

The importance of electronic applications in the acquisition of tourism services

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ABSTRACT:*In this article, the authors highlight the importance that electronic tourism and technology evolution are related to the individual acquisition process. Currently, consumer behavior is strongly influenced by how fast technology is developing. Tourism is the branch of the economy that is most easily adaptable to permanent changes in the digital era, a stage that provides a competitive edge for all providers that accept change and develop electronic applications. Electronic applications for tourism services range from flight or hotel booking applications, travel planning and tourist attractions, GPS navigation and many more that help consumers at different times of travel. These applications can be installed on a number of gadgets, depending on the user's preference.*

KEY WORD: *tourism services, online, e-tourism, electronic applications*

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I. INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The 1960s are the beginning of the development of the economic and social phenomenon of tourism, becoming the world's most powerful industry today. According to national and international classifications, tourism is placed in the services sector (tertiary). Tourist services are considered to be "activities offered for sale to tourists who produce advantages and rewards without necessarily undertaking a physical exchange in the form of a good". (Ionciă, Stănculescu, 2005, p. 121) Tourist services present a number of specific features such as personalization of services, complexity and substitutability, dynamism, seasonal fluctuation and rigorous consumption.

Nowadays the technology is more and more present in human's activity's: activities at work, at home, in holidays, in spare time.

The usage of technology is promoted throughout our modern society. As technology remakes life easier for our days people, it also develops some issues for society such as the regress in social behaviors. The word technology is made of two words "Techno" means application, and "Logy" means learning and science. The meaning of linguistic meaning of technology term is: the instruments and methods that a society developed in order to find solutions of its practical activities that appear day by day in community's life. Yet, using technology in many areas of life has some risks (Al Aga, I, 2009). Currently, many people recognize the utility of modern technologies represent a requirement for a good life and an important factor of the cultural activities of the community. According to Younes and Al-Zoubi This (2015) the modern technologies have negative impacts of on society and will contribute to raise people's awareness towards the appropriate ways of using modern technologies.

Internet of Things, represent a part of this advanced technology and is one of the most promising domains of the future. It is manifested in many areas of our live indifferent forms as, actuators, sensors, mobile phones. IoT includes artificial intelligence and robotics (Insights Team, 2017).

The tourism industry was the first which use information and communication technologies, as demonstrated in the 1970s when a computer reservation system called Computer Reservation System - CRS was introduced in the tourism industry. Subsequently, the 1980s came with the implementation of the Global Distribution System – GDS, so tourism was considered an environment propitious to the implementation of information technology.

According to specialists in the field, technology brings changes in the tourism industry in the offer of tourism services, in tourism management, in tourism services marketing, but also between the relationship between suppliers and consumers. (Sofield, 1998, pp. 75-77)

The major growth of tourists using the Internet to find information about touristic destinations and to make reservations in online system by the help of online applications (Fernández-Cavia, Rovira, Díaz-Luque, & Cavaller, 2014). According Internet World Stats (2013) shows that in 2013, there existed 2.8 billion Internet users in all the world. Given the growth of the Internet users and worldwide tourism market, E-commerce has an

important role on how tourism services and products are sold. The present paper highlights that e-commerce can be defined as the selling and buying of services and products or the conduct of transactions over the Internet. Yet, the Internet evaluates into a new stage of communication and e-commerce (Chiou, Lin, & Perng, 2010).

Currently, the tourism industry is among the first economic industries to capitalize on the opportunities offered by new technologies. The constant development of technology and tourism has led to appearance of the concept of e-tourism that is considered to be the future of the tourism industry. The concept of e-tourism has a strong impact on the market, so it was possible to see the competitiveness between the companies in the field, as well as between the tourism destinations and the consumer decision making process.

The Internet used in the tourism industry helps information on services reach as many consumers as possible and the most important is that the internet allows them to make bookings easily and quickly without letting the consumer change their minds.

Interactions between the individual and the social media create new expectations from the tourism industry, so the desire for personalized holidays and greater control over the journey is the key to a vacation considered perfect.

With gadgets you can make reservations for accommodation, transport and recreational activities, so planning a trip can be done through a smartphone, tablet, or any other device that has an Internet connection. For these services to be more easily booked and purchased, there are a number of free apps available for Android, iPhone and Windows Phone.

The rapid and steady development of digital technologies is a real challenge in the tourism industry, giving tourists the opportunity to reinvent themselves every time but forcing them to adapt quickly to new ones by creating specific applications.

The websites that provides turism content offer opportunities that help tourism agencies to promote their services and products and to facilitate communication with existent clients or the potential tourists, becoming a faster process of business. In the same time, turistic websites provide a main information resource for tourism agencies clients before they arrive at destination and in their travel. These websites provide specific information about famous restaurants with good ratings, zonal attractions, ways of transportation, and hotels. The content of websites was identified as the main factor that contributes to repeat visits (Rosen & Purinton, 2004). In choosing the destination, turists get many information such as maps, address, photos, facilities, reviews and reference. The tourism websites content conveys photos develop a virtual experience providing the images of the destination.

Day by day, websites that provide tourism information are becoming very important marketing instrument for tourism organizations, they are the most visited online source by tourists and potential tourists. This websites not serve only as a key promotional tool but also as a big distribution channel for local, national and international tourism (Lee, 2006). Tourism agencies need to consider the services and facilities they offer to facilitate online commerce could be done better in order to attract more tourists.

Section 1.2 clearly mentioned the basic research objectives of the paper. Section 1.3 clarifies the data and methodology of the paper. Finally, section 1.4 interprets the result and concludes.

1.2 Research Objectives

The objectives of the research are: (1) Identification of types of tourism services purchased by e-commerce applications; (2) Determining the frequency of acquisition of tourism services by e-commerce applications; (3) Identification of the electronic device most often used in the procurement of tourism services with the help of e-commerce applications; (4) Identifying the preferred e-commerce application in the acquisition of tourism services.

1.3 Research Methodology and Data Analysis

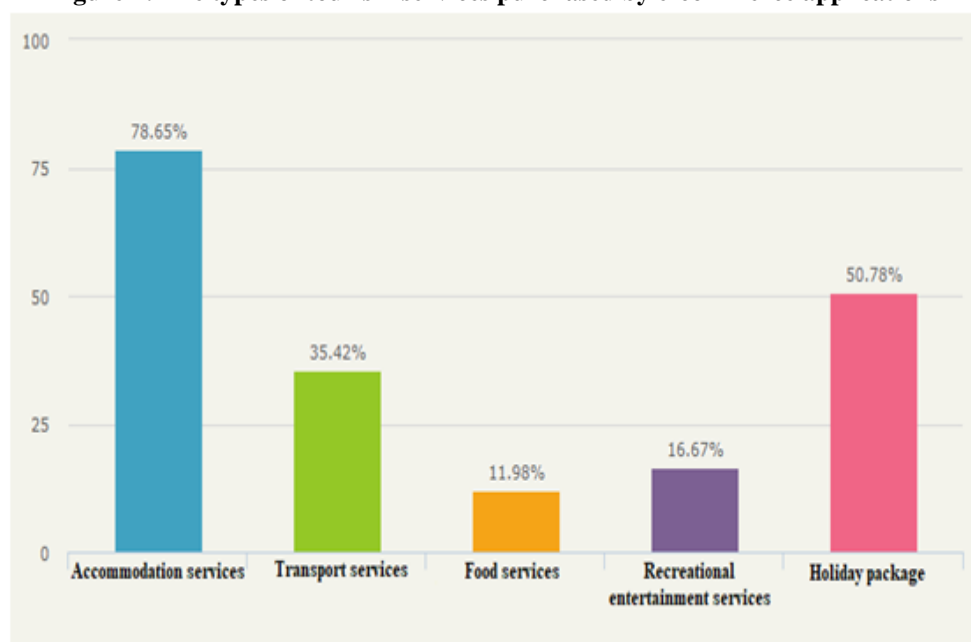
The target group consisted of 384 respondents, women and men aged between 20 and 40+ years. For this quantitative research, we used a quantitative method - the survey, and the questionnaire was the instrument used to collect the information.

Questionnaire questions have the role of obtaining the necessary information to achieve the established objectives. (a) modal coordinates- the research questionnaire was built, managed online and distributed using the eSurveysPro platform; (b) time coordinates – the research was conducted between March-May 2019; (c) the spatial coordinates- the electronic nature of the questionnaire has made it possible to fill in anywhere there is an internet connection.

From the perspective of the first objective of the research we can observe the types of tourism services purchased by e-commerce applications. This question is a multiple choice. Most respondents (78.65%) acquire accommodation services through electronic applications, while 35.42% of respondents prefer to use e-commerce applications to acquire transport services. A percentage of 11.98% purchases food services, and 16.67%

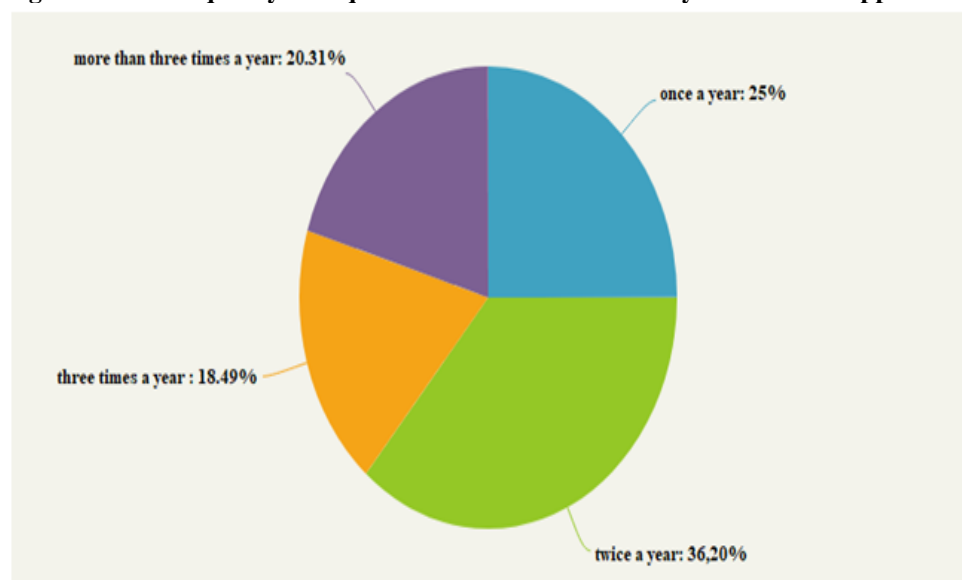
purchases recreational entertainment services. A significant percentage, 50.78% of respondents prefer to purchase holiday packages (accommodation + transport + meals).

Figure 1: The types of tourism services purchased by e-commerce applications



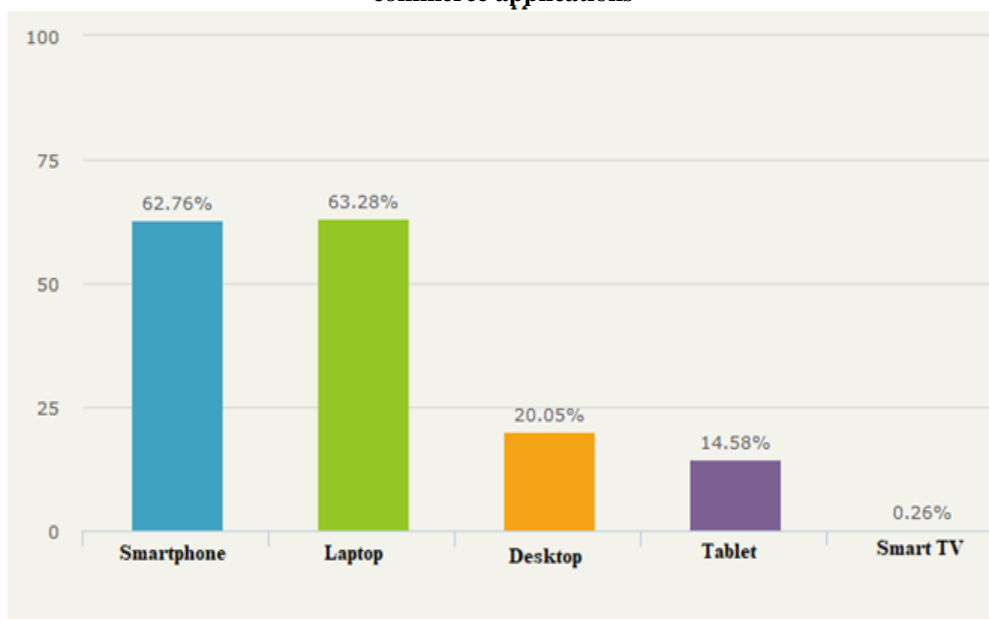
Regarding the second objective of the research - determining the frequency of acquisition of tourism services by e-commerce applications – 25% of respondents acquire tourist services through e-commerce applications once a year, 36.20% twice a year, 18.49% three times a year and 20.31% of respondents acquire tourist services by applications ecommerce more than three times a year.

Figure 2: The frequency of acquisition of tourism services by e-commerce applications



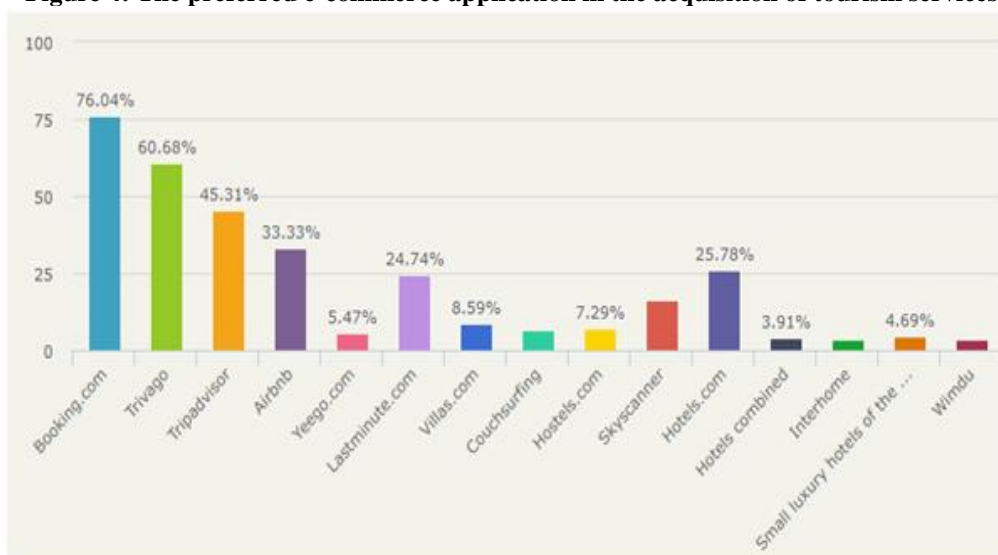
With reference to the third objective of our research - Identification of the electronic device most often used in the procurement of tourism services with the help of e-commerce applications - we have found that the laptop is used very often by 63,29% of the respondents, while 62,76% of the respondents use the smartphone in the procurement of tourism services. 20,05% of respondents use the desktop to purchase travel services with e-commerce applications, and 14,58% use the tablet. A very small percentage (0,26%) uses to acquire tourism services through electronic tourism applications a smart TV.

Figure 3: Electronic device most often used in the procurement of tourism services with the help of e-commerce applications



In this research the fourth objective is to identify the preferred e-commerce application in the acquisition of tourism services. For this objective the brand's reputation was adapted to the subject. For top of mind notoriety, most respondents said the first e-commerce application used to purchase tourist services that came to mind is Booking.com. From a spontaneous point of view, respondents prefer Airbnb, Trivago and Vola.com applications for travel services. Respondents do not know that Trivago is not the platform through which services can be purchased. In terms of assisted notoriety, the respondents had the following preferences:

Figure 4: The preferred e-commerce application in the acquisition of tourism services



In **Figure 4** it can be seen that Booking.com is preferred to respondents.

1.4 Findings and Interpretation

The innovations of new technologies has influenced the way managing companies. Tourism industry is one of the most affected of all industries, in which the process of adoption was most widespread (Dijkmans, Kerkhof, & Beukeboom, 2015). Through e-commerce applications destined to the purchase of tourist services, the individual can easily plan their vacations, even having a number of financial benefits.

As a result of the research we can see that most respondents (78.65%) prefer to acquire accommodation services through e-commerce applications. The highest frequency of acquisition of tourist services is twice a

year (36.20%). The most used device for purchasing e-commerce tourism services is the laptop (63.28%), followed very closely by the smartphone (62.76%). The preferred application by users for the purchase of tourist services is Booking.com.

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