

WOM and Loyalty: Differences Between Package-buyers and Self-packers

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Abstract

A vacation can be bought as a package (package-buyers) or put together by the traveler themselves (self-packers). The latter alternative requires a higher level of involvement. The relationships between involvement and word of mouth (WOM) has previously been established in the literature. Nevertheless, while previous research has focused on how involvement with product and purchase decisions affect WOM, less attention has been given to how differences between types of vacation buyers affect satisfaction and WOM, and in turn, loyalty. Drawing on previous research on the role of involvement, loyalty, and satisfaction, we study differences in WOM intentions and loyalty between self-packers and package-buyers. We use data from a large field study (N=5158) in a travel planning context. We find that package-buyers are more likely to recommend the planning process compared to self-packers, while self-packers are more likely to repeat the same planning process, compared to package buyers. The findings have both theoretical and practical implications.

Keywords: *Vacation planning ; Word of mouth; Loyalty*

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