

A CASE STUDY ON MAKE MY TRIP – A LEADING ONLINE TRAVEL PORTAL

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ABSTRACT

Online Travel Portals (OTP) have caught the imagination of consumers who can buy consumer goods directly by making online payment or through cash of Delivery (COD) basis, with buy back offer at competitive rates. Tourism industry has also undergone changes due to Information technology which has paved way for travel automation since mid-1990. This has led to creation of website/webpage by Airlines that provide competitive rates and offers to Passengers directly. Many OTP such as Make My Trip (MMT) Yatra.com, Clear My Trip, Travelocity, Expedia to name a few OTP's are doing excellent online travel business. These OTP's provide plenty of travel options under one website with plethora of hot deals and rebates dealing with new business opportunities in e-commerce or e-tail marketing with spot payment. OTPs and transactions are continuously increasing despite tight economic situation and limitations in executing e-commerce business. Earlier Web services were used for information gathering, but now it is used for direct purchase of travel services from suppliers without middlemen. Under these circumstances this paper is a case study on MMT a leading OTP about its acceptance and impact of being a leading OTP in travel business.

Key words: OTP, e-commerce, retail sector, internet, tourism services.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism industry boosts the economy worldwide and therefore it is rightly called as smokeless industry. Tourism is one of the largest sectors that generate employment, infrastructure, earns foreign exchange and contributes to national economy and it's GDP. Tourism industry has witnessed a steady growth and demand in last century. Tourism industry deals with travel booking and services, transportation services, hotel accommodations, dining with variety of cuisines, tour packages, facilitation of travel documentation, tour escorts, services of local English speaking guides, and all other travel allied services.

The major factors that assist in tourism development are

1. State-wise involvement for coordination and cooperation
2. Strategic planning with application of Technology
3. Advertising with innovative ideas
4. Consumer awareness programs

The above mentioned are only a part of the many other factors involved. Over the decades tourism has experience continues growth with deep diversification to become one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world. Tourism is both cause and consequence of economic development by generating good employment and revenue to national GDP. Tourism has a huge potential with interdisciplinary

approach leading to plenty of linkages. These dynamics have termed tourism as means to into a key river for socio-economic progress. The contribution of tourism to economic wellbeing depends on quality and revenues it has to offer. UNWTO helps tourism industry to promote tourism, in a sustainable manner both in national and international markets. It also highlights achievable benefits from sustainable tourism in developing countries.

TRAVEL AGENCY

Travel agents are middle men who link the services of principal suppliers and ultimate consumer for a commission. They are established throughout the world, under different brand and company names. Products and services offered by this industry increases day by day. They are offering the services such as Flight ticketing, hotel booking, local and International holiday packages, four wheeler rentals, tourist guides, railway ticketing, bus reservations, visa application preparation, etc. Travel Automation has promoted online sales instead of traditional travel agency sales resulting in the popularisation of online travel portals.

ONLINE TRAVEL PORTALS

Online travel portals (OTP) were launched to sell Airline's unsold inventory but now they attract worldwide bookings through effective CRS (Computerised Reservation System) at competitive prices. These online travel portals enable customers to compare and select from the wide range of travel options. It also offers a versatile experience to its consumers with trusted reviews and accurate local information, thereby facilitates consumers to finalise its travel plan.

IMPACT OF INTERNET IN THE TRAVEL AND TOURISM INDUSTRY

The invention of internet facilities has revolutionised tourism industry leading to travel automation towards the end of 20th century with the help of Computerised Reservation System (CRS) executed through Global Distribution System (GDS). Travel automation eliminated hand written manual air tickets with flight coupons for each sector and introduced E-ticket from April 2008. Introduction of E-ticket with online booking through CRS paved way for Online Travel Portals such as Make My Trip, Yatra, Travelocity, etc. This has resulted in growth of ecommerce in retail tourism from the year 2008 onwards. The evolution of internet in the travel and tourism industry has a great level of changes, some of these changes are positive whereas some others are negative. Internet has totally changed the working style of travel agents and tour operators in their business dealings and customer service. Many Online Travel Portals are flourishing in travel business due to availability of online payment modes like credit card payments or through internet banking due to the technology driven digital marketing push given by Indian Government. The usage of mobile technology with the combination of internet also has a very significant effect on the industry, as people can now view and choose travel and tourism options by surfing the internet on their phone itself, also the phones are designed in such a way that they allow the user to make bookings for hotels, also they can book tour packages and arrange travel related services online. Thus, with the help of increased technology the travel and tourism industry has developed several strategies to provide a one stop solution for all travel related services with the help of internet and information technology.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. **Angelo Rossini** says for travel agents, the rise of digital world (ie. Computer and handy device that support internet and online portals) has severely disrupted the traditional travel industry. Rossini says Low cost carriers and online travel portals have benefitted immensely due to travel automation by changing the way travellers plan and book their holidays in 21st century. Tour operators are also embracing OTP and mobile channels to sustain in business.

2. **Mr. Graham Cook** Group Head of Digital Operations Thomas Cook says- As part of our Omni-channel strategy, Thomas Cook has seen the need to make sure that their customers can be served in a

seamless way through whatever channel they wish – online through mobile, tablet, desktop or offline in a store or over the phone.

3. James McClure, Country Manager UK & Ireland at Airbnb says “There is a worldwide impact due to Digital revolution. In Airbnb’s case tradition is in main stream due to technology. The home stay concept is not new to tourism industry but technology has accelerated this concept with easy accessibility in the global market.

4.Mr. & Mrs. Smith’s Lohan says We pivoted from a hotel guidebook to become an online travel agent just as the internet started to become a place people could finally trust with their credit cards. She further states that business pattern has changed due to internet and promotes online bookings, while few customers still prefer online chat or services of call centre officials in handling online services

5.Croix Says Digital technology has changed the way we connect with guests, creating a 24/7 relationship in and out of stay, says Stephan Croix, vice-president of marketing at Starwood Hotels and Resorts. It is also transforming every phase of hospitality – from finding a hotel, to checking in, to unlocking your door and personalizing your stay. As travel is inherently mobile, travellers expect to use their mobile devices to enrich their travel experiences.

6.Mr.Werthner H., Ricci F, says E-Commerce in travel and tourism industries are continuously increasing despite tough economic problems. As per them, this industry is adopting application of B2B (business to business) and B2C (business to consumer). This industry has changed the ways of do business for traditional ways to modern way, i.e. e-commerce via web and other online transaction software where as other industries are still adopting the traditional way. Web is changing the behaviour of consumers are well as they are becoming less loyal, take less time for choosing and consuming the tourism products.

7.Kim (2004) stated that E- Commerce is huge lap in travel and tourism industry moving from traditional way to technological way and there are various barriers for travel and tourism companies to adapt E-commerce in their business.

8.Anshuman Bapna (chief product officer Make My Trip) informed NDTV as Make My Trip is one of the oldest and most well-known e-commerce companies in India. Listed on the Nasdaq, MMT can’t really be called a start-up anymore. It’s been a year, and MakeMyTrip has been open to a lot of experimentation, within limits.”

9.Mr.Rajesh Magow CEO and Co-Founder, India Make My trip told Business standard as Large part of our growth is going to come from people who are booking through offline channels such as travel agents or after reaching the destinations. Today it lot more convenient to book over phone. We are confident that online penetration in hotel bookings will improve from 20percent to 40-50 percent in next three or four years”.

SCOPE & NEED OF STUDY

The Scope of the study is confined to Bangalore Urban area. OTP gains a lot of income and they are one of the biggest income generators for their company. Therefore, it is important to make sure that these portals are regularly updated and Current information is available to regular users and target customers. This study concentrates on the major features of Makemytrip.com website details, design and contents by giving a detail review about the page and its user friendly features.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study are as follows-

1. To understand the usefulness and User friendly features of an OTP to the general public.
2. To identify the benefits and limitations of OTP in travel and tourism industry.
3. OTP’s content and its usefulness to the general public/target market.
4. The major challenges faced by the tourism industry in adopting OTP

METHODOLOGY

The research is quantitative in nature, and adopts descriptive and content analysis method. The method of data collection consisted of Primary data and secondary data. Primary data is collected through structured questionnaire. Secondary data is collected by referring various books, journal and online sources. Primary data was collected across the area of study by adopting simple random sampling method and sample size was 126. Questionnaire was prepared by using google forms and were sent to various contacts who are regularly using OTP facilities and the same questionnaire were used for general public also to ascertain their knowledge regarding OTP. The purpose of this study is to ascertain if OTP contents are user friendly and to check if the services of OTP are meeting the expectations of its customers.

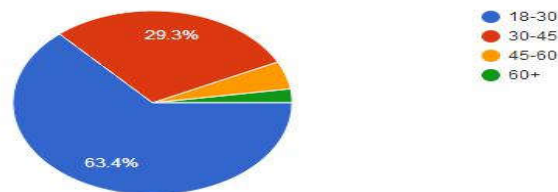
LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

The study is limited to the city of Bangalore and its OTP users, thus the information gathered cannot be used for other states or cities in India. The responses gained from the questionnaires cannot be generalized.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

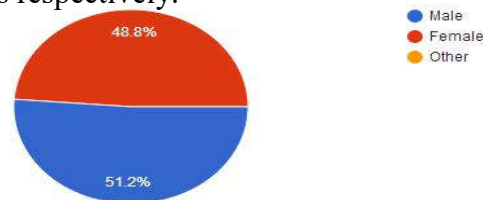
We deal with the analysis and interpretation of the data. The study includes graphical representations and interpretation of data that were obtained from the survey. The survey was based on the general public knowledge and their preference for online travel portals".

1) Age



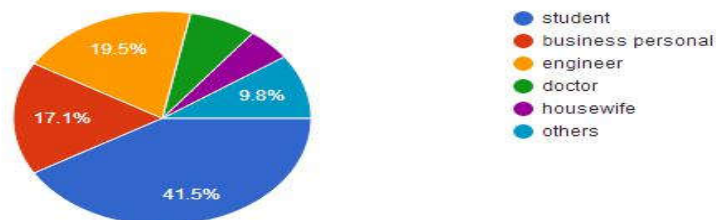
It was found from the above graph that 63.4 % of respondents belong to age group of between 18-30, 29.3 % of respondents belongs to age group of between 30-45. 5.5% and 1.8% belongs to age group of 45-60 and 60 plus respectively.

2) Gender



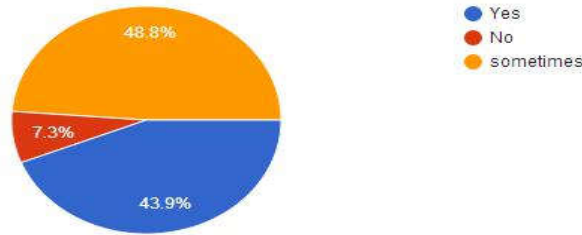
The diagram states that 51.2% of the respondents are male, 48.8% are female.

3) Occupation



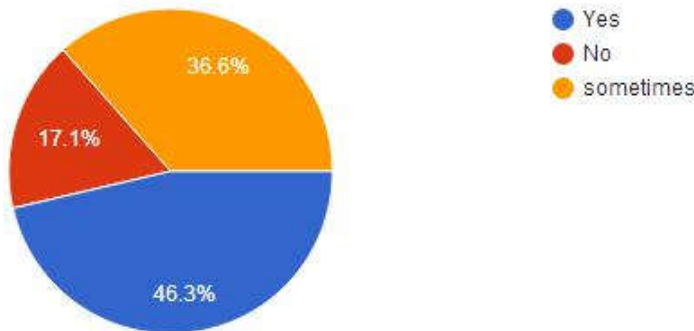
The above graph states that 41.5% are students, 17.1% are business personal, 19.5% are engineers, 8.5% are doctors, 3.6% and 9.8% of the respondents belongs to housewife and employees respectively.

4) Usage of travel portals/websites-



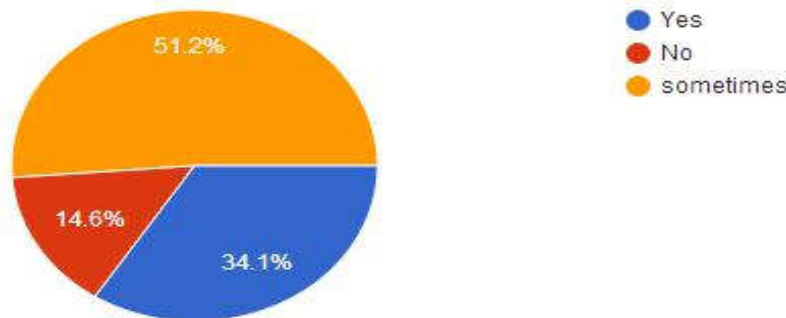
The survey report was taken from 126 people out of which 43.9% use travel portals regularly, 48.8% use it sometimes whereas 7.3% of the respondents don't use online travel portals. The reason for this 7.3% may be because lack of awareness, uncomfortable to use online services and they me feel the process unimpressive or complicated

5) Usefulness and Difficulty of using travel Websites:-



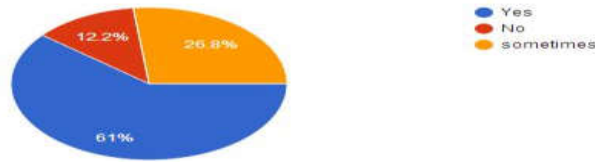
The survey report was taken from 126 people. 46.3% were regular users of OTP, 36.6% were occasional/sometime users and 17.1% were not opting for OTP services. The reasons for not opting for travel portal are lack of awareness, lack of trust in online process, unable to follow the riders that are applicable on online offers and finding the process complicated.

6) Preference of online travel portal over travel agency



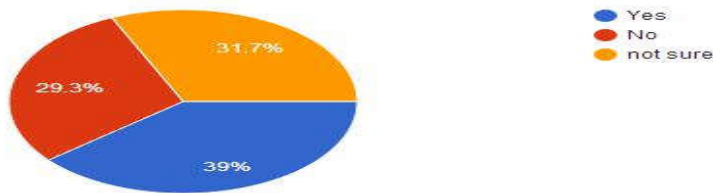
34.1% of the respondents choose OTP over a travel agency, 14.6% responders will opt for the travel agent and the remaining 51.2% will be alternatively using both OTP and travel agent.

7) Satisfied with the services of online travel portal



Customer satisfaction is the key to business success in both online and offline business. 61% of respondents were satisfied with the services provided by the travel websites, 26.8% are partially satisfied and the other 12.2% are not satisfied with the services provided by the travel portals.

8) Travel portals are useful for travellers of all age group and category

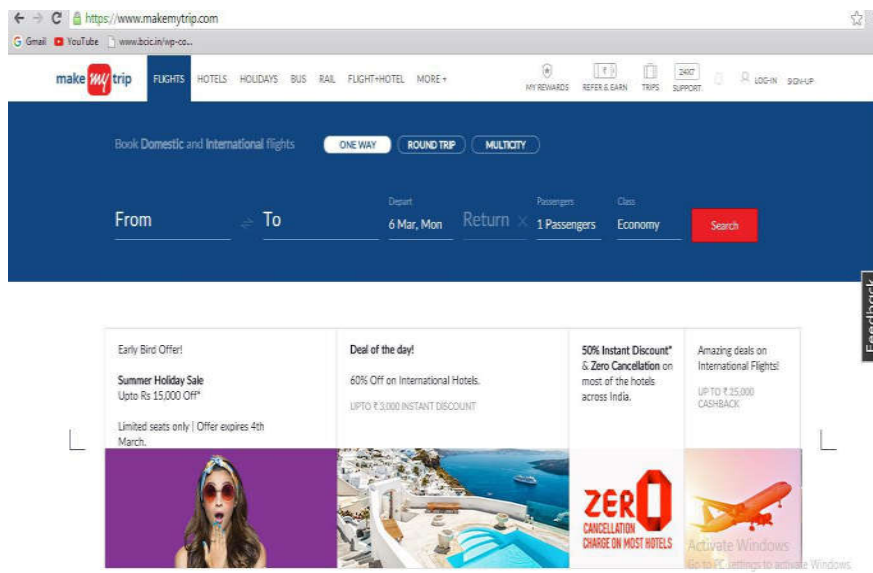


Out of a sample size of 126 respondents, 39% of respondents agreed that travel portals are useful for travellers of all age group whereas 31.7 % were not sure and 29.3 of respondents did not agree that travel portals are useful for travellers of all age group.

STUDY ON MAKE MY TRIP ONLINE PORTAL

Online travel portals are easy to access and use, as they have been formulated based on „customer friendly features“, but there are situations where some of the older generation people who are not familiar with the usage of computer or internet may not find it easy to use and this is where the role of the travel agent becomes important.

MAKE MY TRIP HOME PAGE-



Components of the page-

- They provide bookings for flight, hotels, holidays, buses, rail, flight & hotel.
- Services include one way, round trip and multicity.
- They also provide gift cards, deals.
- Rewards refer to the loyalty programs arranged by the company.
- The option “refer and earn” mentioned on the page is a unique earning facility offered by Make My Trip to its travellers where a MMT user should recommend/invite a friend to download the MMT app, and if that friend signs up then the user can earn Rs600, and if that friend books with MMT then the user will earn Rs 800/-
- The feedback option towards the right, enables the customer to see various reviews and also to give their own review.

We can understand from the above given graphical representations that some of the respondents do not use online web sites due to certain problem's that they may have faced or heard such as

- Payment process
- Refund process
- Misleading information / outdated information / expired offers, etc.
- Prices are highly fluctuating
- Overlapping issues (i.e. seat being taken when you are in the process of payment)
- Some official websites cause the system to get effected with virus.

Keeping in mind all the above factors Make My Trip (MMT) has effectively created a very informative and easy to use website. The website provides details regarding all process and procedures in one click, and provides immediate assistant in case of payment procedure. For example, in the given image we can see that they have an option called “TRIPS” it provides assistance for all booking, payment and refund process, they include

- Printing the booked e-ticket.
- Procedure for cancellation of booked tickets.
- Procedures for Re-scheduling the booked tickets.
- Refund status details
- Procedures to make a payment.

The screenshot shows the 'Manage Your Bookings' page on the MakeMyTrip website. The page is divided into two main sections for user authentication: 'Login to MakeMyTrip' and 'Manage using Booking ID'. The login section includes input fields for 'Email Address' and 'Password', a 'Remember me' checkbox, and a 'Forgot Password?' link. The 'Manage using Booking ID' section includes input fields for 'MakeMyTrip Booking ID/Rail PNR' and 'Mobile Number used for Booking'. Both sections have a corresponding 'Login' or 'Submit' button. The page also features a top navigation bar with icons for various travel services and a footer with contact information and partner logos.

They also have a 24/7 customer service option, this page manages all the bookings related to the trip and provides immediate assistance when contacted.

SUGGESTIONS

MMT has a lot of competitions and it is highly recommendable that they promote their product in a better to a greater target market. From the graphical representation given in the earlier part of the study we can understand that 7.3% of the respondents do not use travel portals, and there chances that these few non-users may influence the usage of the others. Thus, it is important to gain the attention of this crowd, so that even they can understand the usefulness of OTPs.

Measures to be adopted in-order to attract the non-users attentions-

1. Make the refund process less complicated and time saving
2. Replenish the data on the website on regular basis.
3. Arrange regular incentive tours for its employees to improve their work efficiency.
4. Create a more personal touch, by directly meeting the tourist at any point before, between or after the tour. This can also increase the trust level of the OTP user.
5. Acknowledge feedbacks given, and clear the queries immediately.
6. Take videos of customers good feedbacks (which may also include a few good experiences) and include it in the portal, as this will encourage the prospective customers to use the website.

CONCLUSION

The study focuses of the content, usefulness and importance of OTP, with specific reference to makemytrip.com. It is clear that use of OTP is increasing overtime, and soon it will have a platform of its own in the tourism sector. Traditional travel agencies are also providing OTP services to increase their customer base. MMT is one of the first portals in this category and they have been very successful in spite of their disadvantages and short-comings, because they keep working on customer relations and exactly know the preferences of their target market. It is very important to keep in mind that customer satisfaction can be disrupted due to small insignificant issues, thus, a service provider should keep in mind to clear all glitches in the portal, in-order to avoid such situation and provide complete customer satisfaction. Technology oriented applications play a major role in day to day activities of young generation. OTP have a vast area for development with huge opportunity to create a large customer base and expand its

sales and services. The companies will also upgrade their portals at regular intervals with user friendly approach to save time and impress the clients to avail their services.

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