The Impact of Social Media Word of Mouth on Visit Intention towards Classified Hotels in Southern Coastal Area of Sri Lanka

W H Dedunu

Department of Marketing Management, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka
hasshini3464@gmail.com

Thilina D K

Department of Marketing Management, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka
thilinasq@kln.ac.lk

The advancements and growth in technology have facilitated the expansion of social media, and virtually all types of hotels in the tourism sector now maintain a significant presence on these platforms. This study aims to investigate the impact of social media word of mouth on the intention to visit classified hotels in the Southern coastal region of Sri Lanka. The quality and credibility of social media word-of-mouth information, including comments, reviews, opinions, suggestions, and recommendations, are crucial for this examination. The research model was developed using the Elaboration Likelihood Model, and a quantitative research approach was employed. The study targeted domestic travellers who use social media, with a sample selected using a convenience sampling method. Data was collected from 250 respondents through an online survey using a self-administered questionnaire. Regression analysis revealed that all measurement items related to argument quality, source credibility, and social media word of mouth showed a positive and significant relationship with the intention to visit classified hotels. All hypotheses were supported. The findings offer managerial implications for the hotel sector and domestic tourism, and provide future researchers with insights into how social media word of mouth affects domestic travelers' intention to visit classified hotels in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Classified Hotels, Domestic Tourism, Social Media Word of Mouth, Visit Intention