to make their own plans for travel without a travel agent”. This indicates that people are linking the digital revolution for planning their own tours. The second participant replied, "retail travel agents need to deliver a value proposition, expertise and service that makes working with them more desirable than finding solutions online". This indicates that the respondent accepted a significant relationship between the digital revolution and traditional retail travel business.

The third participants mentioned, “it has turned society, especially the younger generations, into a permanently connected consumer". The answer of the respondent confirms that the digital revolution has affected the retail travel business and specifically the young generation.

**Theme 3: Leverage on the internet revolution to attaining a competitive advantage**

The first participant responded by saying yes. The second respondent mentioned, “Yes. Travel agents can curate online information to provide recommendations to customers to provide a richer set of possibilities and save people time". The answers depict that they have accepted the impact of the digital revolution on providing a competitive advantage to the travel business.

The third participant replied, “absolutely yes; technology is an opportunity, if we do not take advantage of it, it will become a threat”. The answer of the participant reveals that technology will threaten the agencies that are not switching to technology and are relying on old methods.

**Theme 4: using the digital revolution for developing broader customer base**

The first participant responded, “Yes, this can be done through the use of social media and direct marketing skills, but it can be very costly”. The participant explained that social media is an effective tool for marketing that will help agencies in broadening their customer base. The second participant stated, “maybe, possibly through blogging, email blasts, online advertising, influencers and satisfied customer recommendations”. The answer indicates that blogging is a powerful tool for capturing wider customers.

The third participant mentioned, “absolutely, by interphasing will all reservations systems, by applying web-enabled CRM, SEO, Hootsuite and other tools”. This reflects that he has considered SEO and CRM as effective strategies for capturing more customers.

**Theme 5: Winners and losers**

The first participant was not sure who were the winners or losers of digital technologies. The second participant mentioned, “winners will be the ones who are top of travel destinations that are fresh, fun, less saturated with recommendations that are fulfilling, offer great price/value and go beyond what everyone will otherwise find online”. This indicates that travel agencies that integrated technology managed to attain positive outcomes.

The third participant replied, “the winners are the users, the losers are those who stay behind”. The answer of the respondent indicates that users remain the ones that attain enormous benefits.

**Theme 6: Survival strategies in the face of disruptive change**

The first participant couldn't reply to the question. The second participant mentioned, "great service, time-saving, fresh recommendations with an online component that makes customers feel they have best in class inspiration for optimal travel”.

The third participant mentioned, “Specialize or go all digital”. The respondent has accepted that the agencies will need to adopt survival strategies for handling the transformations due to digitalization.

Discussions

The interpretation of the results obtained from interviews depicts that the participants have accepted the positive relationship between the digital revolution and retail travel business. The literature provides evidentiary support to the findings of the survey. All participants agreed that customers are becoming more dependent on internet and technology that will change the nature of the retail travel business.

The responses of the participants indicate that they have accepted the positive impact of digital technologies on broadening the customer base. Evidence from the literature suggests that online booking systems have allowed these modern agencies to broaden their customer base (Mohammad et al., 2012). This indicates that new technology will create more attraction for the customers and they will switch to the travel agencies that offer digital services.

The answers of the respondents indicate that losers in the retail travel business are the agencies that ignored to adopt the technology. Literature reveals similar results by accepting that the internet has killed off many high-profile travel agencies because they failed to integrate technology (Berlin, 2012). The results also confirm that the traditional agencies are losers because they failed to capture customers that resulted in their closure (Law, Leun and Wong). Evidence from the literature confirms that agencies that don’t invest in technology suffer loses. This also confirms that the travel agencies that adopted digital technologies remained the winners. The broader customer base, increased satisfaction and positive feedback of clients portray these companies as winners.

The question about competitive advantage depicts that the participants have identified technology as an effective tool for acquiring a competitive advantage. The common digital tools identified by the participants for attaining competitive advantage include SEO, blogging, social media and direct marketing. Literature suggests that a blog marketing channel is an effective tool used by travel agencies for gaining competitive advantage (Huang and Yung). The findings of the literature provide adequate support for the survey results.

The participants agreed that survival will demand the provision of advanced digitalized means such as bookings and personal travel plan. Literature also supports these results because customers rely on fast methods for making travel bookings and payments. ICT's has a direct relationship with the enhanced customer base (Amaro and Duarte).

Limitations

The study has some limitations such as it relied on the responses of three respondents only. This could affect the reliability and credibility of the data. The limited sample size impacts the quality of results. Another limitation of the study includes difficulty or bias in transcribing the raw data. The researcher is handling the collected interview results this exhibits a high likelihood of biases. The interviewer has more control over the interview that can also affect the reliability of the results. The interview can also influence the respondents.

Future research

The findings of the current research depict the need for conducting future research that emphasizes on conducting a comparative analysis between the digitalized travel agencies and the ones relying on traditional methods. it also suggests considering the profits and costs associated with the adoption of digital technologies. This will uncover how the integration of technology has impacted the retail travel business practically.

Work Cited

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