THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON ATTITUDE, LOYALTY, AND RETENTION OF THE CUSTOMER IN TOURISM INDUSTRIES IN MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT
This article has drawn out the understandings of social media marketing impacts on Malaysian tourism with the positive and negative response figured out through different surveys. The surveys imply the positive and negative responses about the tourism industry in Malaysia. This paper represents the topics to cover the impact of the social media marketing process that has affected the customer's loyalty, retention process, and attitude about the tourism industry. The research aims to define the impact of social media on the tourism industry that is evident in Malaysia and it engages with the attribute of customer loyalty, retention process, and customer attitude. The aspect of social media being an indicator of change in the tourism industry in Malaysia. The sample size of the research is 100 respondents. The data collection procedure that is associated with the research is the primary method with the help of questionnaire. The objective set for the research is related to undermine the effect of social media marketing on attitude, loyalty, and retention of the customer in tourism industries in Malaysia. This has helped in gaining a significant understanding of how the research has delved deep into extracting knowledge associated with the area of study. The results administered have gained a better momentum of how the tourism industry has been impacted by the aspect of social media and its attributes. The inclusion of social media in the sector of tourism has gained a positive momentum that has helped in the growth of the industry. This research has worked to define different ideas and understandings of how this outcome has been attained. The aspect of social media marketing has gained substantial momentum towards defining the technological goals that are associated with the sector of tourism. The link generated between social media and tourism has been defined in lieu of retention, attitude and loyalty aspects.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing; Customer Retention; Brand Loyalty; Customer Attitude; Tourism

1. INTRODUCTION

Social media is a platform where people share their content in real-time quickly with efficiency. No one can deny that social media marketing has a great impact on the way people experience things with real-world entities. Traveling is one of the most shared areas on social networks. People share their trip experiences over social platforms where they used to spend most of their time. Therefore, social media marketing is considered one of the most powerful tools in the tourism industry for the companies of Malaysia. According to Hua et al. (2017), people believe this platform as they believe in the reviews, experiences, and feedback that other people share based on their experiences. The way of research that the travelers used to do has been changed and it has brought a huge change in the marketing sector of the tourism industry via social platforms. As inaugurated by Khan & Khan (2016), there have been changing opinions that have been derived by different customers.
associated with this industry trying to extract knowledge of social media and its impact. The issue faced by the Malaysian tourism industry is associated with the understanding of how the facts and figures of tourism are witnessing a change in demand pertaining to the industrial outcome. There has been a possible issue associated with the financial outcome that is supported by the industry. There is a significant opportunity that is available in this sector after the inclusion of a technological attribute that will help the industry usher. Social media has been a critical tool that has endowed a change in the industrial output and has helped to gain a sustainable future. There are safety and security issues that have been evident in the Malaysian tourism industry and efforts are generated to barge in a better outcome for the industry. The tourism receipt has been witnessed to be 84.1 billion MYR and the number of arrivals was 25.8 billion in the year 2018. This paper aims to cover the impact of the social media marketing process that has affected the customer's loyalty, retention process, and attitude about the tourism industry. The literature reviews, methods related to survey for getting the outcomes and other processes that are conducted in this study about Malaysia for implying a positive response. The study endorses the field of attitude, loyalty, and retention that is associated with the tourism industry that is evident in the country of Malaysia. As suggested by Azam, Alam & Hafeez (2018), there has been immense effort embedded in this research to gallop over the concept and engage in a performance-oriented result that is associated with the tourism industry. As reported by Alamanda (2019), there has been a profound requirement of knowledge that is associated with the industry of tourism that relates to how social media has indulged in changing its future outcomes (Azam, Alam & Hafeez 2018).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Social media marketing

Social media marketing is the process where social platforms are used to make the connections between customers and agencies or consumers. As suggested by Zainal, Harun, & Lily (2017), it helps to build the reputation of the brands, the company increase sales. This social media marketing follows some processes such as:

- Publishing good content on social media platforms that will attract clients to get involved (Alamanda, 2019)
- Listening to the followers, and acting the way they expect with their engagement (Azam, Alam & Hafeez, 2018)
- Managing online surveys, and analyzing the results
- Advertising interesting facts and offers that a particular company is about to provide on social media (Yong & Hassan, 2019)

2.2 Social media on Customer’s attitude

Social media marketing is the approach that provides marketers a new and unique set of tools that are used to put consumers at the center of the business world. According to Hamid et al. (2016), nowadays this is the best way to interact with consumers, customers, and clients to involve them in the brands, company, and agency inventing different interesting ways. The customers always want to go for the best choice that will make their experience special and innovative. However, the best choice is not enough for the people; they want the uniqueness in every case to look different, to go beyond all. By Roque & Raposo (2016), mostly, the visit campaigns of Malaysia are decided and organized through media programs. The media programs are controlled by the customer’s requirements and the previous reviews, and digital marketing update the programs (Haque, 2017). Therefore, the attitude of the customers highly depends on social media marketing strategies defining how innovative and unique a particular tourist agency or a company is (Azam, Alam & Hafeez 2018).

2.3 Impacts of Social media on Loyalty

Building brand loyalty is one of the most important factors for marketers to research marketing values via social media. As reported by Jamaludin1&2 et al. (2017), marketers are in the race to build and maintain their brand loyalty to their customers and clients. The industry of tourism mainly depends on the accessibility of the clients. Social media is the best way to reach the customers and it also defines the best accessibility that the company will provide for its customers. With the opinion of Eslami et al. (2018), the certifications from different statistical analyses are also the reasons to gain the trust of customers ensuring that the agency or the company is loyal to its clients. The social platforms are used to organize online surveys via Microsoft Excel where the clients and company-related people respond according to their opinion. These opinions of the clients attract others to be engaged with the company with loyalty and integration.
2.4 Impact of social media marketing on customer retention process

The customer Retention process is a strategy to hold the existing customers providing a proper and rich environment compared to other companies. The strategies that a company follows to retain its customers via social media marketing includes four phases.

1. Market research to find out the needs and expectations of the customers from the tourist agencies
2. Marketers use some techniques analyzing data to improve customer retention
   - UX data: This is very obvious if the tours and the trip experiences are full of frictions, the customers won’t change their choice (Sarkar, 2016).
   - Customer Services: Poor customer services are one of the main reasons why people change their tourist agencies in search of better opportunities. A good customer service score might change the customer’s image towards the tourist agencies (Yong & Hassan, 2019).
   - Email Performance: Post Tour Emails are very important that helps the first-time client to repeat clients (Ormond & Sulianti, 2017)

There are some basic components known as 3A’s of tourism, such as

1. Accessibility: Accessibility stands for the reachability to the destined place through various transportation systems. Transportation systems are regular, economical, and safe in Malaysia. The comfortable journey is desired for all travelers from the travel agencies when they plan for a tour. In Malaysia, the transportation system is there for all destinations and tourists that are advertised through social media (Hussin, 2018).
2. Accommodation: It means the place where travelers or tourists can find food, proper shelters so that they can believe in the accommodation provided by the tourist agency is worthy. According to Hussin (2018), advertisements about accommodation attract people to get attached to the agency that is promoting their business via digital marketing (Eslami, 2018).
3. Attraction: Locale is considered as one of the most important components of tourism. The attraction is considered as the desire of people to travel in a specific destined location. By Jamaludin1&2 et al. (2017), the attractions of each tourist agency are represented via Facebook, YouTube advertisements, and other social media platforms (Sarkar, 2016).
4. Other factors include safety and security, communication systems, guide facilities

2.5 Advantages of social media marketing in the tourism industry

The benefits that social media marketing provide for tourism are-

Brand recognition: social media platforms and their contents represent the voice of the travel agencies to make the existing clients more familiar and recognizable. It helps to increase accessibility to new clients.
Improvement in brand loyalty: According to the market research, the Malaysian travel agencies that are engaged through social media channels are enjoying high loyalty from the clients of those agencies. A good social media strategic plan can be very influential that can convert the consumers into more brand loyal clients (Khan & Khan, 2016).
Higher brand authority: The regular interaction with the clients shows a potential effort to gain the customers’ faith. When people go for the compliment section of any agency, they mostly turn to social media. As suggested by Ormond & Sulianti (2017), the aspect of brand authority depletes better customer traffic in the organization. When the marketers post their brand, facilities, the new clients, and audience members will follow the updates of the social pages.

2.6 Literature Gap

The gap that is associated with the research is evident to define the negligence that has been associated with different previous research works. The previous research work did not imply the aspect of attitude, retention, and loyalty being critical to work with the impact generated by social media. The previous research had worked on an overview perspective and did not delve deep into the concepts and understandings associated with social media.
3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research methods

Several research methods can be used to complete the study with appropriate results. In this context, the Positivism research philosophy has used which helps researchers to get logical and meaningful arguments (Haque, 2017). Moreover, a descriptive research design along with a deductive research approach has chosen. As stated by Hua et al. (2017), deductive research approach facilitates to overlook on the existing theories related to the social media marketing process. Both the qualitative data analysis process and the quantitative data analysis process have selected. In this way, with the help of Microsoft excel to get numeric outcomes of the collected data for analyzing the data in a relevant manner.

3.2 Research Approach

The approach towards particular research is termed to be a path that is used to complete particular research work. This defines the plan that is associated to complete the research. This helps in barging in different concepts and theories in the research work (Khan & Khan 2016). The different approaches associated with research include the inductive approach and the deductive approach. This particular research engages with the deductive approach and the concept is undermined from a general perspective and the final outcome tends to focus on obtaining a specific reaction (Sarkar, 2016).

3.3 Data collection by survey

Primary data collection has done with the help of 100 customers of the Malaysian tourism industry. 4 close-ended questions were asked to the respondents for collecting their opinion about the effect of the social media marketing process and its impact on their behavior. The respondents are the customers who have been more frequent with the tourism industry of Malaysia and have immense knowledge pertaining to their growth. The respondents are chosen from the customer section as they have more experience of the changes witnessed in this particular industry. The population is chosen from the Klang Valley of Malaysia. The use of the primary method of data collection has helped in gaining authentic data and this is also termed to be a no-cost method of data collection. Primary data collection has gained an insight into the real-life situation of the tourism industry and aspects of social media embedded into it. Most of the respondents belong to the age group for 25 years to 45 years. Additionally, data collection has done through the interview process from the Customer relationship managers of the tourism companies.

![Figure 3.1: Social media marketing and customers' behavior](image)

3.4 Sampling

The sampling was done with a probability method and using simple random sampling from customers of the Malaysian tourism industry. In this case, 100 customers have chosen for collecting their opinion regarding the social media marketing process and the way its effects on their brand loyalty and service purchasing attitude. On the other hand, 2 customer relationship managers have chosen from two different tourism companies in Malaysia for getting their views on the social media marketing process. There are 2 open-ended questions asked to them for completing the interview process as well. The sampling technique used is a convenience sampling method that is associated with a non-probability sampling technique. This method helps in gathering authentic data that is associated with the research.
Moreover, the major research question of this study is related to the impact of the social media marketing process of the companies of the tourism industry of Malaysia in retaining customers, increasing brand loyalty and effect on the customers’ attitude. Then the result and the discussion of the study is focused on the questions below:

1. What is the impact of social media marketing on the customer’s attitude, customer retention and customers’ loyalty?
2. How social media marketing is related to the customer’s loyalty to the tourism industry of Malaysia?
3. How social media marketing is related to the customer’s attitude of the Malaysian tourism industry?
4. In what way social media marketing affects the customers’ retention process of the Malaysian tourism industry.

Respondent’s details for interview and survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents position</th>
<th>Name of the company</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Customer relationship manager</td>
<td>Intrepid Travel company of Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer relationship manager</td>
<td>Topdeck travel company</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1: Respondents of the interview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male- 65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female- 35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24 years</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-45 years</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-55 years</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2: Respondents of the survey

Survey Questions and Results

Question 1: Do you think that social media marketing positively changes your attitude?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Responses %</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Total responded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.4: Survey Question 1

Question 2:

How your brand loyalty increases when you face social media advertisement from any tourism company?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Responses %</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Total responded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In a positive way</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a negative way</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 3:
How many times do you get a positive influence from any tourism industry from their social media marketing process?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Responses %</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Total responded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most of the time</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The reviews of the customers make a difference</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 4:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is your brand loyalty increased after seeing any tourism advertisement in social media from any company?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Responses %</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Total responded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interview Questions and Results

Question 1:
What is your opinion that social media marketing can help your company to retain your customers?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'As most of the people are spending their time in the social media platform that is why marketing in social media platforms can help us to retain our customers positively.'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'Social media marketing process helps the customers to connect with us more easily. This increases their positive attitude and brand loyalty also.'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 2: Do you think that the social media review process helps your company to develop your customers' base?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'Most of the time customers use to see the review of other customers. In this way, positive reviews can help</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'The negative review of the customers can increase the loyalty of the brand and by this customers can</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
them to change their buying behavior’ purchase their products and services with proper judgment.”

Table 3.9: Interview Questions 2

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Quantitative research analysis (Survey)
This has seen from the opinion of most of the sample that the social media marketing process and advertisement related to the tourist industries that influence customers. Moreover, many customers believe in brand loyalty and their positive attitude increase via social media marketing process.

![Social media marketing change attitude in positive way](image1)

In this context, this can be said that the social media marketing process affects the attitude and behavior of customers about purchasing ay services form the Malaysian tourism industry. Following Yong & Hassan, (2019), attractive advertisements in social media used to affect the customer’s perception at the time of buying any service from the tourism companies. Moreover, the result of the survey indicates that most of the customers get positively affected by the advertisement related to tourism in different social media platforms. On the other hand, customers are not getting that much motivation and influence from this marketing process in some responses. The change associated with the attitude change involved by social media has been said yes by 66% of the respondents and 14% feel that is a rare occurrence.

![How brand loyalty increases when face social media advertisement](image2)

Figure 4.1: Social media marketing change concerning the Customer's attitude

Figure 4.2: Brand loyalty changes
4.2 Qualitative research analysis (Interview)

The interview session has done with two different customer relationship managers from two different tourism companies in Malaysia. This has seen that the first respondent of the tourism company has a positive perception in case of the reviews of the other customers. Moreover, another manager has also positive views on the feedback process by which many customers can increase their brand loyalty. On the other hand, as opined by Jamaludin1&2 et al. (2017), many people are using social media platforms actively. This can increase the retention of customers for tourism companies by attractive advertising. The result shows that 60% of the respondents feel that social media has a positive influence and 15% feel that there is no form of influence generated.

5. CONCLUSION

This article has drawn out the understandings of social media marketing impacts on Malaysian tourism with the positive and negative response figured out through different surveys. As reported by Sarkar (2016), the main purpose of social media in the tourism industry is to circulate the knowledge and information of the travel agencies that provide unique and interesting offers to engage new consumers with their agencies. Mass communication is one of the suitable ways through which the business of tourism has reached a different level with mass audiences (Roque & Raposo 2016). The customer retention process, gaining the loyalty of the clients and the attitude of the customers towards the tourism industry of Malaysia is defined in this paper. As advocated by Hussin (2018), the data of the media programs draw the responses of the customers in the term of social media impacts on the tourism industry. The mass media communication is the best way to connect with the people and encourage them in different ways that influence the tourism industries with brand loyalty and high brand authority.

The recommendations associated with social media marketing impact relates to the following points:

- Inclusion of a tourism marketer
- Working with better travel research
- Working with the aspect of social sharing
- Enhancement of customer service
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