

WARRANTING VALUE OF INFORMATION AND TOURISTS' TRUST IN ONLINE BOOKING WEBSITES

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ABSTRACT

When tourists are planning to travel to places where they need to stay overnight, many would most likely visit some online booking websites to search for the right accommodation. Such websites as Agoda, Booking.com, Expedia, Hotels.com, etc. list accommodation vacancies and provide relevant information such as price, hotel star ratings, customer review ratings, reviewers' comments, hotel policies and facilities, and so on. This information is particularly useful for first-time tourists to a new place, helping them to reduce uncertainty in making choices. Thus, the question of which information adds more value to the decision-making process of these tourists is worth investigating. With reference to Walther and Parks's (2002) Warranting Theory and McKnight et al.'s (2002) Web Trust Model, this study develops a model to examine which information has high or low warranting value; how warranting value affects trusting intentions; and how trusting intentions affect trust-related behaviors (Willingness to depend and Subjective probability of depending as subconstructs). This study collected responses from people who have used online booking websites and analyzed the data using the partial least squares (PLS) approach. The findings of this study can help online booking websites to first understand what information is considered valuable by their customers when making accommodation choices, and subsequently, to improve website functions and features to provide information of high warranting value.

Keyword: Accommodation, Online Booking Websites, Trusting Intentions, Trust-Related Behaviors, Warranting Theory, Web Trust Model
