WAYFINDING STRATEGIES AND PERFORMANCE OF APPS FOR RECOMMENDATION INTENTION: A CASE STUDY OF AIRBNB

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Abstract

Recommend suitable mobile applications (apps) for travelers will lead to travelers' convenience and satisfaction on their trip. It is possible to complete variety of transactions including shopping on- the-go for travel related products and services with this application. One of the advantages provided is the convenience to book hotel rooms via mobile devices. It is expected that mobile booking will become the predominant distribution channel for the lodging industry. Distinct from other apps which have emphasized its lowest price guarantee, Airbnb.com tends to give priority to geographical location to help travelers find the closest destination to their place of stay. The traveler's destination is not necessarily in the famous attractions; the features of Airbnb can help him live in a place closer to the destination. Nevertheless, travelers may feel lost when exposed to unfamiliar environments, which might result in the need for wayfinding. When looking for accommodations via apps, the convenience and utility of apps helps travelers clearly understand the relative position between the current location and destination, get the suggested route on the map, found themselves in wrong route and correct it.

This study will examine the role of the influence factors that make traveler recommends such travel mobile apps. Meanwhile, exploring how travelers connect the relationship between their accommodation and the destinations that influence the apps performance through strategies of wayfinding with apps. In this study, a recommendation intention model was formulated from the perspective of S-D logic, and respondent samples from the Airbnb.com were collected by providing a hyperlink to survey form from Airbnb.com users. According to snowball sampling, we require above users to invite other travelers who also had user experience on Airbnb.com. In total, 416 of which were returned, of which 132 were male and 284 were female. In this study, internal consistency reliability of the collected data was assessed by examining Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Construct validity be analyzed by factor analysis. The convergent and discriminant validity of the remaining items and scales were tested with confirmatory factory analysis by using the LISREL 8.50 software. The model and hypotheses were tested by using structural equation modeling.

Orientation strategy of wayfinding integrates all the paths in the environment and links them together into a map-like network, in contrast, route strategy of wayfinding focuses on information about the route to be followed. Travelers who tends to use route strategy, needing a sequence of instructions allowing one to navigate from one place to another. The findings of study point that orientation strategy and route strategy are both positively associated with convenience of apps and application utility respectively. Although the results suggest that convenience of apps is not positively associated with recommendation intention, it may arise from several reasons such as lacking of Internet in travel places. Therefore, a portable Wi-Fi router or an offline map in the apps is needed in this case. Final, the apps with excellent utility makes travelers put less effort to find out the most suitable accommodation. Application utility is a representative factor of utilitarian benefits, the more useful a traveler perceives the apps, the greater value he receives. Considering the demands of travelers before they need is the prime directive of enhancing the application utility. With satisfaction, continuance intention and hedonic benefit obtained from the apps; result in the travelers' intention of recommendation.