

**“THE ANALYSIS OF TRAVELER’S EVALUATION OF ONLINE
CUSTOMER REVIEWS OF HOTELS AND RESORTS IN
BATTICALOA DISTRICT”**



BABU PARTHEEPAN



FCM1665



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**DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT
FACULTY OF COMMERCE AND MANAGEMENT
EASTERN UNIVERSITY, SRI LANKA**

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Abstract

Consumers habitually rely on personal advice, recommendations and suggestions to make purchasing decisions. These personal informal networks of communication are defined as Word-of-mouth (WOM). With the advancements of internet technologies, online consumer reviews, a form of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) is prevalent in today's hotel industry, and the widespread application of the internet technology has changed the way consumers choose and book hotels. An empirical knowledge gap was observed regarding the analysis of evaluation of online customer reviews of hotels and resorts in Batticaloa District. Therefore, in order to fill this empirical knowledge gap, this study was carried out with the objectives of find out the levels of Review valence, Characteristics of review, Reviewer characteristics, and Evaluation of online reviews, explore the relationship between independent variables and evaluation of reviews and explore impact of Review valence, Characteristics of review, and Reviewer characteristics on evaluation of online reviews of hotels and resorts.

A total of 140 customers of hotels participated from 15 hotels and resorts in Batticaloa district. Research questions and objectives were set, Descriptive statistics comprising the simple percentage and tables were used for data presentation and analysis. Pearson correlation coefficient and regression analysis were employed and the reliability of the measurement scales were tested against the survey data. Simple random sampling method was used. The data were analyzed with univariate and bivariate analyses using SPSS 22.0. The study reveals that as Review valence positively impact on evaluation of online customer reviews, Characteristics of review positively impact on evaluation of online customer reviews, and finally Reviewer characteristics negatively impact on evaluation of online customer reviews. It is recommended that hotels should welcome suggestions from customers and more programs should be designed to measure online customer generated reviews. The findings provided a useful tool for improvement in the context of online reviews of Hotel and resorts in Batticaloa District.

Key word: Review valence, Characteristics of review, Reviewer characteristics, online reviews

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