



Article Title

Are the States United? An Analysis of U.S. Hotels' Offers Through TripAdvisor's Eyes.

Citation

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Abstract

This empirical data-driven research aims to unveil thought-provoking insights on the U.S. hotel offer across its 50 states. Information of more than 30,000 hotels was collected through web scraping from TripAdvisor. Using such data, 50 support vector machine models were trained to model the TripAdvisor score, one per state, to assess the convergent and divergent factors in customer satisfaction across all the U.S. states. A conceptual model is proposed and validated through the data-driven support vector machine models developed for each state to identify convergent features across the states to explain customer satisfaction (here represented by TripAdvisor score). Hotel size, price, and stars are not moderated by the location, expressed by the corresponding state, although these highly influence satisfaction, whereas both hotel number of published photos and the amenities are affected by the location. Thus, adaptation issues were found regarding amenities and published photos within each state's offer.

Conclusion

This results of this study revealed that a huge and mature tourism market such as the United States, where the large majority of the population has access to the Internet and uses social media, is highly influenced by TripAdvisor's awards. The validated model provides evidence of the influence of five major hotel features on customer satisfaction: hotel price, stars, size, number of photos, and amenities. The two latter were found to be highly affected by the location, while the former three were not.

First, the same segments of visitors in a region can leverage the relevance of some amenities valued by these visitors (e.g., families appreciate more refrigerator in room when visiting New York in comparison with other states). Second, at least one food related amenity is accountable for some relevance in customer satisfaction, although which amenity depends on the state. Hoteliers should pay special attention to food and analyze competition to understand if competitors are offering the amenity that is most valued by their region's visitors. However, there are some limitations that should be noted. It is to be note that this study is limited to TripAdvisor as the single source and, are restricted to the U.S. market (albeit a large market).

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