

WORKSHOP 1

THE USE OF CONTENT ANALYSIS ON HOTELS' WEBSITES AS COMMUNICATION TOOLS

Vicky C. Katsoni

Technological Educational Institute of Athens, Greece
katsoniv@teiath.gr

Androniki G. Kavoura

Technological Educational Institute of Athens, Greece
nkavoura@teiath.gr

ABSTRACT

This research employs a combination of content and semiological analysis taking hotels' websites in Attica, Greece as a case study. Content analysis is widely used in tourism and management research (Berg, 2004; Neuendorf, 2002), as it provides rich and in-depth accounts on a wide range of topics. When content analysis combines both the descriptive and interpretive approaches, then it is not merely a quantification of qualitative text data (Roller, Mathes, & Eckert, 1995); this view is followed in this research combining qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. The content analysis applied here, establishes categories within the framework of hotels' websites in Athens, in order to determine content elements that are most commonly used. More specifically, according to the theoretical background of the study, particular emphasis is given to determine the existence of the general website features, such as visual appearance, information quality and variety, ease of use, interactivity and personalization and also features from the users' point of view (such as online service quality and assessment). The study aims to provide a platform, consisting of a set of website characteristics, in order to help tourism marketers in the hotel industry maximize the persuasiveness of their websites as significant communication and advertising tools aiming to increase hotels' visitation.

Key-words: content analysis, semiotics, hotels' websites analysis, e-tourism, communication, web-based research

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