



**A STUDY ON THE STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY LEADING
BRAND IN E-TRAVEL INDUSTRY IN INDIA**

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Abstract

India has become a popular business market for online tourism and travel. The online travel providers aim to ease travel planning and bookings for travelers. The key growth drivers of the e-travel industry are the proliferation of mobile usage and innovative mobile travel apps. Easy accessibility and hassle-free functioning of these apps have fueled the growth of online travel and tourism industry. The study is conducted with the objective of identifying the impact of various strategies adopted by MakeMyTrip in becoming a leading brand in e-travel industry in India. The study is based on an online survey which has been conducted to know the factors which attracts the customers to plan their travel from MakeMyTrip. The respondents of this survey belong to the various customer segments including demographic, psychographic and behavioral aspects. All the measures and steps which are required for enhancing the performance of MMT have been studied in this research.

Keywords: Tourism, e-travel, online travel, Makemytrip

1. INTRODUCTION

MakeMyTrip is a pioneer in India's online travel industry. The company initiated its journey in the US market in the year 2000 to cater to the Overseas Indian Community for their US to India travel needs. It started Indian operations in September 2005, offering online flight tickets to Indian travellers. It was founded by Deep Kalra, an alumnus of IIM-Ahmedabad. The headquarter of the company is situated in Gurugram, Haryana. MMT's tagline "Dil Toh Roaming Hai" focuses on the desires of the heart, a little voice that motivates a person to start fulfilling his/her travel dreams and live life to the fullest. With a multitude of offerings, MMT aims to provide experience leisure travel like never.

In 2016, MakeMyTrip and Ibibo Group, India's largest travel booking portals, merged. Since then the company has become a one stop shop for all Indian traveler's and is a collection of leading travel brands such as MakeMyTrip, Goibibo, Redbus, Ryde and Rightstay. MMT has taken the lion's share of the Indian online travel pie. MMT holds 42% of the market share in the e-travel industry. This shows the proliferation of MMT in the online travel industry. The main competitors of MMT are Yatra, Cleartrip, Travel Triangle and Bookings.com.

MMT Rigorous Marketing Strategies

Product Strategy: It provides wide range of products and services including airline, bus and rail tickets, hotel bookings, variety of holiday packages etc.

Pricing Strategy: The pricing strategy adopted by MMT is the "Competitive Pricing Model" which provides the users with best offers and deals amongst various travel facilitators.

Place and Distribution Strategy: The company has also adopted "Internet marketing strategy" for its distribution. Apart from this MMT also has offline presence across India, New York and Sydney.

Promotion and Advertising Strategy: Majority of its promotion is done through "digital marketing and social media marketing". The company has used platforms such as facebook, twitter, youtube, television commercials and newspaper advertisements.

MMT has increased its brand awareness by providing various promotional offers as well.

To become a giant in the e-travel industry, MMT provides various features to its customers. These features are:

Zero Cancellation Charges: This feature reduces the burden of cancellation fees. It comes with a nominal price and ensures customer's stress-free travel experience.

Pay Later Feature: It is a deferred payment feature which allows the customers to book a flight or hotel by just paying a fraction of the total cost. The rest of the amount can be paid later in instalments.

Pay at Checkout Feature: Through this feature the customers will have the option to pay after enjoying their stay at the hotel-at checkout. This feature also ensures confirmed booking of hotel rooms.

Special Logged-in Pricing and Competitive Pricing: Under the Special Logged-in feature, the prices shown on the travel website or app significantly drops if we create an account and sign in. The main pricing model adopted by MMT is the "Competitive Pricing Model". It provides the users with best offers and deals amongst various travel facilitators. It provides the customers, a wide range of options to choose according to their preference and budget.

Largest Inventory Feature: Under this feature even if the customers find their favourite hotel listed as "full" on the hotel's website, they can still find a vacancy on the MMT app. It also allows its customers to choose amongst a large number of hotels offered to them. They can search the hotels based on their selection criteria such as type, budget, location, amenities etc.

Great Stays at Assured Hotels: The customers get an opportunity to secure their stay with hotels having the "MMT Assured Badge". These hotels are a cherry-picked lot. These hotels are quality-checked and guarantees spectacular service. MMT Assured Hotels offer spanking clean rooms, stellar service and a 24-hour hotline that addresses all your complaints within an hour (or else, free stay!)

MakeMyTrip has taken its next step in quest to become travel super app: “Trip Ideas” is the latest service added by MMT so as to become travel super app. It displays destination videos on its mobile app. This is done to inspire the travellers at the start of their travel planning and then provide personalized recommendations throughout their journey. It is available on both iPhone and Android apps. Every idea shown in the videos is bookable through links displayed at the end. About 10% of the app’s one million daily users are accessing the video content already. The idea behind this is to make the trip so connected that the customers could use a single window to explore and book, seamlessly.

In order to provide an indelible experience to its customer, MMT offers various exclusive flight deals, hotels deal and eye-popping holiday packages on trending holiday destinations. Besides these exciting deals, there are villas and apartments which adds comfort and privacy of homes for its customers. MMT has also come up with Holiday Cruise bookings. If the customers are finding it difficult to settle for a particular destination, then they should definitely try this exclusive deal.

MMT also provides various other offers such as Travel Hassle-free (No date change charge is applicable.), Visa Clearance(for countries like Australia, Indonesia, Maldives, Singapore, Thailand, USA, Mauritius, UK etc.), MyBiz (stress-free changing of travel plans for corporate.) and Trains, Buses and Cab Bookings. MMT gift cards are also one of the centerpieces for its customers.

The Advertising Push: MakeMyTrip has launched various TV commercials with its brand ambassadors- Ranveer Singh and Alia Bhatt. The theme of the campaign is to address the unforeseen issues like end moment change of plans, flight cancellations, assistance during foreign trips for consumers travelling abroad etc.Both Ranveer and Alia are depicted in different avatars to convey the message in a captivating way through television commercials. The ad campaign highlights the customer focused features.Apart from Ranveer and Alia, Diana Penty has also been featured in the MMT advertisement.

All these strategies and the value-added features provided by MMT helped it to surpass all its competitors and become a leader in the online travel industry.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

A good amount of research has been conducted on this topic to know the actual behaviour of the customers towards Make my trip.

Kim (2004) stated that there is a huge gap in between traditional and the technological way in which the travel and tourism industry is moving and also that there are various hindrances for travel and tourism industry to adapt e-commerce in their business. Rossini, Angelo stated that the rise of digital world has led to disturbances in the traditional travel industry. Rossini says that the e-travel industry has been benefited due to travel automation. People in 21st century plan and book their holidays from such online travel portals for the sake of their convenience. To sustain in the business various tour operators are adopting OTPs and mobile channels in their business.

Chanchlani, Madhav (2015) outlined the benefits which MMT has got by picking 28% stake for 95 crore in HolidayIQ (an online travel community and information portal powered by user-generated content). Chanchlani stated that there will be a boost in the hotel and holiday business which contributes to as much as the airline ticketing business for the company.

Horn, Meloy (2016) outlined the combination of Ibibo Group and MMT as one of the largest travel groups in India. 100% of ibibo was sold to MMT in exchange for the issuance of new shares by MMT. Meloy further stated that this combination will bring together a bucket of leading consumer travel brands including makemytrip, goibibo, redbus, ryde and rightstay. It will combine the strengths of both the travel groups and will help to add value to the customers.

Gandhi, Forum (2019) outlined the advantage of Artificial Intelligence for MakeMyTrip. Gandhi added that AI would provide a unique experience to its customers like never before. With the use of its AI-powered chatbots, customers will get suggestions and alerts of rail/flight bookings, baggage details, and even suggestions for car bookings. Customers will also be able to book tickets by using their voice and by talking to the chatbots.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Methodology is considered as the nerve of the project. A framework or blueprint for conducting the research project is made which is referred as the research

design. A good research design lays the foundation for conducting the project. The project was carried out by collecting both primary and secondary data.

3.1 Sample Size

Sample size measures the number of individual samples measured or observations used in a survey or experiment. A structured questionnaire is prepared to conduct this research and a sample of 150 respondents is taken to do the analysis.

3.2 Sampling Method

To carry out this research, convenience sampling method was used.

Convenience sampling (also known as availability sampling) is a specific type of non probability sampling method that relies on data collection from population members who are conveniently available to participate in study.

3.3 Data Collection Method

The objectives of the project are such that both primary and secondary data is required to achieve them. So, both primary and secondary data was used for the project.

Primary data: The primary data was collected to measure the customer satisfaction and their perception regarding Make My Trip. The primary data was collected by means of questionnaire and analysis was done based on response received from the respondents. The questionnaire has been designed in such a manner that the consumer's satisfaction level can be measured, and consumer can enter their responses easily.

Secondary data: The purpose of collecting secondary data was to achieve the objective and study the recent trends and developments taking place. The sources of secondary data are Websites, Articles, Journals, etc

3.4 Limitations

- i. The research work is subject to time constrictions.
- ii. An Opinion survey has been restricted to 150 respondents.
- iii. The data collected in this study covers huge cost.
- iv. Responses received through questionnaires from the respondents can be biased.
- v. There is a lack of face-to-face interaction with the respondents since it is an online survey.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

A detailed questionnaire was prepared which was used to get the feedback of the respondents. The responses of the customers are valued in this analysis to find their level of satisfaction for the products and services offered by MMT. The percentage analysis gives the percentage of the respondent's satisfaction with regards to the various factors which drives them to stick to the MMT app/website to plan their travel. The details of detailed analysis are

4.1 Names of the respondents

4.2 Frequency of travelling

In Fig.1, data can be interpreted that out of 100%, approximately 37% of the respondents travel half yearly, 27% of the respondents travel quarterly, 24% of the respondents travel yearly and rest of them travel on a monthly basis.

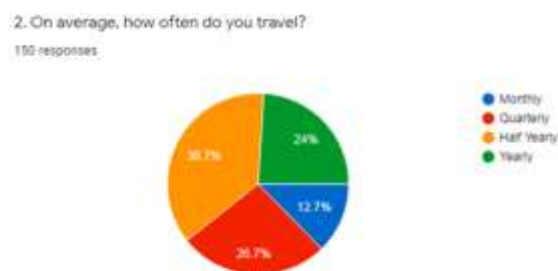


Fig.1 Frequency of Travelling

4.3 Plane tickets purchase



Fig.2 Plane Ticket Purchase

In Fig.2, data can be interpreted that out of 100%, 80% of the respondents purchase their plane tickets through an online travel site/app, while 20% of the respondents purchase it directly from an airline's website.

4.4 People using Make My Trip App

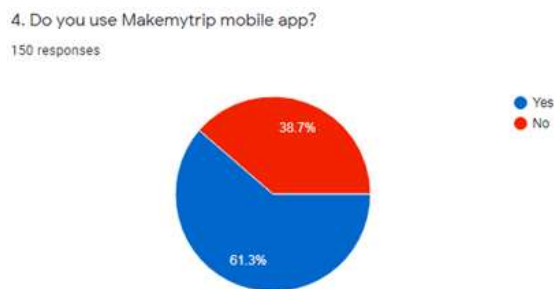


Fig.3 People using Make My Trip App

Fig.3 can be interpreted that out of 100%, approximately 61% of the respondents use MMT app while 39% of the respondents do not.

4.5 Travel Arrangement Preferences

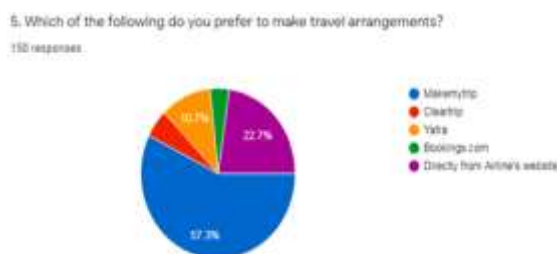


Fig.4 Travel Arrangement Preferences

From Fig.4, it can be interpreted that out of 100%, approximately 57% of the respondents prefer to make their travel arrangements from MakeMyTrip, 23% prefer to make their travel arrangements directly from the airline’s website and rest 20% of the respondents use other modes for this purpose.

4.6 Reason for their above preference



Fig.5 Reason for their above preference

From Fig.5, it can be interpreted that out of 100%, approximately 41% of the respondents prefer to make their travel arrangements based on the user friendliness of the mobile app, 23% of the respondents go for competitive pricing factor and rest 36% of the respondent’s preference depends on the easy cancellation facility and the exclusive deals offered to them.

4.7 Aware of Pay Later feature

From Fig.6, it can be interpreted that out of 100%, approximately 53% of the respondents were unaware of the pay later feature provided by MMT whereas approximately 47% of the respondents were aware of this feature.

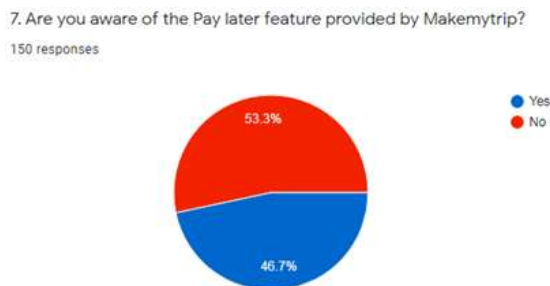


Fig.6 Aware of Pay Later feature

4.8 Aware of Pay at checkout feature

From Fig.7, it can be interpreted that out of 100%, approximately 53% of the respondents were unaware of the pay at checkout feature provided by MMT whereas approximately 47% of the respondents were aware of this feature.

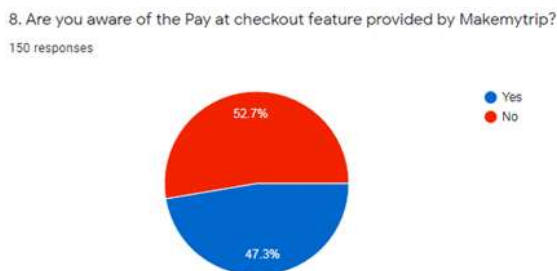


Fig.7 Aware of Pay at checkout feature

4.9 Aware of Zero Cancellation Charges feature

From Fig.8, it can be interpreted that out of 100%, approximately 67% of the respondents were aware of the zero cancellation charges feature provided by MMT whereas approximately 33% of the respondents were not aware of this feature.



Fig.8 Aware of Zero Cancellation Charges feature

4.10 Aware of Largest Inventory feature

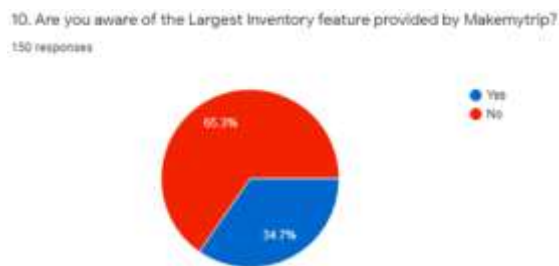


Fig.9 Aware of Largest Inventory feature

From Fig9, it can be interpreted that out of 100%, approximately 65% of the respondents were unaware of the largest inventory feature provided by MMT whereas approx 47% of the respondents were aware of this feature.

4.11 Aware of Special Logged-in Pricing feature



Fig.10 Aware of Special Logged-in Pricing feature

From Fig.10, it can be interpreted that out of 100%, 64% of the respondents were unaware of the special logged-in feature provided by MMT whereas 36% of the respondents were aware of this feature.

4.12 Have they ever used these features?

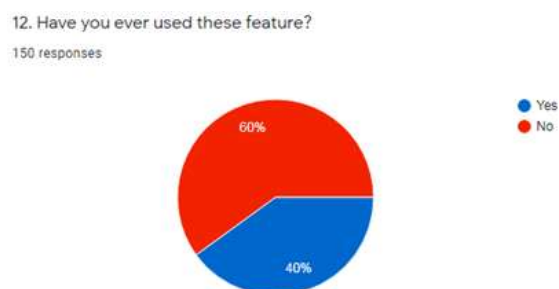


fig.11 Have they ever used these features?

From Fig.11, it can be interpreted that out of 100%, 60% of the respondents have not used these features provided by MMT whereas 40% of the respondents have used them.

4.13 Have advertisements led to a push in the usage of MMT app

From Fig.12, it can be interpreted that out of 100%, approximately 71% of the respondents think that advertisements have led to a push in the usage of the MMT app whereas 29% of the respondents do not agree to this.

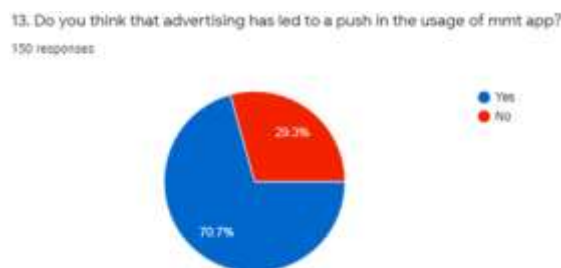


Fig.12 Advertisements usage of MMT app

4.14 Satisfaction level of the customers

From Fig.13, it can be interpreted that out of 100%, approximately 43% of the respondents were satisfied with the level and quality of service provided by MMT, 35% of the respondents had neutral response, 16% of the respondents very extremely satisfied whereas rest 6% of the respondents were dissatisfied with the same.

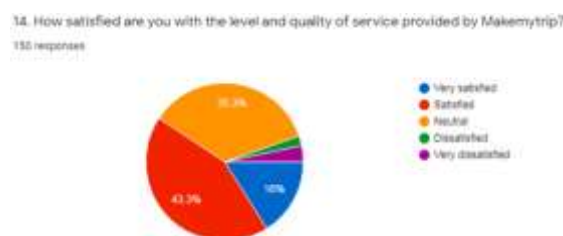


Fig.13 Satisfaction level of the customers

4.15 Would people recommend the MMT app to others?

From Fig.14, it can be interpreted that out of 100%, approximately 79% of the respondents would like to recommend the MMT app to others whereas 21% of the respondents would not.

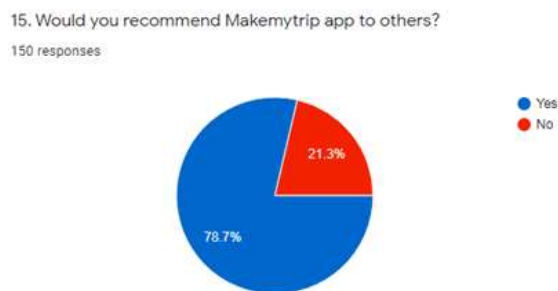


Fig.14 Would people recommend the MMT app to others?

5. FINDINGS

From the survey, it was found that MMT has come up with various fascinating deals and holiday packages in order to cater to the travel needs of the travellers. It was found that almost 36% of the respondents travel in every 6 months and majority of them prefer to book their tickets from an online website or application. Most of the respondents prefer to use MMT app to make their travel arrangements. It is evident from the survey that MMT is a user-friendly mobile app and hence people find it convenient to use.

Through this research it was found that people prefer MMT due to the competitive pricing which it offers to its customers. This study also shows that majority of the respondents were unaware about the features which MMT offers. Most of the respondents were only aware about the zero cancellation charges feature which MMT offers and have also used it. Majority of the respondents think that advertising has led to a push in the usage of MMT app. This study gives a clear picture that the customers of MMT are quite satisfied with its product and services and like to recommend it to others. MMT has come a long way and has achieved various endeavors in the e-travel industry and is now one of the leading brands in the market.

CONCLUSION

From the above survey it can be concluded that the use of online travel portals is increasing overtime and MMT is one of the first portal in this category which has been very successful in the market. MakeMyTrip has emerged as a leading travel planner for the travellers in India. After conducting a detailed study, the analysis shows that most of the respondents like to plan their travel from MMT due to its user-friendly app and the competitive pricing which it offers. In this digital oriented world, technology plays

a major role in day to day activities and people prefer such portals for their convenience and to save their time. Though MMT is one of the leading portals for online travel bookings but still most of the people are not aware of the exclusive features which MMT offers. From the above finding it can also be concluded that MMT provides fascinating deals for its customers so that they can enjoy their dreamy holiday.

MMT has favorable and unfavorable aspects as well. The favorable aspect is that it provides lot of benefits to its customers which some of its competitors fail to provide and less awareness among people is its negative side which hinders them to plan their travel from MMT.

FUTURE SCOPE OF RESEARCH

Following are some of the suggestions that MMT should inculcate for its betterment: Events, campaigns, and other demonstrations should be done frequently. MMT should show the live travel experiences of their customers on their youtube channel. From this the prospect customers maybe attracted. Rigorous advertising strategies should be adopted to spread awareness about the exclusive features provided by MMT. To be a global leader in the e-travel industry MMT should expand its presence in each and every country. For frequent travellers, MMT can come up with premium annual subscription which may provide added benefits to them. Example: Get upto 50% off on every meal if you are a premium customer or discounts on cabs and hotel bookings can also be provided. Replenish the data on the website on regular basis. Add engaging content on the website. Arrange regular incentive tours for its employees to improve their work efficiency. Acknowledge feedbacks given and clear the queries immediately.

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