

The influence of smart hotel app features on five-star hotel guests booking intention

ABSTRACT

The world is smart. Recent developments in information and technology systems triggered the birth of smart tourism, among many other trends. Smart tourism describes linking information technology and tourism to enhance the tourism experience by extensive information exchange. This linkage has a tremendous impact on tourists' behavior. (Pencarelli, 2020)

Especially the five-star tourism industry is unique in its nature and highly service-oriented and is known to strongly rely on human exchange in the service delivery processes to satisfy the guest's need. (Slattery, 2002) This paper aims to understand how the latest advancements in smart hotel apps impact the booking intention of a five-star hotel guest. Therefore, the author will examine how smartness affects premium hotel guests' booking intention, how price-sensitive these guests are regarding room rates of smart featured rooms, and which smart hotel app is the most preferred.

The first part of this thesis is a literature review, which analyzed and summarized the available literature on smart tourism, smart hotels, consumer behavior of smart five-star hotel guests, and smart hotel app features.

The paper further draws attention to challenges smart hotel apps bring along, such as security concerns or consequences of digital traces and usage requirements for guests such as usefulness and ease of usage which ultimately impact the acceptance of smart hotel apps. (Han et al. 2021)

The second part of this paper is an empirical study consisting of a questionnaire that evaluates five-star hotel guests' booking intention with smart hotel apps. The study results will allow the author to conclude if the availability of smart hotel apps in the five-star hospitality industry is developing and shaping guest behavior so that modern luxury is associated with convenience and stronger technology-based control or continues to rely on human interaction with concierges service. Furthermore, the author will conclude if five-star hotel guests are willing to pay more for a smart featured hotel room.

The author applied the simple linear regression model to analyze the relationship between parameters of the defined research model (Buhi. et al. 2007)

The study confirmed that the majority of five- star hotel guests do see an added value of using smart hotel apps in the pre-trip phase. Obviously critical usage requirements such as usefulness ease and security of usage need to be met as these are the key influence factors of a positive attitude towards smart hotel apps and ultimately decide whether smart hotel apps are accepted by travelers. (Han, 2011) Not surprisingly is, that the author identified that with increasing age a decreasing acceptance of smart hotel apps is applicable.

The last part of the thesis is the future research that discusses on the one side the potential of future studies on the influence of smart technologies on the booking behavior in budget as well as mid – ranged hotels. On the other side the future research part highlights opportunities for five-star hotels by using smart technology such as robotic technology or personalized futuristic services to revolutionize the tourism industry again. (Mingotto et al. 2020)