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AN ASSESSMENT OF VIRAL MARKETING EFFECT ON THE SELECTION OF TRAVEL DESTINATION BY TRAVELLERS

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ABSTRACT

The internet applications of viral marketing (Word-Of-Mouth marketing) is becoming increasingly popular among online community. In tourism industry, the owners of the tourist destinations, travel agents, rating organizations, and travel sites…etc. are extremely concern of the "reviews" that they are getting from the travellers. Conversely the travellers also pay much attention than ever in writing and viewing the reviews beforehand they plan their travel. Hence, the effect of viral marketing places a significant role in the selection of tourist destination by contemporary travellers. Hence, the main focus of this study is to assess the effect of online viral marketing on the travellers' decision to select a tourist destination from travellers' perspective. The study utilizes a quantitative approach. An online survey was conducted among the group of travellers from different countries. The respondents were selected based on convenient sampling method. A self-administrated instrument of 35 items was used with 0.806 reliability score. The results of correlation analysis indicated a strong positive relationship between travellers' decision and the viral marketing attributes of usefulness of the content, brand recalling ability, and questioning/answering option. The relationship proven to be positive yet moderate for the attributes such as information credibility, brand recognition ability, frequency, relevance of information and rewards associated with viral marketing efforts. A model for viral marketing is proposed with the aim of aiding the predictive ability of viral marketing attempts. Implications suggest developing viral marketing campaigns giving high priority for commanding attributes to best reap the investments over such campaigns.

Keywords: Viral marketing, Online WOM marketing, Travellers' choice of travel destinations