Chapter 18
Adoption of E–Commerce Among Travel Agents in Brunei Darussalam

Md Hisyamuddin Hamir

School of Business and Economics, Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Brunei

Nur Khalifah Ibrahim

School of Business and Economics, Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Brunei

Nurul Qamarina Ali Sham

School of Business and Economics, Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Brunei

Shazedah Osman

School of Business and Economics, Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Brunei

Siti Nazihah Ahmad

School of Business and Economics, Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Brunei

Amalina Zuadi

School of Business and Economics, Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Brunei

ABSTRACT

Information and communication technology has played an important role in the tourism industry. The internet has completely changed the tourism industry's landscape, particularly for travel agencies. Travel agencies are small and medium-sized enterprises that manage, coordinate, and provide transportation, leisure, and hospitality services. Based on prior research, travel agencies are regarded as slow adopters of e-commerce. Moreover, three factors affect the adoption of e-commerce among travel agents, which are environmental pressure, benefits of adoption, and perceived barriers. In achieving this study's aim in reference to Brunei Darussalam, an integrated conceptual framework was developed based on the technology acceptance model. A quantitative approach via questionnaires was used in the data collection. If managers are able to recognise the aforementioned factors, it could help them develop strategies to improve and sustain their businesses.

INTRODUCTION

Since e-commerce was introduced, traditional means of commerce where exchange of goods and services done face-to-face have since declined. An example of a traditional commerce is the use of a travel agency, which requires appointments with travel agents. Travel packages for different types of travellers are offered, with affordable prices and suitable locations that have been effectively researched and safety vouched for by the travel agents (Sokanu, 2019). Many things have caused the decline of the use of travel agency services, mainly the availability of online reservations or booking systems.

Online booking or eBooking is a software that allows companies to manage bookings and reservations (Odgers, 2017). As it is more convenient and faster to book online, potential travellers can now purchase their own flight tickets, book accommodations, or even buy event tickets, such as for concerts or amusement or theme park tickets, themselves. The Internet has made it easier to get information through travel blogs and YouTube, where people upload videos or video logs (vlogs) of their vacation. Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram are other online platforms which can help travellers get information on attractions and notable local food. Booking.com and Airbnb are some of the more popular accommodation websites that help make travelling bookings easier, while Trivago combines, compares, and finds the best hotel price for customers.

Travel agencies need to start adopting e-commerce, particularly Booking Commerce, in order to sustain themselves in the current industry. Booking Commerce or website booking allows travel agencies to design their own booking system that consumers can easily access with the Internet (Hackernoon, n.d). Website booking allows customers to book their tickets or make reservations through website services offered by the travel agencies. Integrating the use of website booking into their current process may expand the business of travel agencies.

As for the objective of this chapter, it is to find out the perceived benefits and perceived barriers of the e-commerce adoption among travel agents in Brunei Darussalam and how these factors influence the manager's decision. In addition to that, it is also to find out the external pressures that have led travel agents in Brunei Darussalam to adopt e-commerce to help them survive and to complete with rivals. Furthermore, this chapter would also determine the e-commerce adoption level among travel agents in Brunei Darussalam. Whereas the scope of this chapter will concentrate on the factors that influence the adoption of e-commerce among travel agents in Brunei Darussalam, specifically in Brunei-Muara, Belait and Temburong. In the next section, the chapter will look further into detail about the development of e-commerce over the years.

BACKGROUND

E-commerce

In the late 1970s, Electronic Commerce or e-commerce was referred to as the exchange of business documents, information, and transactions using Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) and Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). However, when the Internet was introduced and opened to the public for commercial purposes in 1991, the definition of e-commerce has changed to the process of purchasing and selling goods and services over the internet. According to Nanehkaran (2013), e-commerce first began in the United States and a few European countries in 1998, and Amazon.com was the first American company

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