

ONLINE TRAVEL PORTAL AND THEIR EFFECT ON TRAVEL AGENCY: A STUDY ON OUTBOUND VISITORS OF VARANASI.

Sujay Vikram Singh, Rajeev Ranjan

Research Scholar (UGC-JRF),

Department of History of Art and Tourism Management, Banaras Hindu University

Abstract : The internet revolution has changed the scenario of travel industry through the easily accessible of travel products to the mass consumers by their virtual presence rather than physical. The online travel Portal (OTP) is also known by Online Travel agent, E-travel agents and virtual travel agents (VTA's). The concept of travel agents immersed as a connecting link between supplier and consumer. In a last 5-10 years techno friendly visitors prefer more to buy their travel services online like the online shopping of physical goods. The OTP has served vast prospects for travellers to buy their travel directly online thereby evading the traditional travel systems i.e. travel agencies. While serving as an intermediary means between service providers and tourists, internet has reduced the significance of the traditional intermediary (travel agents) or at the large extent traditional part became very uncommon in today's practice. Web-services may eventually progress to disintermediation of travel business since the travel facility and product suppliers can sell their products and services directly to the travellers. Yet, Traditional Travel agencies still have the benefit of serving personalized services particularly in giving advice to travellers with an individual touch.

This paper attempts to examine perceptions of tourists travelling from eastern Uttar Pradesh who had not only used traditional methods but also booked their itinerary through at least one travel website and Web Portals which can relate their experience in using them and their opinion upon disintermediation. The study will determine preference of tourists in choosing their services in accordance to their length of stay, demographic and socio-economic characteristics upon their purchasing behaviour.

KEYWORDS: Disintermediation, Online Services, Perceptions, Tourists, Travel Agency.

Introduction

The globalization of the world changed the scenario of travel industry by introducing fastest internet revolution. The emergence of online travel agencies made the travel accessible for mass people. Make My Trip Limited is an Indian online travel company founded in 2000 by Deep Kalra, considered as pioneer online portal of Indian origin.

The changing paradigm of business equally changed the service providing mode of private and public sector. IRCTC, a Mini Ratna of Indian government and subsidiary of the Indian Railway booked the world's highest of 1.5 to 1.6 million tickets every day. Its tagline is "Lifeline of the nation". The Online travel agencies are the result of Internet revolution in the 21st century, when a customer has the choice to compare the services and purchase the best deal. The knowledge of computer and Internet enhances and promoted the accessibility of online travel services.

The web-services have brought diverse range of prospects for travellers to book their tours directly through internet thereby circumventing the traditional travel channels i.e. travel agencies. While helping as an intermediary passage among tourists and travel service providers, the internet has reduced the significance of the traditional intermediary (travel agents) or at the least made that orthodox role very unlike in today's practice (Tang, 2009). The OTA (online travel agency) industry in India is presently forecasted to be around \$800 million and rest largely upon air travel-related dealings (Marian and Sanjai, 2008).

The marketplace is quite disordered, with a variety of both recognized businesses and start-ups offering indistinguishable offerings. Seemingly, price has played the significant part in consumer choice of service supplier. A variety of OTA brands serve multiple customer segments – leisure, business and group. They are global in reach and innovative in functionality. They are marketing engines, search engines, booking engines and execution platforms for consumers. OTAs also hold a prominent place in travel information search and multi-device (mobile) applications.

Vacationers in the tourism business are the centre as well as focus point for all tourism events that includes blend of inter-reliant groups of tourism members and enterprises such as travel agents, promoters, operators etc. When reserving a trip, tourists may involve directly with any of the tourist facility suppliers, but eventually they will require specialized services provided by tourism organizers such as travel agencies or tour operators (Cook, Yale and Marqua, 2006). When buying a trip, a tourist may begin scheduling by contacting different airlines, hotels or tourist centres in finding flights, accommodation and transfers. To simplify the quest, it is convenient to come in interaction with travel organizations, who will select the best options for guests. The function of the travel agency is to therefore establish tours for their clientele, beginning from advising them about the destination, its attractions, activities, accommodation, amenities and different transport means and everything regarding the journey (Cook, Yale & Marqua, 2006).

Travel organizations are often categorized as dealers to business and holiday tourists, offering flight, lodging, car rental, cruise, foreign currency exchange, travel insurances, data about destinations and many more. Today, tourists can arrange for their own travel by booking

straight from the providers themselves via the internet (Law, Leung & Wong, 2004). The providers of travel products are often regarded as travel principals, possessing specific travel elements that are combined as packages containing several travel elements mentioned (Holloway, Davidson & Humphreys, 2009, p. 594). There are two different kinds of travel agencies providing same kind of travel products on different playground, namely traditional travel agency and online travel agency. Traditional agencies were the first to emerge into distribution channel followed by the online agencies, whose business first took place when the Internet and the World Wide Web was developed in the 1990s. The online travel agency has been successful and almost outperforming because of its global accessibility and 24x7 customer assistance. However, the opportunities of physical interaction with customers, selling products and services at stores have favoured the traditional agency over the last decades (Syratt & Archer, 2003, p. 16-17).

However internet and its travel websites do not signify only loss for the traditional travel agents. Travel agents still have the benefit of providing personalized operations particularly in proposing advices to clients with a personal touch. This ability to make services individual will assure the role of travel agents remains secure (Law, Leung, & Wong, 2004).

The role of travel agencies would remain safe if their information proposing ability were strengthened by existence of internet rather than function according to more negative image of being merely a booking organization. Most of the tour operators including hotels, airlines and cruise-lines prefer to sell their own products to the tourism industry through their own websites or stores in order to avoid commission fees, and in order to communicate their products and services directly to the customers without interfering of the intermediaries. In order for the travel agencies to survive in the tourism market, they have to choose the right marketing strategy that suits the products and services they offer best.

Most of the tour operators including hotels, airlines and cruise-lines prefer to sell their own products to the tourism industry through their own websites or stores in order to evade commission fees, and in order to connect their products and amenities directly to the clientele without interfering of the mediators. In order for the travel agencies to persist in the tourism market, they have to choose the right marketing strategy that suits the products and services they offer best. Intermediaries have ability to organize and aggregate large amount of data into one price. They have fundamental role for counselling and delivering a personalised service according to specific need of customers (Kracht and Wang, 2009).

Travel Trade – A Historical perspective

Thomas cook is considered the pioneer of travel agency business set up a “World’s First Travel agency’ to organise excursion in 1845. He conducted the world’s first international tour from England to Paris at 1855 developed the concept of inclusive tour. The travel agency business in India is relatively new. The Jeena & Company considered the first travel agency of Indian origin. The travel business in India, in an organised manner started with setting of ‘The Travel Agents association of India’ (TAAI) in Mumbai in 1951. However, Jeena & Company and other two Indian Travel agencies were merged into one composite travel company known as ‘Travel Corporation of India Ltd,’(TCI) in 1961 (Chand, Mohinder,2009). At present 2500 and more leading companies involved actively with the travel and tourism industry are active members of TAAI (www.travelagentsofindia.com).

Travel Agency

Travel agent acts as an intermediaries serving between the various service providers and travel consumers. They sell and market the products and services provided by the suppliers such as hotel, transport operators, airlines, railways, cruise etc. Travel agents serve as a link between the travel suppliers and the tourists. The travel agent thus organizes the travel for the consumers. Travel agents are also referred to as ‘travel consultants’, ‘travel counsellors’, and sometimes even ‘tour operators’. In a compile and compact form we can say that “A travel agency may be an individual, a business firm, or company which acts as an intermediary in the sales and promotion of different travel related services selling to its client and earns commission”.

According to Airlines Reporting Corporation (ARC) “a travel agency is defined as a business that performs the following functions: quote fares, rates, make reservations, arrange travel tickets and accommodation, arrange travel insurance, foreign currency, documents and accept payments. European commission, define travel agency as a retailer, leisure and business tourists, selling flights (charter or scheduled), hotels, car rentals, foreign exchange, travel coverage and other facilities. The travel agency acts as an intermediary, accessibly linking clientele with the supplier of travel products (Holloway, Davidson & Humphreys, 2009, p. 594). India is a huge country in terms of area and economy; with the growth of per capita income the people are becoming more passionate for travel and simultaneous increasing the demands of travel agency. Thomas Cook, SOTC, Cox and Kings, Yatra.com, make my trip are some of the iconic name in the travel world.

Online travel agency:

Online travel agency, so called OTA, is an automated intermediary focussing in giving consumer services, products and reservation capability on World Wide Web (Law et al., 2004, p. 100).

An Online Travel Agency/portal/ website (OTA) is an intermediary agent selling travel products and services such as the airlines, car rental, cruise lines, Hotels Accommodation, railways and vacation packages on behalf of suppliers using internet as a medium. They establish an online market place and earn profits on the discounts commonly referred to as commission offered by the suppliers (Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, Guidelines).

GUIDELINES FOR APPROVAL OF ONLINE TRAVEL AGENCY (OTA):-

The recognition as an approved OTA shall be granted by the Ministry of Tourism (MOT), Government of India (GOI), New Delhi, for five years, based on the Inspection Report Recommendations of a Committee comprising the concerned Regional Director (RD), a representative of FHRAI, and a representative of IATO, and approval of Competent Authority (Chairman, HRACC).

The Organisation which govern and Regulate the Travel Agency of India are the following:-

- Ministry of Tourism, Government of India- A public unit of central government with a regulating and monitoring authority to frame the policy and planning regarding the Travel agency.
- Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI):-
It is a non-political, non- commercial and non-profit making New Delhi based organisation formed at 1951 very soon after India gets freedom. The TAAI symbol is a guarantee for reliable and professional service. TAAI has been recognised as the ‘voice or travel and tourism’ in India. The primary purpose of TAAI is to protect the interest of its members, promotes the orderly growth and development of tourism.
- Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO):- Established in the year 1981 to promote, encourage, and assist in the development of tourism with the ethical practices of intermediaries.
- International Air Transport Association (IATA):- IATA is an international non- governmental, voluntary and democratic body formed by a group of airlines. The headquarters of IATA is in Montreal, Canada. It certifies the travel agents and tour operators who work in the field of airlines and at the same time safeguard the right of passengers about their safety and value for money across the world.

Study Area

Varanasi is an eclectic mix of the Tangible and Intangible, manifested in its rich Cultural Landscapes. Due to rise in education levels and income most of the residents of the city used to travel to other places to visit natural attractions, meet VFR's or leisure activities are increasing every year. Due to increasing influence of web-services, it becomes imperative out perceptions of outgoing tourists of Varanasi regarding online travel agencies and how will they impact upon traditional travel agencies and upon possibility for disintermediation of travel organisations.

The aim of our study is to compare different marketing focus of these two types of travel agencies from comprehensive perspectives in order to understand their competitiveness. As mentioned above, we think this understanding is important to both online travel agencies and traditional travel agencies because it might lead to a better understanding of customers' needs and reactions on marketing efforts.

Objectives of study

- To study Online Travel Agencies and their effect on Traditional Travel Agencies
- To study perceptions of outgoing tourists on online travel agencies and analyse their impact on traditional travel agencies in Varanasi.
- To analyse the opinions of tourists of Varanasi with perspective of short and long haul vacationers on possibility for disintermediation of travel organisations.
- To investigate customers' future intentions on travel service booking

LITERATURE REVIEW

Various researches have shown significance of web-services on tourism services (Buhalis & Licata, 2002; Christian, 2001; Poon, 2001). With the rise of the web-services, the procedure of fast data transfer can be addressed efficiently at low-cost. The travellers can now obtain complete, timely and significant information in a simulated environment to support their decision-making procedure. Also tourism industry is varied, with excess of different service providers that functions self-sufficiently, even as travellers imagine travelling to be whole experience. To decide this disparity, the Internet offers an efficient way for emerging single and workable e-infrastructure for data collection and business transaction for both tourists and suppliers. Tourist choices have been increasing at an exponential rate. Equipped with laptops, smart phones and tablets, tourists are using multiple devices and searching innumerable sites to plan their trips. In burgeoning travel markets like China and Russia, young, adventurous and newly minted “middle class” consumers will clutch their handhelds to book their getaways this year, many through OTAs. While OTAs are certainly intermediaries, they do more than shift share among competitors. They can be an effective tool to: preserve market position, extend search marketing, meet customer demand for packaged and spontaneous travel, support yield management, and execute integrated marketing strategies. Raini Hasija, Group GM- IT, IRCTC declared at the 5th IMAI Travel and Tourism (August 2014) that “At present we book around 10,000 tickets online per minute which is beyond our expectations. When we launched this service, our target was to book 7,200 tickets per minute. With over 2 Lakhs agents booking through IRCTC, we are gearing-up to higher ticketing per minute in time to come.” For, the hotel reservations Nikhil Ganju, Country Head, TripAdvisor.com in IMAI 5th Travel and Tourism Summit 2014 “Hotel bookings are driven by online research. Hotel reviews by local are a driving factor in selecting a particular property. It is interesting to see that 30% of India's TripAdvisor users are coming to the site using their mobile devices”

Disintermediation and Re-intermediation

According to **Malone (1987)**, the first to bring in concept of intermediation or disintermediation proposed that the function of distributors, retailers, or any middlemen will be reduced during transaction among consumers and service providers.

With regard to the influence of web-services, expanding public access to the Internet in the early 1990s portended the possibility of large-scale 'disintermediation', or the disengagement of suppliers from mediators in favour of direct or alternative marketing relationships with consumers **Bennett & Lai, (2005)**. Primarily, the prospect of the Internet in this regard was limited by weak brand awareness of the fledgling 'cybermediaries', ordinary websites, and security concerns (**Kim, Kim, & Leong, 2005**). These hindrances were slowly removed, and online giants such as Travelocity and Orbitz now rank among the top online travel agencies in sales. (**Goeldner & Ritchie, 2006**). The success of the web-services is due to the nature of tourism product, easy to convey through the web (**Anckar, 2003**). But according to **Hoontrakul, P. and Sahadev, S. (2006)**, the internet does not change the major role of intermediaries who exist to simplify buyers' choice processes." In spite of the security factors, many of the retail travel agencies are flourishing, representing the volume to their senior management to correctly identify and take advantage of influential forces within a changeable and challenging external environment.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS

The researcher used exploratory study as it tends to get insights of tourists perceptions of Online Travel Portals. Detailed interviews were obtained from the respondents travelling from Varanasi who have used online services as well as experienced the services traditional travel agency for booking their trip. A self-administered structured and non-disguised questionnaire was used in this study to analyse the perception of the web-services upon the guests provided by online travel agencies in comparison to traditional services. A pilot test was undertaken to assess the reliability of the attributes, and to ensure that the wordings of the questionnaire were clear. Twenty questionnaires were completed by the guests in accompaniment of researcher. Some problems were identified with the wordings and implications of some questions, so some minor revisions were made to avoid confusion. The study was conducted on the persons who have used both traditional and online travel agencies for their journey during 6 weeks in May- June. A convenience sampling approach was employed and 189 questionnaires were circulated to the peoples who inclined to take the questionnaires. Of these 189 questionnaires, 19 were not included in the analysis because of incompleteness, and 170 were usable for further analysis.

Table1. Respondents Profile

<u>VARIABLES</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
<u>GENDER</u>		
Male	125	73.53
Female	45	26.47
<u>AGE</u>		
18-30	33	19.41
31-40	46	27.06
41-50	51	30.00
50 or above	40	23.53
<u>EDUCATION</u>		
Secondary	27	15.88
Under Graduate	91	53.53
Post Graduate or more	52	30.59
<u>MARITAL STATUS</u>		
Single	63	37.05
Married	103	60.58
Divorced/widowed/others	04	2.37
<u>EMPLOYMENT STATUS</u>		
Employed	103	60.59
Unemployed	21	12.35
Retired	37	21.77
Not Applicable	09	5.29
<u>OCCUPATION</u>		
Business	47	41.97
Service (Government)	21	18.75
Service (Private)	23	20.53
Farmers	12	10.71
Students	09	08.04
<u>SPAN OF TRAVEL</u>		
Short duration	127	74.71
Long duration	43	25.29
<u>PURPOSE</u>		
Tourist Attraction places	65	38.24
Leisure	15	08.83
Information Seeking	38	22.35
VFR	43	25.29
other	09	5.29

Table 2: Mode of tour

TOUR	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Fully Packaged	62	36.48
Partially packaged	86	50.58
Independent	22	12.94

Table3. Respondent's views on Disintermediation

STATEMENTS	MEAN	SD
Travel service providers offer a human feel and interface with the business.	3.98	1.03
Technology, predominantly the web-services, allows tourists to execute most travel probing and buying tasks accessibly.	4.02	0.97
Tour operators generally believe in principles who provide lucrative commissions thereby making prejudiced endorsements	4.35	0.78
Online travel agencies(electronic travel intermediaries) are more convenient and can offer many more varieties other than traditional travel agency	4.21	0.83
Travel service providers commonly assist reservation and registration offering very little tourism product/services	3.65	1.12
Web-services are fast and secure modes of transaction	3.68	1.11

Table4. Opinion of travellers on disintermediation with short duration and long duration travellers

Statements	Short Duration		Long Duration	
	MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD
Travel service providers offer a human feel and interface with the business.	4.04	0.9	3.92	1.08
Technology, predominantly the web-services, allows tourists to execute most travel probing and buying tasks accessibly.	4.10	0.91	3.94	1.03
Tour operators generally believe in principles who provide lucrative commissions thereby making prejudiced endorsements	4.45	0.73	4.25	0.83
Online travel agencies(electronic travel intermediaries) are more convenient and can offer many more varieties other than traditional travel agency	4.32	0.79	4.10	0.87
Travel service providers commonly assist reservation and registration offering very little tourism product/services	3.68	1.06	3.62	1.18
Web-services are fast and secure modes of transaction	3.70	1.10	3.66	1.12

Table no. 1 displays the demographic characteristics of the respondents selected for the study. The finding is reliable with previous works upon demographic characteristics of e-travellers in travel and tourism literature (Bonn et al, 1998; Weber and Roehl, 1999). It was conducted on 125 males and 45 females. Most of the respondents were in the age category of 40-50 and 30-40 having 30.0 % and 27.06 % respectively, while 18-30 and people with above 50 years of age were 19.41 % and 23.53 %. Most of them were Undergraduate 53.53 % followed by Postgraduate 30.59 % which indicates tendency to travel increases with higher education levels. Around three out of five respondents were married. Around 60.59% of the respondents were employed and 21.77% were retired i.e. higher income levels were intended to travel more implicating inclination to travel is directly proportional to the higher income levels. The study took opinion of 127 travellers visiting a destination for short duration and 43 people for long duration of time. Total 103 respondents were employed out of which business persons were 41.97% followed by private job employee and government job employees with 20.53% and 18.75% respectively. 9 students also took part in interview. At interviewing, the researcher found that visitors travelling for shorter duration of time used more online services to book their trips while longer duration of travellers usually preferred more traditional travel agencies as compared to the web-services. Lastly, the travellers whose purpose of travel was for meeting "visitors, friends and relatives" used less web-

services as compared to person who were visiting for leisure, information seeking and to observe tourist attraction sites. In former studies on Hong Kong's inbound and Leisure travellers **Lo et al. (2003)** found that Internet is major source of Information for tourist to get ideas about the destination. Almost all of the respondents agreed upon Traditional travel agencies functions better in terms of personalised services and human trace. Besides, they agreed on the fact that online travel agencies have better prospects to be popular because of high broadband web-support, the services are very convenient, comprehensive and timely information at relatively low cost.

Table 2 displays the type of package travellers from Varanasi used while going to any destination. From the table Partially Packaged constituted highest share of 50.58%, while fully packaged and independent was 36.48% and 12.94% respectively.

Table 3 is based on the Respondent's opinions on disintermediation from Online and Traditional intermediaries (S=170). The highest was found 4.35 where travellers found Traditional travel agencies usually bring out those packages in which they receive highest commission; while lowest was found 3.65 in which Travel agencies commonly assist reservation and offer low variety of choices. The traditional travel agencies have a bright scope towards offering wide varieties of choices and hence ensuring customer satisfaction.

Since one of the purpose of study was to determine the opinion of travellers on the basis of their length of stay determining any difference in view on issues of disintermediation. From the Table 3, it justifies the fact that short-duration travellers considers web-services to be flexible, convenient, and fast relatively compared to traditional agents. The respondents usually favour web-services due to fast information search and transactions. Short-duration travellers also were in opinion that traditional agencies are biased and offer the packages with high commission rates. This indicates a positive sign for rapid growth of web-services in the future. However Long-duration travellers usually avail more services of traditional travel agents because of the personalised services provided to them at same rate of commission to the short-duration travellers. Hence, Travel agencies have prospect to survive and growth with involvement of partial web-platforms to stay in the competition. However an issue of secure transaction remains in a scrutiny where web-services platforms needed to improve their performance. As **Sterne (1999)** states that Security is major issue in Web-sales.

Consumer Future intentions to use online portals

The researcher also investigated the intention of using the online portals. It was achieved through interviewee to describe their booking channel selection for their future trips, including method of payment, channel of booking and tickets delivery.

Table 5: Future of ticket booking channels

All respondents (%)		Use of Internet		Online booking experience	
		Non-users (%)	Users (%)	Bookers (%)	Non-bookers (%)
Internet (OTA)	37.8	0.3	37.50	27.2	10.6
Travel agencies	42.6	1.0	41.60	25.1	17.5
Airline offices	18.07	-	18.07	9.40	8.67
others	1.53	-	1.53	0.90	0.63

From the results of Table 5, the respondents stated Internet and Travel agencies to be their priority for the future booking. Total 42.6 % respondents voted for travel agencies and 37.8 % for Internet. Most of the users reported that they use internet. In connection to online booking experience many users replied to book from Internet (OTA) and Travel agencies. While 9.40 % and 0.90% choose to use internet to book online. However, number of non-bookers was also high in Internet and Travel agencies as 10.6 % and 17.6% respectively.

Table 6: Future of payment through booking channels

All respondents (%)		Use of Internet		Online booking experience	
		Non-users (%)	Users (%)	Bookers (%)	Non-bookers (%)
Cash	40.39	1.8	38.59	19.26	20.13
Card payment or wallets	38.62	-	38.62	34.42	4.20
Net banking	15.87	0.2	15.85	13.56	2.31
Through UPI	3.12	-	3.12	3.12	-

Table 6 denotes the view of respondents on payments through booking channels. Most of the respondents believe that cash and card payment (34.52 %) will be used in future booking. Most of the users have familiarity with internet. Usage of card payments or cash wallets will increase in the future. Payment from Net Banking (13.56%) will also be increased however cash transaction will also be prominent (19.26%) by people who will book through online. The findings are consistent with study of Li & Suomi (2007).

CONCLUSION

The paper demonstrated the perception of the travellers towards web-services and its impacts on traditional travel agencies in Varanasi. The findings indicated that short-duration travellers were more intended to use online travel agencies, where Long-duration travellers preferred their traditional travel agencies. It was observed that with an increase in education and income level people tend to travel increases. Considering the limited range in area and sample size, the findings could not be generalised regarding travellers' view upon disintermediation of traditional travel agencies. The wide customer base has been attracted by adoption of online travel service delivery, which is facing the risk of disintermediation.

From this study it can be concluded that traditional travel agencies along with personalised services should also focus on web-services structure and should be aware with changing distribution based scenarios. Online travel service delivery has grown as a popular direct distribution channel in the travel industry.

Customers have intent to book travel service online, however, many of them favour the traditional travel agency. The web-services should be used as an opportunity rather than a threat by the agents as its impact in the travel industry is very large. Online travel agencies have the advantage of fast processing of information and transaction; however, vulnerability in the booking system should be improved to ensure secured web-operations.

REFERENCES

- Anckar, B. (2003) "Consumer Intentions in Terms of Electronic Travel Distribution". *E-service Journal*, Vol. 2, No. 2, pp. 68-86.
- Bennett, M. and Lai, K. 2005. The impact of the Internet on travel agencies in Taiwan. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*.
- Bonn, M.A., Furr, H.L. and Susskind, A.M.(1998), "Using the Internet as a pleasure travel planning tool: an examination of the socio-demographic and behavioural characteristics among Internet users and non-users", *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, Vol. 22 No. 3, pp. 303-317.
- Buhalis, D. and Licata, M.C.(2002), "The future of e-tourism intermediaries", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 23 No. 3, pp. 207-220.
- Burkart, A.J. and S. Medlik, (1974), *Tourism : Past, Present and Future*, Heinemann, London.
- C.H. Malone, J. Yates, and R.I. Benjamin, (1987). *Electronic Market and Electronic Hierarchies*, *Communications of the ACM* 30(6), 484-497
- Cook, Roy A., Yale, Laura J., & Marqua, Joseph J. (2006). *The business of travel*. 3rd Edition. Prentice Hall, pp. 7-8.
- Goeldner, C. and Ritchie, J. 2006. *Tourism: Principles, Practices, Philosophies*, 10th, New York: Wiley.
- Holloway, Chris, Davidson, R., & Humphreys, Claire. (2009). *The business of tourism*. 8th edition. Pearson Education Canada.
- Hoontrakul, P. and Sahadev, S. (2006) Application of data mining techniques in the on-line travel industry, *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, (2008), Vol. 26 No. 1, pp. 60-76.
- Kracht, J. and Wang, Y. (2009). Examining the tourism distribution channel: evolution and transformation. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 22 No. 5, 2010, pp. 736-757.
- Kim, L., Kim, D. and Leong, J. 2005. The effect of perceived risk on purchase intention in purchasing airline tickets online. *Journal of Hospitality & Leisure Marketing*, 13(2): 33-53.
- Law, R., Leung K., & Wong, J. (2004). The Impact of the Internet on Travel agencies. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality management*. 16(2), 100 - 107.
- Li, H., Suomi, R., 2007, in *IFIP International Federation for Information Processing, Volume 252, Integration and Innovation Orient to E-Society Volume 2*, eds. Wang, W., (Boston: Springer), pp. 113-122.
- Lo, A., Cheung, C. and Law, R., (2003), "Information search behaviour of Hong Kong's in-bound travellers – a comparison of business travellers and leisure travellers", *Journal of tourism and travel marketing*.
- Marion Arathoon and P.R. Sanjai, 2008, "Online travel portals most prone to fraud", Jun 11, <http://www.livemint.com/2008/06/10235627/Online-travel-portals-most-pro.html>. Last accessed on: Sept 30, 2009
- Syrratt, Gwenda. & Archer, Jane. (2003). *Manuel of travel agency practice*. 3rd edition.
- Sterne, J.(1999), *World Wide Web marketing*, John Wiley & Sons, New York, NY.
- Tang, L., Choi, S., Morrison, A. M., & Lehto, X. Y. (2009). The many faces of Macau: A correspondence analysis of the images communicated by online tourism information sources in English and Chinese. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 15(1), 79-94.
- Weber, K. and Roehl, W.(1999), "Profiling people searching for and purchasing travel products on the World Wide Web", *Journal of Travel Research*, Vol. 37 No. 3, pp. 291-298.