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Impact of Gratification Factors on User Satisfaction of Hotels' Facebook Pages and Their Visit Intention

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of gratification factors that increase user satisfaction of hotels' Facebook pages and to determine how user satisfaction affects visit intention of a hotel by applying the Uses and Gratifications (U&G) theory factors (e.g. five motivational factors of information, convenience, entertainment, self-expression and social interaction). Social Network Sites (SNS) have become one of the most popular ways people use to communicate with each other and among them Facebook has acquired a prominent place. Frequently, Businesses and Customers also tend to use SNSs respectively to promote their brands and search information regarding products and services. Currently social media has a strong presence in the hotel industry and especially Facebook pages can be identified as very popular marketing tool they used. As per the previous studies revealed there is an important research area to investigate whether there is an impact of gratification factors on user satisfaction with the hotel's Facebook pages and whether there is a positive relationship between user satisfaction with a hotel's Facebook page and intention to visit hotels in Sri Lankan context. This study conducted, as a quantitative study and it extracted data through a questionnaire by using 100 Facebook users who are engaging with the Facebook pages of targeted hotels' in Sri Lankan context. Accordingly, findings, information, entertainment and self-expression are positively impacted on hotel page user satisfaction and user satisfaction also has positive impact on hotel visit intention.

1. Introduction

The emergence of social media platforms and increasing customer adaption of these platforms has significantly shifted the way of individuals communicate and interact with each other and especially with brands. Social media has become one of the mainstream media platforms that connects one-third of the world's population [1]. There are numerous types of social media groups [2], "Social Networking Sites (SNSs)" in other words social media sites are one of the most popular ways people use to connect and network with each other [3]. Over the past decade, it has been significantly increased the number of users of social networking sites (SNSs) such as Facebook and Twitter[4] As per the global social media statistics Facebook has become the largest and one of the most popular and widely used social networking sites in the world as of July 2019 [5]. Further, social media such as Facebook made a significant influence on consumers' behavior in the current era. People regularly spend one –third of their time on social networking by log on it every day and it causes to

change the behavior of consumers [6]. As indexes of Sri Lankan context around 34.1% of people access the internet and there are 6.1 million Facebook users who are around 29% from entire population ((Facts & Published by J. Clement, ("Facebook users in Sri Lanka" 2019).

The immense growth of the population of internet users on social networking sites has had a tremendous influence on many industries and among them Hospitality and Tourism industry has acquired a prominent place [7]. Currently social media has a strong presence in tourism industry [8].

1.2 Research Problem

The growing role of Social Media in the tourism field has being becoming an interesting research topic and scholars and researchers also have shown an increasing interest on that area during the past two decades [9,10,11]. Although there were so many popular studies in the area of social media, website based studies, the topic of SNSs is less meaningful due to the basic format of SNS page limits

companies in the design of their SNS page [4]. Instead, it is crucial to understand what drives users to visit commercial SNSs and what factors make them satisfied with the SNSs because different motivational factors exist between personal SNS usage and commercial SNS usage. Uses and Gratifications (U&G) theory is an important theory in media researches and it has been utilized in significant number of researches which investigated the motivational factors for SNS usage [4,13]. However, majority of existing studies with related to SNSs have focused on users' motivations and gratification factors for personal SNS usage and it has not been fully investigated why users use commercial SNSs and what drives users to visit commercial SNSs [4,14].

Further, although Facebook is one of the widely used SNS in terms of hotel industry, most of the hotels limit to design commercial Facebook pages without focusing that much on the understanding of how driving factors influence to user satisfaction with their pages and visit intention to their hotels. According to the research findings of Choi's research study [4] which has been done based on the U&G theory, it has suggested three gratifications of information, convenience, and self-expression serve as antecedents for user satisfaction with the hotel's Facebook page, but two gratifications of entertainment and social interaction did not significantly affect user satisfaction with the hotel's Facebook page. The results of the study also showed a positive relationship between user satisfaction with a hotel's Facebook page and intention to stay at that hotel in the future [4]. These research studies have been investigated the impact of motivational factors on the satisfaction of hotels' Facebook page users and visit intention to hotels in world context. However, there is a problem that determines whether there is an impact of gratification factors on user satisfaction with the hotel's Facebook pages and whether there is such kind of positive relationship between user satisfaction with a hotel's Facebook page and intention to visit hotels in Sri Lankan context also. Even though this area has been investigated in world context it is difficult to find empirical evidences related to this research problem within Sri Lankan context and there is limited information regarding this topic with related to Sri Lankan hotel industry. Moreover most of the research in tourism industry in Sri Lanka have discussed about its sustainability, eco friendliness (12).

Therefore, in terms of Sri Lankan hotel industry there is a research problem existing with related to SNS usage area to investigate how the gratification factors influence to user satisfaction on Hotels' Facebook pages and their visit intention to hotels.

However, this area has not been fully investigated and still there is limited information regarding this research area in Sri Lankan context with related to hotel industry. Therefore, there is a contextual research gap relevant to the gratification factors on user satisfaction of hotel Facebook page visitors and their hotel visit intention. To fill this research gap, this study applies the U&G theory (gratification factors of information, convenience, entertainment, self-expression, and social interaction) and determine whether there is an impact of gratification factors on user satisfaction with the hotel's Facebook pages and whether there is positive relationship between user satisfaction with a hotel's Facebook page and intention to visit hotels in Sri Lankan context as same as in the world context.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Uses & Gratification Theory

The Uses and Gratifications (U&G) theory was introduced in the 1940s as an attempt to test relationships between mass media and respective audiences [15]. The main objective of the U&G theory is to explain people's psychological reasons and motivations for using a certain media and how that gratification fulfills their. Several researchers have identified unique gratification factors for SNS usage drawing from the U&G theory [13,15,16,17,18]. As tested the adaptability of the U&G theory on the use of Facebook and the findings of the study showed the U&G theory is relevant to the area of SNSs [15].

2.2 Gratification factors for Commercial Social Networking Sites (SNSs)

As per the short history of SNSs and similarity among the Internet, website, and SNSs, user motivations for the Internet and websites can serve as a fundamental framework for SNS research [4]. In order to the study of [16] information, convenience, entertainment, and social interaction have been identified as the motivations for using the Internet. Park et al. (2009) [17] studied the four motivational factors of SNSs; socializing, entertainment, self-status seeking, and information seeking. Commercial SNSs also maintain the friendly aspect of personal SNSs yet. Hence, with a combination of gratification factors from a study [16] about websites and the study of Park et al. (2009) [17] examined Hotel Facebook pages. Therefore, as Social Network Sites gratification factors, in this study it was included five motivational factors as, information, convenience, entertainment, self-expression, and social interaction, for visiting hotels' Facebook pages.

Information

In an online presence, information gratification refers to the extent to which the website provides helpful and resourceful information [19,20]. As found that⁵ information has the strongest effect on user's attitude toward websites which includes user satisfaction with the website. Choi et al. (2016) [4] also examined that information on SNSs influence on user satisfaction positively. Based on these rationales, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H1: Information gratification is positively associated with users' satisfaction with the hotel's Facebook page

Convenience

Convenience gratification defined to the extent to which users evaluate the website as simple to use, intuitive, and user friendly [21]. Most researchers have agreed with the finding that the convenience aspect is highly related to the success of online retailers [4]. However, some researchers have observed that the convenience aspect of the website does not guarantee the success of the website. Hence, considering these rationales following hypothesis was proposed:

H2: Convenience gratification is positively associated with users' satisfaction with the hotel's Facebook page.

Entertainment

Entertainment refers to the extent to which the users perceive using a website as fun and entertaining [4,20,22]. The entertainment value of a social networking site can be a crucial reason for consumers to adopt it [17,23]. Following hypothesis was used to identify whether entertainment factor has a significant influence on Facebook page user satisfaction:

H3: Entertainment gratification is positively associated with users' satisfaction with the hotel's Facebook page.

Self-Expression

Self-expression defined to the extent to which individuals attempt to control the impression that others have of them [24,25]. Compared to other media, the self-expression has been identified as a strong motivator for participation in the online environment and the most unique characteristic of SNSs [26]. Based on these rationales, the following hypothesis was suggested:

H4: Self-expression gratification is positively associated with users' satisfaction with the hotel's Facebook page.

Social Interaction

The definition of social interaction is the extent to which users connect with other users, by communicating interpersonally and expressing their social identity using the websites [17] examined that socializing is an important reason for users to participate in Facebook groups. Following hypothesis was proposed to identify whether social interaction has a significant impact on Facebook page user satisfaction related to hotel sector:

H5: Social interaction gratification is positively associated with users' satisfaction with the hotel's Facebook page.

2.3. User Satisfaction & Hotel Visit Intention

Studies that adopted the U&G approach examined that higher levels of satisfaction received from using various social media websites highly influenced purchase intentions [20,27,28,29]. Studies that used the U&G approach also indicated a direct relationship between traveler satisfaction and purchase intentions, with satisfaction as a strong mediating factor [20,27,28,29].

Purchase intention is a key loyalty dimension, and it is therefore likely that satisfaction with a website will increase the likelihood of purchase[30]. In an online setting, website satisfaction positively influences online purchase intention [30,31]. Therefore, following hypothesis was used:

H6: Users' satisfaction with the hotel's Facebook page is positively associated with intention to visit the hotel.

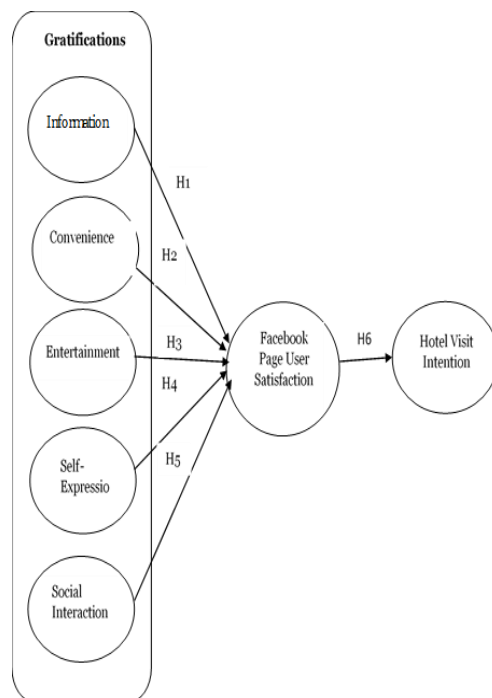


Figure -1: Conceptual Model

3. Material and Methods

3.1 Data Collection

As per this study, target population was the Facebook users who are engaging with the Sri Lankan hotels' Facebook pages. Facebook users who left comments on the hotels' Facebook pages and users who liked or reacted on hotel pages' postings, sharing posts on the selected hotels' Facebook fan pages was targeted as the population for this research. A total 128 online invitations were sent initially target respondents who have face any reaction such as 'liking', sharing or facing comments on the target hotels' Facebook fan pages. Due to the timeframe of the study was in Covid 19 pandemic (during March to June in 2020), researcher has limitation with use of other methods that can be more accurate with limited errors such as bias, variance, confidence intervals, prediction error).. Under the convenience sampling method 100 respondents were selected as the sample through the identified main five hotels, in Sri Lanka, which have the Facebook brand pages for their hotels. The selected five hotels mainly identified focused on its fan page population which is recording over one million views.

Data collection was done through sharing a link to an online questionnaire to the particular hotel Facebook page users who left comments and liked postings on the target hotels Facebook fan pages (e.g., Hilton hotel, Cinnamon Grand hotel, Kingsbury hotel, Shangri-La hotel and Jetwing hotel).

3.2 Measures

The questions and items were used based on literature and all the items except demographic information were measured on five point Likert-scale. Questionnaire consisted main two parts as demographic factors and multi item scale factors for the variables of the study. As the first step, demographic part consisted of 7 questions and the measurement part of the questionnaire included 21 questions to examine why users become a hotel's Facebook fan and also the extent of users' involvement with the hotel's Facebook fan page. All the three main variables of Gratification factors, Facebook page user satisfaction and Hotel visit intention measured using 21 adapted items from Choi et al. (2016) [4]. In this study, online satisfaction measured using the scale of Chen and Barnes (2007) [32] because it measured satisfaction with respect to the E-platforms which mostly similar in nature to social network sites. The purchase intention scale of Chen and Barnes (2007) [32] was used by Choi et al. (2016) [4] because it measured purchase intention with respect to the websites

which mostly similar in nature to social network sites.

4. Results and Discussion

According to the descriptive statistics on demographic factors the sample consisted of 58% male and 42% female respondents. Of the respondents 85% were aged in between 20-29 and only 13% were aged in between 30-39. 94% of high respondents' rate use Facebook as the mostly used social media site. Majority of respondents (43%) were spent 1-5 hours on Facebook while another 22% were being there in 11-20 hours per week. However, least times (less than an hour) only spending by 8% of them.

Moreover, 40% of respondents mostly have given their reactions by liking on Facebook brand pages, while they have reacted slightly often and moderately respectively in 22% and 25%. Further, nearly 60% of respondents have liked 1-5 hotel pages. Another 10% rated the interest to 11-15. Furthermore, more than half of reactions have given to these pages because of their self-preferences. Respectively, 15%, 12% and 18% of people have referred it on peer invitation, page advertising and the popularity of the hotel page.

Developed hypotheses were tested through, Structural Equation Modelling with Smart PLS 3 [33]. The reliability and internal consistency of the applied constructs and items were evaluated using indicator reliability and composite reliability. When examining the indicator reliability, one of the indicators which stating "I want to share my own negative hotel experience with others=0.631" has to be removed due to the outer loading value of 0.631 was smaller than the required threshold level of 0.7 [34]. After performing the loading relevance test to remove that outer loading it resulted in a significant increase in the reliability and validity values of Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted Values (AVE) that means convergent validity being over 0.7 and 0.5 threshold levels according to Bagozzi and Yi (1988) [34] respectively. Therefore, the Table 1 presents standardized factor loadings, Composite Reliability values and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values which revealed the final model consisted of acceptable reliability and validity in all three constructs.

As the next step discriminant validity was assessed and in order to the Fornell and Larcker (1981) (13) the square root of AVE of each latent variable should be larger than the Latent Variable Correlation (LVC). The results of Table 2 indicated that all AVEs were greater than LVCs, which

ensured the discriminant validity of all the constructs of this study.

As per the assessment of coefficient of determination (R²) of this study, there was a 54.2% (0.542) impact from all the five Gratification factors on the hotel Facebook page user satisfaction. As

well as, there was a 37.6% impact on hotel visit intention from hotel Facebook page user satisfaction. Both the impacts show a moderate sufficient impact from gratifications factors on Hotel visit intention via the User satisfaction with hotel Facebook pages.

Table- 1: Results of Reliability & Validity

Constructs	Item	Loading	CR	AVE
Information		0.849	0.653	
	-Information obtained from the hotel's Facebook page is helpful to me	0.844		
	-I learn a lot of information from using the hotel's Facebook page	0.833		
	-I visit the hotel's Facebook page because I get information on the quality of products faster than elsewhere	0.745		
Convenience			0.859	0.671
	-The hotel's Facebook page is the fastest way to get information	0.789		
	-The hotel's Facebook page saves time during hotel room shopping	0.827		
	-The hotel's Facebook page is an easy way to search from home or work	0.841		
Entertainment			0.915	0.782
	-The hotel's Facebook page is entertaining to me	0.868		
	-I enjoy surfing the hotel's Facebook page	0.899		
Self-Expression			0.967	0.937
	-It is fun to use the hotel's Facebook page	0.887		
	-I want to help others with my own positive hotel experience	0.967		
Social Interaction			0.887	0.724
	-I want to give others the opportunity to have a good hotel experience with sharing my experience	0.969		
	-I can see if others feel the same way about a hotel as I do	0.89		
Facebook Satisfaction			0.908	0.768
	-I like to compare my own evaluation about a hotel with others	0.841		
	-I feel much better when I read that I am not the only one who has a certain problem about a hotel	0.82		
	-I am satisfied with the experience of using the hotel's Facebook page	0.914		
Hotel Visit Intention			0.755	
	-My decision to visit the hotel's Facebook page was a wise one	0.815		
	-I am happy that I visited the hotel's Facebook page	0.896		
	-I look forward to visiting the hotel in the future	0.798		

-If I get a chance, I would consider staying at the hotel in the future	0.901
-If I get a chance, I intend to stay at the hotel in the future	0.904

Source: Study Survey (2020)

Table- 2: Results of Discriminant Validity

Variables	CON	ENT	FSAT	INF	SE	SI	VIH
CON	0.819						
ENT	0.361	0.885					
FSAT	0.332	0.61	0.876				
INF	0.407	0.298	0.506	0.808			
SE	0.118	0.158	0.401	0.302	0.968		
SI	0.351	0.235	0.323	0.27	0.316	0.851	
VIH	0.187	0.292	0.613	0.368	0.395	0.35	0.869

Source: Study Survey (2020)

Note: CON (Convenience), ENT (Entertainment), FSAT (Facebook page User Satisfaction), INF (Information), SE (Self-Expression), SI (Social Interaction), and VIH (Visit Intention to the Hotel)

The relationships between constructs were determined by examining their path coefficients and related t statistics and p values as shown in Table 3 path analysis results. Hypothesis 1, which hypothesized the positive impact of Information gratification on FSAT, was supported with path coefficient of 0.281 at the level of $p < 0.05$, meaning information on SNSs affect user satisfaction positively. Hypothesis 3 was supported by path coefficient of 0.477 ($p < 0.05$), suggesting the Entertainment on SNSs has a strong positive impact on user's satisfaction with the hotels' Facebook page. Likewise, as proposed in hypothesis 4, Self-Expression showed a positive relationship with hotel Facebook page user satisfaction with a path coefficient of 0.22 ($p < 0.05$).

Table-3: Results of Path Coefficients

Hypothesized Path	Standardized Path Coefficients	T Statistics	P Values	Result
H1: INF -> FSAT	0.281	2.911	0.004	Accepted
H2: CON -> FSAT	-0.003	0.036	0.972	Rejected
H3: ENT -> FSAT	0.477	5.694	0.000	Accepted
H4: SE -> FSAT	0.22	2.657	0.008	Accepted

H5: SI -> FSAT	0.067	0.891	0.373	Rejected
H6: FSAT -> VIH	0.613	10.23	0.000	Accepted

Source: Study Survey (2020)

However, hypothesis 2 for predicting a positive relationship between convenience and Facebook page user satisfaction was not supported showing a negative impact with a path coefficient of (- 0.003) and also hypothesis 5, which proposed a positive impact of social interaction gratification on FSAT indicating an insignificant impact with a path coefficient of 0.067. Hypothesis 6, which proposed the relationship between users' satisfaction with the hotel's Facebook page and users' visit intention to the hotel, was supported by a strong significant path coefficient of 0.613 ($p < 0.000$). Accordingly, hypothesis 1, 3, 4 and 6 were accepted indicating significant positive relationships and hypothesis 2 and 5 had to be rejected due to the insignificant relationships between the particular variables.

5. Conclusion

Through this study, it was examined why users visit a commercial Facebook fan page and also the link between satisfied users with a commercial Facebook fan page and purchase intention of the brand. The current study further advances the area of social media marketing by identifying users' gratification factors for visiting hotels' Facebook fan page drawing from the U&G theory and exploring the direct impact of users who are satisfied with the hotel's Facebook page on their visit intention to the hotel.

Analysis is indicated that three gratification factors (Information, Entertainment, Self-expression, display significant positive relationship on user's satisfaction with the hotels' Facebook page and also intention to visit the hotel. As proved through the hypothesis 1 (H1), Information gratification on FSAT is affect user satisfaction positively, Hence, the findings stress that, availability of adequate information, it can effect strongly for consumers' attitudes as well as user satisfaction positively in accordance with past research Choi et al. (2016) [4]. The findings of the current study are line with the past researches suggestions like; means there is positive significant relationship between these two variables that entertainment value of a social networking site can be a crucial reason for consumers to adopt it as well as significant influence on Facebook page user satisfaction [17, 23] with the acceptance of 3rd hypothesis. The previously founded information that self-expression makes strong motivation for participation in the online environment and the most unique characteristic of SNSs [26] has determined by the current study as well.

The findings of this study demonstrate several theoretical and practical implications. Primarily, this study investigated five gratification factors that bring users' satisfaction of a hotel's Facebook fan page based on the U&G theory. The study makes weighted contribution to international marketing and online marketing phenomenon. Drawing upon the theories upon consumer decision-making, the study provides an effective framework for function of social media mainly as principle source of forming intention.

The findings of this study indicated that some of the gratification factors for internet and personal SNSs could be applied to commercial SNSs, but not every gratification factor is suitable for applying to commercial SNSs. Particularly, the findings emphasized the information factor, entertainment factor, self-expression factor as the most important gratification factors for internet and SNS usage specially Facebook. The findings suggest commercial SNSs are another form of company managed websites and companies should include information related to their products and services in commercial SNSs to satisfy their users. Further, these findings indicated that hotel Facebook page users visit those pages to express their feelings and also to be entertained and thereby they are more satisfied with the Facebook fan page.

However, convenience factor and the social interaction factor had not a strongest influence on users' satisfaction with the hotel's Facebook page in

order to these findings. Even though these convenience and social interaction gratifications are not significant for user satisfaction previous literature reviewed the convenience as a significant motivation to use websites and internet. Therefore hotels can improve those aspects by making easier their pages to use and put more stuffs to increase social interactions with users. And also further improvement should be there in information, Entertainment and self-expression aspects to more satisfy the page users. For that they can increase more information sharing posts and provide enough up-to-date information, and also posting more entertaining posts and videos about their service. By encouraging users to share their feelings and opinions, users will be more satisfied with their hotel pages.

Overall, the findings revealed the importance of managing hotels' Facebook pages because users who are satisfied with their hotel brand pages do have a higher intention to visit those hotels in the future. Therefore, these study findings provided a reason for companies to pay attention on Social Network Sites as an effective marketing tool.

Even though this study emphasized meaningful findings, limitations related to this study should be addressed. The current study focused on Facebook, so the findings of this study might be hard to generalize to other SNSs because each SNS provides different functions to users. The next limitation lies within the types of hotels that were studied (i.e. chain hotels vs. local hotels). Some chain hotel Facebook pages are operated by the parent corporation while other hotels have their own Facebook page. Thus, more research is needed in order to compare the types of hotels. Further, there was limitations when selecting the sample also because in this study researcher selected 100 respondents as sample size and also main five hotels who are conducting hotel pages throughout the whole population and it was another limitations based on the sample.

Future research could include a comprehensive investigation regarding consumer expectations, attitudes and satisfaction toward hotel Facebook pages. And also, considering Social media marketing being active as a whole in the society, further researchers can be done in other industries as well. Thus, adding more dimensions or mediating variables may help to develop a more reliable model. Thereby, reviews further can be studied in human traits that can be classified as into the senders and receivers point of view as well as on hotel categories such as star and normal hotels, eco-friendly hotels.

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