

Impact of Online Customer Reviews on Behavioural Intention to Book Hotel Rooms in Sri Lanka

A. Arishanvass¹ and K.M.P.G.A.J. Bandara^{2,*}

*Department of Information Systems, Faculty of Management Studies,
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale, Sri Lanka^{1,2}*

*Corresponding author: amithb@mgt.rjt.ac.lk

Abstract

In Sri Lanka's evolving hospitality sector, online customer reviews (OCRs) have become a decisive factor in shaping travellers' booking behaviour. However, few studies have examined their impact in this context since 2018. Addressing this gap, the study investigates three core attributes review quality, review volume, and review realism selected based on their established importance in consumer trust and decision-making. A quantitative research design was adopted, and data were collected from 385 respondents through structured Google Forms distributed both online and in person. Descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analyses were employed to test the hypotheses. The findings reveal that review volume and review realism significantly influence booking intention, whereas review quality shows no meaningful effect. This indicates that Sri Lankan travellers value the authenticity and number of reviews more than their detail or depth. These insights extend existing knowledge of online consumer behaviour in Sri Lanka's post-2018 tourism landscape and provide practical implications for hotel managers and digital marketers, who should encourage the generation of genuine and voluminous feedback to build trust and attract customers. While the quantitative approach provides strong evidence, future research could incorporate mixed-method designs and sentiment analysis to capture the emotional dimensions of OCRs, offering a more comprehensive understanding of their influence on booking behaviour.

Keywords: behavioural intention, online customer reviews, review quality, review realism, review volume