Chapter 8

CONCLUSION

This chapter summarizes the entire research conducted by the researcher. The synthesis of the research work will help the academicians and tourism industry in understanding the perceptions of online shoppers and the ways of building trust in the virtual world. The detailed organization of the chapter is as follows:

8.1 Summary
8.2 Recommendations
8.3 Consistency of results with literature
8.4 Future Scope of the Study
This study has been undertaken with a view to identify the factors that are crucial for building trust in online tourism companies in India and also study the impact of consumer trust on customer satisfaction. The study revealed the following results summarized below.

8.1 SUMMARY

1. This study has been built upon prior studies by showing that demographic variables have a significant impact on consumer characteristics including the shopping orientations as well as attitude towards shopping online. Previous studies have added to the researcher’s understanding whereas no other published study has explicitly shown how demographics have an impact on consumers’ preferences for shopping online in Indian tourism industry.

2. The results of this study are in line with other studies (Girard et al, 2003) where consumers who prefer to shop online are predominantly economical as well as convenience oriented shoppers. Customers enjoy online shopping as they link online shopping with its convenience and the economical aspect where the companies offer a good deal or discount than the traditional travel agents.

3. Males and married people are inclined more towards online shopping as they are more convenience oriented than against unmarried population and females who consider shopping as more of a recreational and experiential experience.

4. Elderly people are inclined more towards Recreational Orientation and Experiential Orientation whereas younger people are more convenience oriented and seek economical aspect of shopping.

5. This study proposed a model that represents the factors that help in building consumer trust in an online tourism company in India. Seven factors have been identified as important variables having a significant impact on consumer trust namely; Website characteristics (Swaminathan etal, 1999; Wolfinbarger & Gilly, 2002; Hong-Youl Ha, 2004; Chen, 2006; Stewart, 2006; Gregori & Daniele, 2011; Ron, 2011 Personalization (Chen & Barnes, 2007), website information (Mcknnight et al., 2002; Hee-Woong et al, 2004) , promotional deals, availability, price competitiveness (Delina & Drab, 2010) and refund policy (Zhou & Tian, 2010).
6. The study revealed that although the customers find the tourism websites efficient and easy to navigate and are also impressed by the layout, graphics and all time availability of the website, but this doesn’t lead to their satisfaction or increased purchase intention unlike Wen, 2010 and Phelan, 2011. Study conducted by Wen (2010) revealed that consumers evaluate website design and quality as important factors for building trust and thereby influence online purchase intention whereas Phelan (2011) concluded that booking decisions are positively related to website’s aesthetic appeal.

7. Indian Customers are more attracted by promotional deals and discount offers which are available more on the tourism websites (than with the travel agents) because of which they feel more satisfied with online tour planning. Similarly, provision of competitive prices of travel mode, accommodation, etc. also lead to more satisfaction of customers. This may be due to the fact that these are evaluated as “Expected Quality” parameters, which should be present in a website.

8. This study also highlights an important criterion that although online tourism companies lack to cater the specific needs of the customers, lack in providing efficient refund policies and updated information, still the Indian customers are attracted towards tourism websites (as against Taylor & Baker, 1994; Oliver, 1997; Heskett, 2008) because of their promotional offers and price competitiveness. They don’t expect personalized attention and feel satisfied only if they get attractive discount offers and schemes.

9. Employees of the online tourism companies on the other hand perceive that still a big chunk of market is not tapped as only 20% of the customers purchase tour packages online, while mostly the customers visit the websites for undergoing comparisons for tour packages or planning tours later.

10. Employees design the website which is easy to navigate and processes faster. They believe that if they respond to the customer’s queries well on time and by providing promotional deals and offers motivate the customers for online tour planning.

11. The positive aspect of these travel companies is that most of the customers are loyal and go for repeat purchase provided some sort of offers are given to them. Their satisfaction level can be enhanced with customized solutions/packages while improving their services.
As far as trust is concerned, competitive prices is the most crucial factor in building trust in the minds of the customers.

8.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the above mentioned points, researcher has proposed certain recommendations for the online companies in general (and tourism industry in particular). These include:

1. Companies should consider demographic variables while targeting its customers. Companies should focus on people with economic and convenience shopping orientation.
2. Younger generation, preferably married males can be the possible target audience for these companies who resort to new ways of shopping. Apart from these shoppers, the others can be targeted by providing them attractive offers.
3. While designing the website, companies should focus on the following parameters to build trust amongst its customers. They include: good and attractive layout of the website, personalisation of services, qualitative and updated information, promotional offers, all time availability, competitive tour plans as well as proper refund policy.
4. Although Indian customers trust the online tourism companies with good graphics and layout, therefore companies should pay attention on its designing for attracting more customers. The websites should be graphically pleasing, has a stable and reliable purchase system and must respond to consumers’ queries in a timely manner.
5. Once the customers are attracted and acquired, the question arises as to how to retain them. In order to retain the customers, companies should provide more and more promotional deals and offers.

This will help online tourism companies in understanding their consumers and their perceptions better. This will facilitate the companies in attracting more customers by targeting the right audience and retaining them for longer time duration. Also, the research work will be beneficial for the academicians for undergoing research of virtual world by understanding their perceptions and shopping orientations better.

8.3 CONSISTENCY OF RESULTS WITH LITERATURE
Our research work was undertaken in the year 2010, wherein very few studies were conducted in Indian context. Below is the comparison of findings of our study viz-a-viz other similar studies conducted in India in recent years. The results show that except one study all studies are consistent.

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<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Research Articles (References)</th>
<th>Findings of their study</th>
<th>Findings of our study</th>
<th>Consistent/Inconsistent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Khare, A. &amp; Khare, A. (2010). Travel and tourism industry yet to exploit the internet fully in India. <em>Journal of Database Marketing &amp; Customer Strategy Management</em>, 17, 106-119.</td>
<td>Customers prefer to carry out transactions with a service provider they trust. They suggested that websites should be more user-friendly and the instructions should be easy to follow and understand.</td>
<td>Although the customers find the tourism websites efficient and easy to navigate and are also impressed by the layout, graphics and all time availability of the website, but this doesn’t lead to their satisfaction. This may be due to the fact that these are evaluated as “Expected Quality” parameters, which should be present in a website.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Ganguly, B., Dash, S., &amp; Cyr, D. (2011). The influence of website characteristics on trust in online travel portals in India: the moderating role of demographic and psychographic variables. <em>Tourism</em></td>
<td>Website trust is one of the key obstacles of online transactions. They investigated the key antecedents of consumer trust in online travel portals and concluded that Indian consumers give most importance to</td>
<td>Seven factors are found to be the antecedents of consumer trust, which are: website characteristics, personalization, website information, promotional deals, availability, price competitiveness and</td>
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<td>Source</td>
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<td>Banerjee, M. &amp; Banerjee, N. (2012). An empirical study on factors influencing consumers’ trust in e-tailers – evidence from India. International Journal of Business and Social Research, 2(7), 46-61.</td>
<td>People who prefer to purchase online include younger generation, professionals in service, post graduates and financially well off. The website should be easy to use, have a clear refund policy, include extensive information, etc.</td>
<td>Younger generation and that also males enjoy online shopping more than the elderly people as they find it more convenient and hassle free.</td>
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<td>Sinha, J. &amp; Kim, J. (2012). Factors affecting Indian consumers’ online buying behavior. Innovative Marketing, 8(2), 46-57.</td>
<td>The retail managers should sway consumers through ads, promotions and online only discounts.</td>
<td>Indian Customers are more attracted by promotional deals and discount offers which are available more on the tourism websites (than with the travel agents) because of which they feel more satisfied with online tour planning.</td>
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<td>Kaur, B. &amp; Madan, S. (2013). Factors influencing trust in online shopping: Brand recognition, website</td>
<td></td>
<td>Seven factors are found to be the antecedents of consumer trust, which are: website characteristics,</td>
<td>Consistent</td>
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<td>Males’ attitude towards online shopping is more positive than females as they enjoy online shopping as they find it easy and convenient. The impact of all seven factors of consumer trust on customer satisfaction has been studied. Out of all the seven factors, only Promotional Deals and Price Competitiveness significantly influence Customer Satisfaction.</td>
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<td>Jain, K., Sharma, J. &amp; Jain, J. (2013). Drivers affecting e-tourism services adoptability. <em>International Journal of Advanced Research in IT and Engineering</em>, 2(10), 87-99.</td>
<td>Website should be user-friendly, the consumers can very conveniently plan the tours online at any point of time. They opined that promotional strategies of online services also</td>
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<td>Thamizhvanan, A. &amp; Xavier, M. J. (2013). Determinants of consumers’ online purchase intention: an empirical study in India. <em>Journal of India Business Research</em>, 5(1), 17-32.</td>
<td>Males as compared to females were found to have more intention to shop online. Moreover, Indian online shoppers typically tend to seek offers and great value price deals instead of brand or quality.</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Consistent</td>
<td>Sahney, S., Ghosh, K. &amp; Shrivastava, A. (2013).</td>
<td>Conceptualising consumer “trust” in online buying behavior: an empirical inquiry and model development in Indian context. <em>Journal of Asia Business Studies, 7</em>(3), 278-298. Online based trust constructs have a significant impact on intention of buyers of booking / purchasing railway tickets online in India. Employees design the website which is easy to navigate and processes faster. They believe that if they respond to the customer’s queries well on time and by providing promotional deals and offers motivate the customers for online tour planning.</td>
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### 8.4 FUTURE SCOPE OF RESEARCH

This study enhances the current body of knowledge on customers’ beliefs of online companies with special reference to understanding of consumer trust in online tourism companies. This study can be further explored and studied in context of other industries. Also, the relation between demographic variables and shopping orientations can be further explored to understand target audience for different products. Furthermore, the effectiveness of employing strategies to enhance satisfaction level can also be measured. Hence, the study is very useful in studying and analyzing perceptions and behaviour of online customers.