

EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HOTELIERS' REVIEW SITE USE INTENSITY AND HOTEL CHARACTERISTICS - MOROCCAN HOTELS

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ABSTRACT

Due to rapid development and consumer adoption of technology, the hospitality industry has dramatically increased online-based user-generated reviews for a variety of services, such as those found in eWOM communities (e.g., TripAdvisor). Few studies have tested—among eWOM communities—the correlation between hoteliers' review site use intensity and hotel characteristics. The purpose of this paper is to examine the predictors of TripAdvisor use intensity, as perceived by Moroccan hoteliers. After the literature review on user-generated content, a quantitative study based on a structured questionnaire survey was developed, and correlation analyses were conducted to empirically validate the relationship between hotel characteristics and the use of TripAdvisor among a population of 48 hotel managers. The results showed that all variables studied commitment, competence, hotel size (number of beds), hotel category, and type of ownership were positively related to the intensity of use of review sites. This study deepens hotel practitioners' understanding of the importance of user-generated content and offers suggestions on how to improve eWOM advocacy. Moreover, this paper contributes to the recent and still scanty research line on eWOM from the hoteliers' perspective. The novelty lies in the positive relationships between hotel features (commitment, competence, hotel size, hotel category, and type of ownership) and user-generated review sites (TripAdvisor). It extends current literature and provides practitioners with some guidance on user-generated content and hotel characteristics.

Keywords: eWOM, User-generated Content, TripAdvisor, Hotel Management, Online Reputation Management.

JEL Classification: Z32

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the Internet has provided extensive opportunities for tourists to share their shopping experiences and feelings with others. Previous research has referred to such online communications between consumers as electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). According to Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh & Gremler, (2004: 39) "Word-of-mouth could be any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, and former customers about a product or a company via the Internet". Currently, tourists may be exposed to eWOM information

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virtually everywhere on the Internet, such as blogs, portal websites, review websites, social media, emails, professional eWOM forums, and so on (Huete-Alcocer, 2017). Moreover, previous research (Okazaki, Andreu & Campo, 2016) suggests that prospective tourists use eWOM information (i.e., user-generated online reviews) to make judgments about products and services. Rensink (2013) find that eWOM information can have a positive impact on consumer perception of product value and their likelihood of recommending the product. In the same vein, Okazaki et al. (2016) findings show that eWOM information plays a significant role in the growth of new products in the marketplace, and other authors (Zhang, Ye, Law & Li, 2010; Yoo, Sanders & Moon, 2013) further observe that eWOM information had a stronger effect on consumer attitudes compared to other types of information, such as professional editors' recommendations.

Previous studies on user-generated content (UGC) highlight the impact of product reviews on online purchasing (Fu, Zhang, Xie, Xiao & Che, 2011; Bahtar, 2016) and on tourist destination choice (Buzulukova, Sheresheva, Berezka & Andreev, 2018). Moreover, these studies analyzed the influence of UGC on consumer's online product purchase intention (Bahtar, 2016), the effect of hotel size on hotel operational performance (Ko, Tsai & Chen, 2013), the impact of online reviews on hotel booking intentions, and perception of trust (Sparks & Browning, 2011), or the reasons why travelers trust (Filieri, Alguezaui & McLeay, 2015). However, more research on the use of TripAdvisor and how to measure its results is needed (Garrido-Moreno & Lockett, 2016; Perez-Aranda, Anaya-Sanchez & Ruizalba, 2017).

Hence, this research contributes to the literature by analyzing the correlation between hoteliers' review site use intensity, and five critical variables: commitment, competence, hotel size (number of beds), hotel category, and type of ownership in a sample of lodging establishments in Morocco.

This paper consists of three parts. The first part is an overview of the existing literature to provide an understanding of user-generated content and eWOM metrics, then the methodology is described and the main results of the empirical study are presented. Finally, this paper ends with a conclusion and discussion where the authors provide some valuable contribution to practical use and future research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 ElectronicWord-of-mouth (eWOM)

Before Web 2.0 technologies appeared, Web 1.0 was the first stage of the World Wide Web (the web). At this stage, the web was not very interactive and was used mainly to push out information to comparatively passive readers, the concept of 'ownership' of websites was strong, and the owners were responsible for the content. It was mostly used for reading, so users who accessed this kind of websites did not participate or engage in content creation (Huete-Alcocer, 2017). Since 2004, with the arrival of social and collaborative software applications (e.g., Facebook and LinkedIn...etc.), things have changed. These applications have provided opportunities for users to express their opinions and knowledge (Schuckert, Liu & Law, 2015). Internet development has given consumers the opportunity to increase their search options and to disseminate information, allowing them to post their own reviews and experiences on products and services purchased (Bahtar, 2016). This development has changed the way consumers communicate and has overcome some limitations of traditional word of mouth (Moliner-Velázquez, Fuentes-Blasco & Gil-Saura, 2019). Users can share their opinions about products or brands through forums, chats, opinion pages, blogs, social networks, or any other web application (Cheung & Thadani, 2012). These contents are

generally published on UGC (user-generated content) websites, term used to describe any form of content such as video, blogs, discussion forum posts, digital images, audio files, and other forms of media that were created by consumers or end-users of an online system or service and is publicly available to others consumers and end-users (Lugmayr & Dal Zotto, 2015). However, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) and user-generated content (UGC) might be related and interdependent concepts since “UGC requires eWOM to get awareness and influence; eWOM requires UGC as object of dissemination” (Burmam, 2010: 83).

Marketing literature refers to electronic word-of-mouth as all the user’s recommendations of a product or a company, including the relevant purchase information made on the internet (White, 2017). Thus, online valuations are the main source of communication of eWOM and have been studied in previous research (Kumar, 2013; Filieri et al., 2015). In terms of user behavior, it can be distinguished between active and passive consumers. Active users share their opinions with other consumers, publishing their ratings on various forums or websites. By contrast, passive users are mainly engaged in information search, allocating most of the time reading comments and experiences shared by other consumers in the network (Chiu, Wang, Shih & Fan, 2011; Pai, Chu, Wang & Chen, 2013). Therefore, electronic word-of-mouth could be “any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual or former customers about a product or company, that is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the internet” (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004: 39).

In terms of tourism, electronic word-of-mouth could be measured as noncommercial, authentic, and experiential detailed information about destinations and operators that are generally considered to be more reliable because they are not managed by the company. Therefore, travelers check feedbacks and read about the experiences of other people before choosing a destination, a hotel, etc., and then share their experience during the trip (Sparks & Browning, 2011; Yoo et al., 2013).

2.2 The role of user-generated content in leisure travel planning

In the travel and tourism industry, the Internet has changed market structures, practices, communication, and distribution channels (Yoo et al., 2013), making it critical for the industry to be aware that tourists are increasingly influenced by travel sites (Filieri et al., 2015).

User-generated content (UGC) encompasses of all the data, information, or media produced by the general public (rather than by professionals) on the Internet (McKenzie et al., 2012; Taecharungroj, 2019). In all UGC activities, the user has the key role being not only the consumer but also content contributor, simultaneously producer and consumer of the content (Yoo et al., 2013). Many travelers like to share their travel experiences and recommendations with others on the Internet (Okazaki et al., 2016) being the web increasingly the primary source of information for planning a trip. According to Tanford and Montgomery (2015) and Tsiakali (2018) the data generated by online consumers play an increasing pivotal role in travel decision-making processes. Kumar (2013) points out that online travel reviews written by tourists and posted in virtual communities are being used more frequently to communicate and share travel-related information

It is quite a while since eWOM was well thought out as essential in supporting travel decision making. Likewise, in hotels, restaurants, and travel destinations (Buzulukova et al., 2018), user-generated content sites provide large amounts of data on customer searches. Thus, prospective travelers rely on eWOM to support the decision-making process (Luo, Luo, Xu, Warkentin & Sia, 2015). Virtual communities like TripAdvisor, booking.com, hotels.com, Expedia... etc., are excellent platforms for interacting and participating for travelers and tourism organizations (Filieri et al., 2015).

Many researchers have revealed that products and services discussed on the Internet have more influence on consumers than those marketed traditionally (Pai et al., 2013). A lot of persons can access easily to the internet, mostly looking at what others comment about services, products, and companies. Basically, these comments become a reference for a potential customer (Moliner-Velázquez et al., 2019; Taecharungroj, 2019). Thailand, namely, Khaosan Road and Yaowarat (Bangkok's Chinatown).

2.3 Electronic word of mouth in the hospitality industry

Despite the fundamental technological structure of hotels, previous studies on the role of technologies in hotel management, show that managers fail to realize the importance of ICTs in the development of strategies (Law & Jogaratnam, 2005).

Internet provides the hospitality industry participation and interaction tools with consumers and customers. Potential customers access to websites or tourist blogs that allow them to review and evaluate the popular hotels or learn through the experience of other users, for instance, characteristics of the service or tourist destination in order to make a rational decision (Verma, Stock & McCarthy, 2012; Filieri et al., 2015; Zhang, Takanashi, Gemba & Ishida, 2015; Amorim & Rodrigues, 2019). Thus, in the hotel sector, opinions of virtual users provide consumers with greater knowledge about the characteristics of a specific offer. For example, consumer ratings have a strong impact on hotel booking intention. An establishment that gets positive reviews has twice the possibility of being booked than those with negative reviews (Verma, Stock & McCarthy, 2012).

Actually hotels have a very plausible alternative communication, less expensive than advertising, in the implementation of data collection information systems which allow to obtain information about their customers and support the company's decision-making process (Lee, Shi, Cheung, Lim & Sia, 2011; Melián-González, Bulchand-Gidumal & González López-Valcárcel, 2013; Yoo et al., 2013). Moreover, the higher the presence of the hotel on the internet and social networks, the higher the intention of its customers to generate comments on the network that can be seen by a large number of users (Rensink, 2013).

Notably, user-generated websites offer hotels the opportunity to get ideas for improving, information that would be otherwise difficult to access (Burmam, 2010). For instance the improvement of the physical environment of the hotel and others elements that create satisfaction and loyalty (Yoo et al., 2013), However, the use of these ideas must consider that the sender and the receiver of WOM are not known, which means that the latter must rely on the honesty of the first. The success of e-WOM as recommendation system depends upon trust; in fact, both businesses and individuals can manipulate the discussion forums with positive reviews on a product under the assumption that consumers are more likely to buy when a product receives more positive reviews. There are many cases of companies that manipulate or have manipulated strategically online reviews to influence consumers purchase decisions (Dellarocas, 2006; Lee et al., 2011). This type of communication is called "exogenous WOM" (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2018: 319), which focuses on proactive actions of companies that encourage consumers to spread information about their online products. Van der Lans, van Bruggen, Eliashberg and Wierenga (2010) state that hotel managers can build trust among customers through individualized actions, in this sense, e-WOM can be a tool that operates in both directions, as a confidence builder and as a precursor of positive results, satisfaction, and loyalty.

E-WOM would not be used so randomly but as a key to the marketing manager that can be controlled and directed towards desired results. In fact, it is accepted that the widespread use of e-WOM and ORs (online reviews) about the hotel may be more an opportunity

than a threat to the establishment management (Litvin, Goldsmith & Pan, 2008; Garrido-Moreno & Lockett, 2016). Furthermore, it is an important source of information for the development of new concepts, improving existing products, or creating new product lines. Thus, through e-WOM, hotels can enhance the level of customer satisfaction to meet the requirements; get new ideas to develop products, and generating an increase in sales. This would improve their financial short and long term (customer loyalty) situation (Yoo et al., 2013).

2.4 User-generated review sites (TripAdvisor)

The general theoretical framework of this study is based on TripAdvisor network use intensity (Guesalaga, 2016; Perez-Aranda et al., 2017). With the growing influence of consumer-generated hotel review sites like TripAdvisor, hoteliers are undoubtedly going to see a change in their revenue (Ko et al., 2013). TripAdvisor as one of the user-generated travel review website where people can share their experience with written details, pictures, and videos about a hotel has grown over the last eleven years to become a household name (TripAdvisor, 2016).

User-generated travel websites are considered as electronic word of mouth and one of the most influential sources of travel information (Luo et al., 2015; Bahtar, 2016). Potential travelers often rely on advice from friends, family, and other groups of individuals, especially when planning to travel to a destination not previously visited (Burmam, 2010). The UGC has an essential role in travel decision-making (Cai, Feng & Breiter, 2004; Kumar, 2013) with different platforms providing tourists with information on alternatives —e.g. TripAdvisor.com, IgoUgo.com, Virtualtourist.com, Trekshare.com and LonelyPlanet.com (Litvin et al., 2008).

To achieve the objectives of this study, we selected hotels on the social media platform TripAdvisor. Based on previous studies (Perez-Aranda et al., 2017), the following items were included in the questionnaire: review site use intensity (Garrido-Moreno & Lockett, 2016; Guesalaga, 2016), commitment and competence, factors collected from the interactional theory according to Guesalaga's methodology (Guesalaga, 2016), and ownership structure, category, and size from Garrido-Moreno and Lockett, 2016. Moreover, the objective of this study is to examine the relationship between use, competence, and commitment and the characteristics of the organization (category, hotel size, and type of ownership).

3. METHODOLOGY

For this study, correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between hoteliers' review site use intensity on TripAdvisor and hotel characteristics. For data source collection, we selected hotels present in the user-generated review site TripAdvisor, one of the widely used UGC platforms for accessing information (Xiang, Du, Ma & Fan, 2017). According to Xiang et al. (2017), the platform has been extensively used for tourism studies, especially in mixed methods research and content analysis, to examine issues related to the hotel industry, eWOM, readability, reviewer characteristics, rating, and so on (Chiu et al., 2011; Sparks, So & Bradley, 2016; Rubio Gil, Jiménez Barandalla & Mercado Idoeta, 2017).

3.1 Study population and sample

The population of this study was the lodging industry in Morocco listed under TripAdvisor's "selected for you". We collected data from a directory of 352 Moroccan hotels listed on TripAdvisor in May 2016, followed by data from key-informants, consisting of hotel managers

and review sites managers. The information regarding this target population was collected using systematic random sampling, with the first element chosen at random from said population and other elements selected at regular intervals (i.e. systematizing item selection using a lift coefficient). In this case, the assumed margin of error was 5%, so we sampled 61 participants, hence $352/61=5.7$ (lift coefficient). As we work with a finite population the study has estimated a margin of error of 4.8%. After excluding incomplete questionnaires, the sample size was 48 hotels. The fieldwork data was collected in Morocco. One of the world's most sought-after tourist destinations, over 12.3 million tourists received in 2018 (Bazza, 2018). Table 1 shows the technical specifications of the fieldwork conducted.

Table 1. Collection Information

Population	Moroccan hotels in TripAdvisor
Sampling element	Key-informant
Sample size design	61
Sample seize	48
Sampling Method	Random sampling
Sampling fieldwork	March to May 2016
Sampling technic	Telephone interview
Margin of error	5%

Source: Own Elaboration

3.2 Variables and dimensions

To investigate the relationship between hoteliers' review site use intensity on TripAdvisor and hotel characteristics, all independents variables were identified. Table 2 shows the main features of the scale and sources.

Table 2. Variables and Dimensions

Variables and Dimensions	Items number	Authors
Hotel category	1	Garrido-Moreno & Lockett, 2016; Haro del Rosario et al., 2013; Orfila-Sintesetal., 2005
Hotel size (number of beds)	1	Garrido-Moreno & Lockett, 2016; Haro del Rosario et al., 2013; Orfila-Sintesetal., 2005
Hotel size (number of employees)	1	Garrido-Moreno & Lockett, 2016; Haro del Rosario et al., 2013; Orfila-Sintesetal., 2005
Ownership structure	1	Garrido-Moreno & Lockett, 2016; Haro del Rosario et al., 2013; Orfila-Sintesetal., 2005
Use intensity	1	Guesalaga, 2016; Hameed et al., 2012
Competence	4	Guesalaga, 2016; Hameed et al., 2012
Commitment	3	Guesalaga, 2016; Hameed et al., 2012

Source: Own Elaboration

In social research, questionnaire surveys are considered one of the most important methods of data collection from a sample of respondents (Levine & Hogg, 2010). To conduct this study, a questionnaire comprising 12 questions was developed, including information about the sample characteristics: hotel category, size by number of beds, size by number of employees, ownership structure, use of review sites, competence, and commitment to the

review platforms (see Table 3). The final questionnaire, obtained after being pre-tested, is shown in Appendix 1 (at the end of paper).

4. RESULTS

4.1 Descriptive results

All data analyses were run in SPSS (version 21.0). Before formal analysis, data were screened for accuracy of data entry, normality of distribution, and outliers. The first part of the questionnaire contains general descriptive data for the research that provides some valuable information about the sample. Table 3 shows descriptive statistics for the sample studied.

Table 3. Descriptive Results

Variables	%
Category	
5-star and luxury hotel	4.2%
4-star hotels	18.8%
3-star hotels	43.8%
Other (1-and-2 star hotels, rural hotels, villas, apartments, etc.)	33.3%
Size (number of beds)	
Familiar (<100 beds)	58.3%
Small (101-150 beds)	20.8%
Medium (151-300 beds)	18.8%
Large (>300 beds)	2.1%
Size (number of employees)	
Less than 10 employees	52.1%
From 11 to 50 employees	39.6%
More than 50 employees	8.3%
Ownership structure	
Independent hotels	54.2%
Part of an association of independent hotels	25.0%
Part of a hotel chain	20.8%

Source: Own Elaboration

The variables competence and commitment, with four and three items respectively, were re-codified into one-item variables to simplify research results. Thus, items related to the use of review platforms for sales management, the competence of using review platforms, and commitment to the review platforms, are being organized into three categories: low, medium, or high.

4.2 Correlation analysis

In order to reach the objective of this research, a correlation analysis was conducted. Considering that the types of variables employed are ordinal, the coefficients Kendall's Tau-B and Spearman's Rho were used. Both statistics are nonparametric correlation coefficients which measure the dependence between two categorical variables. Their value can vary between -1 and 1: a value of 1 indicates a perfect positive linear relationship; a value of -1 indicates perfect negative linear relationship; while a value of 0 indicates no linear relationship. Hence, both variables are correlated when the probability of the associated t-statistic is lower than 0.05. For the variable ownership structure, as it is a nominal variable, a chi-square analysis was conducted for studying the association with use intensity, competence, and commitment. Table 5 shows the statistical values of Kendall's Tau-B, Spearman's Rho, and Pearson's chi-square, including their significances.

Table 4. Correlation Analysis

Variables	Kendall's Tau-b coefficient	Sig.	Spearman's Rho coefficient	Sig.	Variables
Category-Use	0.660	0.000	0.769	0.000	accepted
Size (number of beds)-Use	0.337	0.006	0.403	0.005	accepted
Size (number of employees)-Use	0.305	0.014	0.362	0.012	accepted
Category-Competence	0.501	0.000	0.605	0.000	accepted
Size (number of beds)-Competence	0.231	0.048	0.294	0.043	accepted
Size (number of employees)-Competence	0.290	0.015	0.349	.015	accepted
Category-Commitment	0.586	0.000	0.692	0.000	accepted
Size (number of beds)-Commitment	0.271	0.022	0.343	0.017	accepted
Size (number of employees)-Commitment	0.294	0.015	0.353	0.014	accepted
Variables	Pearson's Chi-square		Sig		Variables
Ownership structure-Use	25.300		0.001		accepted
Ownership structure-Competence	30.200		0.049		accepted
Ownership structure-Commitment	29.333		0.022		accepted

Source: Own Elaboration

The results from this analysis confirm our expectations regarding the relationship between the characteristics of the hotels (i.e. category, size measured by number of beds and number of employees, and ownership structure) are correlated/associated with the use of review platforms.

Results shows that there is a strong correlation between hotel category and review site use intensity from hoteliers perception with ($r=0.769$) spearman's correlation coefficient, in others words hotels with a higher category are correlated with higher use of review platforms, while there is a moderate positive relationship between hoteliers' use intensity and the two variables number of beds and employees.

Regarding competence, there is a moderate positive correlation between competence and the studied variables; hotel category ($r=0.605$), and employees ($r=0.349$), the same goes respectively for commitment with a positive medium correlation coefficients, hotel category ($r=0.692$), number of beds ($r=0.343$), and employees ($r=0.353$). Both competence and commitment using review sites are higher in hotels with larger size and higher category, and in those which are integrated in hotel associations or chains. Regarding the ownership structure, since the p-value (0.001) is less than the significance level (0.05), hotels which are part of a chain or an association, shows higher use of these platforms than those which act independently.

To sum up, these findings are in line with the previous researches (Perez-Aranda et al., 2017). It can be concluded that hotels with higher category, more beds and employees are related with a higher use of these platforms.

5. CONCLUSION

The aim of this paper was to highlight the importance of user-generated travel website for organizations as well as to test the pilot questionnaire investigation with Moroccan hotel characteristics (size, ownership structure, and category) that could be related to the use of valuation platforms. It contributes to the existing literature by identifying and determining

the magnitude of the different factors in the hospitality industry and by making valuable suggestions on how the pilot questionnaire should be constructed and can be improved to support future studies.

5.1 Theoretical implications

User-generated travel websites and the possibilities of Web 2.0 have a huge impact on eWOM communication between consumers. Today's potential customers access to these UGC platforms or tourist blogs allows people to review and rate popular hotels or learn through the experience of other users (Rubio Gil et al., 2017). eWOM involves positive or negative statements made by consumers and experts about a product or service, providing consumers with indirect experience. In online shopping, the consumer cannot use all of their senses (e.g. smelling, touching, trying, testing) (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004), therefore, eWOM helps Internet consumers to make buying decisions through online reviews. The literature review shows that there are several factors of online reviews that might predict the use of review sites (Guesalaga, 2016; Perez-Aranda et al., 2017). Based on this, three factors have been tested with a sample of the Moroccan hospitality industry: competence, commitment, and the characteristics of the organization (category, hotel size, and type of ownership). While analyzing this information, we found that the organization's characteristics regarding the suggested factors commitment, and competence are related with review site use as perceived by hoteliers. Thus, all study variables—size (number of beds and number of employees), ownership structure, commitment, and competence—are related to the use intensity of review sites. Our findings are consistent with the suggested framework by Perez-Aranda et al. (2017). The factor that has the highest influence is competence. According to hoteliers' perception, Hotels with a higher category, larger number of beds and employees make a higher use of these platforms. Regarding the ownership structure, hotels which are part of a chain or an association shows a higher use of these platforms than those which act independently. Similarly, commitment and competence of hotels using these user-generated travel websites are higher in hotels with larger size and higher category, and in those which are integrated in hotel associations or chains. In addition, this study is based on interactional psychology and research on human behavior in organizations (Terborg, 1981), adding new insights to the tourism literature.

5.2 Practical implications

This research has also important practical implications for user-generated travel communities and hospitality industry adopting eWOM marketing strategies. The findings of this study could guide the implementation of precise eWOM marketing strategies that satisfy different members' information requirements. These findings demonstrated that there is a positive relationship between hoteliers' review site use intensity and lodging industry characteristics from Moroccan hoteliers' perception. Therefore, in this study, it is suggested that hoteliers and related companies should take into account hoteliers' perception and own characteristics when defining its review site usage politics. This work also provides relevant data for specialists in this field regarding the factors influencing the use intensity of user-generated travel websites, particularly TripAdvisor.

5.3 Limitations and future research

Research of this nature will always have limitations, and this study is no exception. Due to the accessibility, availability, and cost, it was not feasible to collect and analyze the information pertaining to the entire population. Future researchers may consider conducting a similar study using additional quantitative data as the main method and combining qualitative

data (customer reviews, customer engagement, negative eWOM etc.) to elicit more detailed information than merely depending on hoteliers and their perceptions of a specific hotel market. Moreover, using more than one travel-related website (e.g., TripAdvisor, Booking, Trivago...) may also be a useful to reveal additional factors that vary in ratings within a valid period. Lastly, this study contributes to an emerging understanding of the predictors of hoteliers' review site use intensity, especially for lodging properties in the Moroccan markets. Since this study only reviewed lodging properties listed on "selected for you" TripAdvisor feature, which may cause biased results based on this specific national sample. For example, the level of development of a country may bias the causes of rating differences. Therefore, more research is needed to understand the drivers of review sites use by hotels.

To sum up, the research on hoteliers' review site use intensity need more attention to overcome some of the limitations mentioned. It is recommended that future research conduct a larger scale survey with random sample of participants to achieve better generalizability. Moreover, other studies may consider analyzing more hotels characteristics that might have an impact on user-generated content engagement. Furthermore, it would be interesting to examine the ways in which hoteliers can manage user-generated travel websites more efficiently and effectively.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper is financed by National Funds provided by FCT- Foundation for Science and Technology through project UID/SOC/04020/2019.

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Appendix 1

Hotel characteristics	X0.1 Hotel category	3 stars; 4 stars; 5 stars; luxury hotel; others
	X0.2 Number of beds	Familiar (>100 beds); Small (101-150 beds); Medium (151-300 beds); Large (>300 beds)
	X0.3 Number of employees	Small (<10 employees); Medium (11-50 employees); Large (>50 employees)
	X0.4 Ownership structure	Independent; member of an association of independent hotels; member of a hotel's chain; hotel's franchise
Use intensity	X0.5 Choose the number that best describes the intensity of your company's TripAdvisor usage in the sales organization. (1 = min. use intensity to 10 = max. use intensity).	10-item Likert scale
Competence	X0.6 My organization makes productive use of social media. X0.7 Our sales organization is innovative and forward-thinking when it comes to adopting productivity-enhancing technology. X0.8 My organization's senior leadership is knowledgeable about social media. X0.9 My organization's leadership actively uses social media.	10-item Likert scale/each question (1 = strongly disagree; 10 = strongly agree).
Commitment	X0.10 My organization has communicated a social media usage policy to me. X0.11 My (total) organization has a social media strategy. X0.12 I have received enough training from my organization on using social media.	10-item Likert scale/each question (1 = strongly disagree; 10 = strongly agree).