

TOURISTS' E-COMPLAINTS ABOUT ONLINE TRAVEL AGENCIES Turistlerin Çevrimiçi Seyahat Acentaları Hakkındaki E-Şikâyetleri

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Öz

Çalışmanın temel amacı içerik analizi kullanılarak çevrimiçi seyahat acentaları (OTAs) için turistlerin e-şikâyetlerini anlamak ve analiz etmektir. Örnekleme, acentaların seyahat hizmetleri hakkındaki 410 e-şikâyetten oluşmaktadır. Teorik altyapı olarak acenta hizmetlerinde aktörlerin şikâyetlerini anlamayı sağlamaya yarayacak olan paydaş yaklaşımı dikkate alınacaktır. Bu çalışmada turistik faaliyetlerin içindeki paydaşlar turistlerdir. Turistlerin en büyük vurgu yaptıkları unsurlar otellerin durumu, fiyat farklılıkları, hizmet kalitesi, çevrimiçi müşteri hizmetleri, kurumsallık, iletişim seviyesi ve çalışan eğitimidir. Bulgulara göre, turistler beyan edilen fiyatlar ile ödenen fiyatlar arasındaki farklılıklardan, turların organizasyonel problemlerinden, rezervasyon problemlerinden ve düşük kalitedeki otellerden şikâyet etmektedir. Çalışma, uygulayıcılar ve arařtırmacılar için turizm endüstrisinde e-şikâyetler için turistlerin görüşlerini açıklamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: E-Şikâyet, Çevrimiçi Seyahat Acentası, Şikâyet, Acenta İnternet Sitesi

Abstract

The main aim of this study is to understand and analyze the e-complaints of tourists for online travel agencies (OTAs) by using content analysis. The sample consists of 410 e-complaints about the travel services of agencies. The theoretical background lies under the stakeholder approach that is considered to understand the actors' complaints about the agency services. In this study, the tourists are the stakeholders who are in touristic activities. The top emphasis of tourists is on the hotels' condition, price differences, service quality, online customer services, institutionalism, level of communication, and employee training. According to the findings, the tourists complain about the low-quality of hotels, reservation problems, tours' organizational problems, and the differences between declared prices, and paid prices. The study enlightens the tourists' views for e-complaints in the tourism industry for researchers and practitioners.

Keywords: E-Complaint, Online Travel Agency, Complaint, Agency Website

Introduction

Due to the development of information technologies, online travel agencies (OTAs) offer numerous services to fulfill the needs of tourists. According to the recent study of Dutta et al. (2017), OTAs should understand the factors affecting customer satisfaction so that resources may be deployed accordingly to strengthen the level of services. In this sense, e-complaints of tourists play an important role so that OTAs can increase their service quality and take corrective action to satisfy the needs of tourists of all ages with different preferences in necessary conditions.

The tourism studies in literature reveal the importance of e-complaints from various perspectives. The service contracts and fairness for the customers in their assessment of e-services (Gong et al., 2015), the website quality of OTAs influencing trust and loyalty (Albayrak et al., 2019; Dutta et al., 2017a), the analysis of the complaining behavior of tourists (Del Chiappa et al., 2018), the travel reviews on the website affecting the decisions of hotel managements (Nurhikmawati & Puspitasari, 2018), and the decisions of potential customers (Gu & Ye, 2014; Mauri & Minazzi, 2013), online reviews affecting the business performance (Ye et al., 2011), the e-complaints towards the agency's employees (Tanrisever, 2018), and the new generations' critique about the travel services they get from OATs (Dimitriou & AbouElgheit, 2019) point out the essentiality of e-complaints.

The theoretical background in this study lies under the stakeholder approach that is considered to understand the actors' complaints about online travel agency services. Stakeholders can be the residents, business owners, local authorities, activist groups, tourists, and media (Gallent & Tewdwr-Jones, 2018). In this case, the tourists are the stakeholders who prefer to be served by OTAs for their touristic activities. According to Harrison and Freeman (1999), the purpose of the stakeholder approach is to manage the relationship of shareholders, employees, customers, suppliers, communities and manage their interests in the long-term for the success of the organization. This translates into the interaction between the online travel agency's customer representatives and the tourists, and how the representatives manage the interests of the tourists, handle the e-complaints, and from the tourists' perspectives how they perceive the delivery of travel services, and respond to the problems. Therefore, the fundamental purpose of this exploratory study is to pay attention to the types of e-complaints of tourists for OTAs through content analysis program (MAXQDA) by using a popular Turkish website "sikayetvar.com". By learning the recent e-complaints of tourists about the services of OTAs, these online agencies, luxury hotels on their sites, and other related stakeholders along with the professional tour guides will improve their perspectives and level of services to fulfill the needs of tourists.

1. E-Complaints for Online Travel Agencies

Internet is one of the main information sources for travel planning and channels such as OTAs that dominate online information gathering and today's consumers continue to use various channels to collect information for their trips (Xiang et al., 2015). The

online purchase of tourist products and services is a complicated and sensitive continuum and the website has a decisive role to make the final purchase or not (Adina, 2017). OTAs offer travel-related products/services along with their information, and various services to customers (Kim et al., 2007), and have a broad effect on the way that the tourism sector works (Buhalis & Law, 2008).

In literature, there are various studies about e-complaints of customers in the tourism industry. For instance, e-complaints for the restaurant services of top organizations in the world (Sengul et al., 2018), the essentiality of e-comments in the sites for the hoteliers (Nurhikmawati & Puspitasari, 2018), the e-complaints in wellness tourism (Sangpikul, 2019) and the management of healthcare services through e-complaints (Setyani et al., 2019), and the analyses of e-complaint tracking and problem-solving strategies in hospitality management (Sahin et al., 2017) show the importance of the matter for various stakeholders. Based on online customer complaints, the importance of service contracts and fairness for the customers are considered as standards to evaluate harm caused by integrity issues (Gong et al., 2015). According to Albayrak et al. (2019), website quality of OTAs affects both hedonic value and trust, which in turn influence loyalty. The retaining of customer loyalty is important (Marimon et al., 2015). Avcı and Dogan (2018) emphasize the e-complaints for the tour guides from a website that are represented in five categories; leadership and social skills, occupational adequacy, the fulfillment of responsibilities towards the group, unethical behaviors, and the legal requirements of the tour guides. The study of Del Chiappa et al. (2018) differentiates the rating behavior and complaining behavior of tourists and the complaint behavior has a more in-depth approach than the rating behavior for travel services. The study of Dutta et al. (2017a) stresses that the electronic service quality's dimensions affect customer trust for OTAs. OTAs' site functionality, information quality, safety, and customer relationship affect online customers' evaluation of overall satisfaction and their repurchase intention (Fu Tsang et al., 2010). For the tour operators, the main e-complaints are about the accommodation services, tour guidance services, and transportation issues (Keles et al., 2016). The existence of the travel reviews on the site is very important for the hotel management as it shows where to improve the services and increase the quality (Nurhikmawati & Puspitasari, 2018). However, service quality in OTAs positively influences customer repurchase intention (Pham & Nguyen, 2019; Zhou et al., 2009). According to the study of Gurkan and Polat (2014), based on the online complaints about the hotels, the customers mainly complain about the service quality (food and beverage services), facilities (hygiene, furniture in the rooms), personnel, and managerial issues. As the new generations appear, after their planning, search and evaluation, booking, and post-booking evaluation, (Dimitriou & AbouElgheit, 2019), online services of OTAs become critical for the sustainability of their business.

Based on the investigation about e-complaints in the tourism industry, the main emphasis of the study is to understand and analyze the current e-complaints of tourists so that online travel agencies, the hotels listed on their website, and the tours along with the tour guides can take corrective actions and increase their level of services to satisfy customers' needs and create a positive travel experience.

2. Sample and Method

The sample consists of 410 e-complaints of tourists who would like to travel to various tourist destinations along with the assistance of an online travel agency. The written complaints which are composed of 87 pages are taken from the popular Turkish website "sikayetvar.com" between December 2018 and September 2019. As of 25 November 2019, the number of individual members for this website is 4.426.308, the number of visitors for the last 30 days is 14.676.673, and the total complaints written on the website are 8.472.414.

The selected e-complaints are related to the service concerns of tourists throughout their travel experience starting from before they leave for the destination and after they have their vacation. Along with the qualitative data analysis program (MAXQDA), frequency analysis, percentage distributions, and the classification of the e-complaints of tourists through content analysis will be presented. The types of e-complaints will be emphasized through the frequency analysis and the data will be presented in a classification based on the collection of respondents' e-complaints about their travel experiences, not in a specific classification that is formed before. Subsequently, the conclusion, limitations, and further research will be provided.

3. Findings

3.1. Tourists' Complaints

Table 1 shows the tourists' complaints based on their travel experiences from the highest percentage to the lowest. The top three answers are the low quality of the hotels, the reservation problem, and the tours' organizational problems. According to the respondents, the quality of the hotels is a problem concerning their physical appearance, quality of furniture, and the level of offered services. In terms of reservations, the main complaint is about reserving the room and paying the price in advance, but once the tourist arrives at the hotel, the reserved room is unavailable. Tours' organizational problems including the miscommunication with the visitors, timing and vehicle problems create complaints about the tours. The visitors also complain about the prices. What is being told about the price and paid to the travel agency is different.

Table 1: Tourists' Complaints

| Items | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|-----------|------------|
| Quality of the hotel is low | 205 | 14.43 |
| Reservation (reserve a room, pay the price but the hotel is occupied) | 103 | 7.25 |
| Tours' organizational problems | 98 | 6.90 |
| Price difference problem | 91 | 6.40 |
| The hotel room is not what is expected | 89 | 6.26 |
| Interest is low after the sales | 72 | 5.07 |
| Refund problem | 61 | 4.29 |
| Lack of service | 58 | 4.08 |
| Agency's poor approach | 51 | 3.59 |

| | | |
|---|----|------|
| Lack of room services (old furniture, different room than booked) | 51 | 3.59 |
| Cancellation problem | 47 | 3.30 |
| Lack of providing clear information to the customers | 44 | 3.09 |
| Not focusing on solutions | 33 | 2.32 |
| Payment | 32 | 2.25 |
| Quality problem | 32 | 2.25 |
| Tour guide problem | 31 | 2.18 |
| Focusing on sales first | 26 | 1.83 |
| Differences on the website and the actual | 22 | 1.54 |
| Not being professional | 19 | 1.33 |
| Poor customer services | 19 | 1.33 |
| Not a corporate firm | 17 | 1.19 |
| Not returning the phone calls | 17 | 1.19 |
| Pictures do not represent the actual | 16 | 1.12 |
| Customer representative is not helpful | 16 | 1.12 |
| Lack of customer satisfaction | 15 | 1.05 |
| Customer demand is not considered by the agency services | 15 | 1.05 |
| Extras | 14 | 0.98 |
| All-inclusive but the service is not provided | 14 | 0.98 |
| Lack of communication | 13 | 0.91 |
| Waste of travel time in the tours | 11 | 0.77 |
| No one is taking the responsibility in the agency | 11 | 0.77 |
| Wrong guidance | 10 | 0.70 |
| Loss of trust to the agency | 9 | 0.63 |
| Invoice problem | 8 | 0.56 |
| High price | 8 | 0.56 |
| Lack of planning | 7 | 0.49 |
| Misleading the customers | 6 | 0.42 |
| Internet connection problem | 6 | 0.42 |
| Old buses | 5 | 0.35 |
| Late transfers between destinations | 5 | 0.35 |
| Call center's strict approach | 4 | 0.28 |
| Although there is a campaign on the website, there is none | 4 | 0.28 |
| Although there is a discount, it is not applied | 3 | 0.21 |
| Deception | 2 | 0.14 |
| Total: 1420 | | 100 |

3.2. Classification of Tourists' Complaints

The following tables represent the classification of tourists' e-complaints in seven fields as the hotels' condition (Table 2), price level (Table 3), service quality (Table 4), customer services (Table 5), institutionalism (Table 6), communication (Table 7), and training of staff members for the customer services (Table 8). The classification of tourists' complaints is based on the types of e-complaints of the tourists, and according to the responses, seven fields are formed. Fundamentally, the poor condition of establishments, problems with the payment procedures and prices, occurrence of several problems while having quality services, poor treatment of online customer

services to the tourists, not having a sense of institutionalism, poor communication with the tourists, and poor perspectives of customer representatives for fulfilling the needs of tourists create e-complaints of the respondents for the online travel agencies.

Table 2: Hotels' Condition

| Hotels' condition | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|-----------|------------|
| Quality of the hotel is low | 205 | 56.7 |
| The hotel room is not what is expected | 89 | 24.6 |
| Lack of room services (old furniture, different room than booked) | 51 | 14.1 |
| Pictures do not represent the actual ones | 16 | 4.43 |
| Total: 361 | | 100 |

The matter of price is one of the biggest issues for tourists. The prices that exist on the website are different than the actual ones. When the price is paid and if the service is not delivered, taking the refund is too long, which mainly creates e-complaints of the tourists for the agencies.

Table 3: Price

| Price | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|-----------|------------|
| Price difference problem (price on the website versus actual) | 91 | 41.1 |
| Refund problem | 61 | 27.6 |
| Payment problem | 32 | 14.4 |
| Extras | 14 | 6.33 |
| High price | 8 | 3.61 |
| Invoice problem | 8 | 3.61 |
| Although there is a campaign on the website, there is none at all | 4 | 1.80 |
| Although there is a discount, it is not applied | 3 | 1.35 |
| Total: 221 | | 100 |

Service quality is another matter that the tourists bring up as a complaint. Reservation through OTAs is a hassle. As the main complaint of tourists, when the reservation is made including the payment and after the arrival of tourists to the hotels, the reservations are not seen in the systems. Organizational problems in tours during sightseeing in terms of timing, treatment of guides, and following the program create difficulties in adapting to the programs. The representatives lose their interest after the sales instead of helping them.

Table 4: Service Quality

| Service Quality | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|-----------|------------|
| Reservation problem | 103 | 20.6 |
| Tours' organizational problems | 98 | 19.6 |
| Interest is low after the sales | 72 | 14.4 |
| Lack of service | 58 | 11.6 |
| Cancellation problem | 47 | 9.43 |
| Quality problem | 32 | 6.42 |
| Tour guide problem | 31 | 6.22 |
| Differences on the website and the actual | 22 | 4.41 |
| All-inclusive but the service is not provided | 14 | 2.81 |
| Waste of travel time | 11 | 2.20 |
| Old buses and late transfers to destinations | 10 | 2.00 |

| | |
|------------|-----|
| Total: 498 | 100 |
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The tourists frequently mention about the lack of customer services of OTAs. According to the complaints, the representatives are not very helpful in terms of providing satisfactory services to the customers. The customers do not listen to what is being said or demanded by the customers and they mislead the customers in choosing the inappropriate options. Therefore, there is a lack of customer satisfaction.

Table 5: Customer Services of OTAs

| Customer services | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|-----------|------------|
| The customer representatives are not helpful | 16 | 29.6 |
| Lack of customer satisfaction | 15 | 27.7 |
| Customer demand is not considered, representatives are not listening | 15 | 27.7 |
| Misleading the customers | 6 | 11.1 |
| Deception | 2 | 3.70 |
| Total: 54 | | 100 |

Institutionalism is important for tourists from several perspectives. According to the tourists' complaints, there is a lack of delivering clear information about the travel services and they are not professional and lack taking responsibility for their actions. Therefore, there is a loss of trust for the OTAs.

Table 6: Institutionalism

| Institutionalism | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|-----------|------------|
| Lack of providing clear information | 44 | 41.1 |
| Not professional | 19 | 17.7 |
| Not a corporate firm | 17 | 15.8 |
| No one takes responsibility in the travel agency | 11 | 10.2 |
| Loss of trust | 9 | 8.41 |
| Lack of planning | 7 | 6.54 |
| Total: 107 | | 100 |

The tourists emphasize the communication problem with OTAs in several ways. According to the main complaints, the customer representatives never return the phone calls of tourists and they guide the tourists in the wrong direction, and this lack of communication bothers the tourists.

Table 7: Communication

| Communication problem | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Not returning the phone calls | 17 | 47.2 |
| Wrong guidance | 10 | 27.7 |
| Internet connection problem | 6 | 16.6 |
| Lack of communication | 3 | 8.33 |
| Total: 36 | | 100 |

Based on the e-complaints of the tourists and the perspectives of the customer representatives, staff training is essential for sustaining the quality services of OTAs. The online travel agency's poor approach of delivering services to the tourists lead to poor results. According to the study findings, the staff members of OTAs should focus on solving the problems of tourists and satisfying the customer needs rather than paying attention to increasing the sales first. Due to the call centers' strict policies

concerning the delivery of services to the tourists, a flexible and satisfying perspective is necessary for the future sales to the potential tourists. The extension of customer representatives' authorities is critical to fulfill and maximize the needs of the tourists.

Table 8: Staff Training

| Staff training | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|-----------|------------|
| Agency's poor approach | 51 | 44.7 |
| Not focusing on solutions | 33 | 28.9 |
| Focus on sales first rather than the satisfaction of the customers | 26 | 22.8 |
| Call center's strict approach | 4 | 3.50 |
| Total: 114 | | 100 |

Results and Discussion

According to the customer complaints, there are various concerns about the hotels' condition, price differences, service quality, customer services, institutionalism, communication, and training of staff. At the top of the list is the low-quality hotels offered by the customer representatives to the tourists.

The majority of the respondents mentioned the low-quality hotels (Table 2) offered by the agency representatives. What the tourists emphasize is that *"We book a five-star hotel room but when we arrive at the hotel, it is no more than three stars"*. The other complaining tourists state that *"The hotel room is not what we expected. There is a lack of room services in terms of old furniture, a different type of room than booked or the services in the open areas in the hotel"*. Others stress that *"The pictures or the declared services on the website do not represent the actual situation"*. Considering the hotels that rely on OTAs (Martin-Fuentes & Mellinas, 2018), online agencies should frequently check out the quality and services of those hotels that are mentioned on the website. As mentioned in the studies of Drozdowska et al. (2019), and Mauri and Minazzi (2013), meeting the guests' expectations for the hotels is essential.

There are several issues about the cost of the vacation as described in Table 3. According to the e-complaints of tourists, when they purchase a tour or book a hotel room, the price difference is a problem. The complaining tourists point out that *"The price is different on the website and different when the representative states it. The firm is not paying back the difference to the customer"*. In most of the cases, it is very difficult to take the refund and it generally takes weeks to take it back. When the purchase is actualized, it takes weeks to take the invoice. According to the complaints, although it is stated that there is a campaign on the website, there is none and although there is a discount, it is not applied, which affects the tourists' level of satisfaction negatively. In the study of Fu Tsang et al. (2010), OTAs' site functionality and safety is a measure of customer satisfaction but in our study, the tourists do not state site functionality or the safety measures of OTAs.

In evaluation of the service quality, the biggest issue is the reservation problem as mentioned in Table 4. In most of the situations, the brief explanation of the tourists is that *"We make a reservation and make the payment in advance. But once we arrive at the hotel, the officials do not see the reservation in their system and say the hotel is occupied"*. The

tourists also say that *"The customer representatives of OTAs suggest other hotels that are very expensive and do not take the responsibility and comfort the customers at all"*. In similar situations, the travel agencies do not take corrective actions or check up on things before when the customers encounter the tours' organizational problems and tour guidance problems. According to the study of Gong et al. (2015), based on online customer complaints, customers use service contracts and fairness as standards to assess harm, and the customers hold the travel agency or tour operator responsible, and not their employees. On the other hand, as a main finding in this study, the tourists want the customer representatives to take responsibility and action to compensate for their losses and create better alternatives without any additional cost. The tourists emphasize that the interest of the customer representatives disappears after the sales. This situation leads to the complaining of tourists on e-complaint sites where they express their feelings and experiences for their final purchases. Different from the findings of Gong et al. (2015), surprisingly, the tourists in their e-complaints do not mention about using service contracts to evaluate their purchases.

The cancellation of the reservation is another issue. The online agency does not fully refund the money back if the customer prefers to cancel the reservation although the mistake belongs to the online agency. Different statements on the website and the experience, all-inclusive emphasis but the delivery of fewer services, waste of travel time by the tour guides, old vehicles and late transfers to destinations show the lack of travel services. One of the fundamental e-complaints is that *"I make a reservation and pay the full price. They call me back saying the hotel is occupied, recommend me an equivalent hotel but it has a less star and is not all-inclusive"*.

In terms of providing customer services presented in Table 5, the customer representatives are not very helpful. After the sales are completed, the representatives do not have the authority to change the preferences of customers even if it is the fault or the wrong guidance of the online travel agencies. This situation creates a lack of customer satisfaction because customer demand is not considered. According to the complaints, when the representatives mislead the customers towards a low-quality hotel or a tour different than their postings, the representatives should pay attention to what the customers want and need, and compensate for their losses. One of the main complaints is the deception of services. *"They offer you the best price, get the payment, call you shortly saying the hotel is occupied, offer you two options, either another hotel or a refund, generally recommend a low-quality hotel and the refund takes too long"*.

The lack of institutionalism in Table 6 is vastly mentioned by the tourists due to not providing clear information while selling the vacation package, not being professional, not being a corporate firm, not taking full responsibility as a travel agency, loss of trust towards the online travel services, and lack of planning of the online agencies. One of the main complaints of tourists is that *"...lack of institutionalism, you make the reservation, pay the price earlier and later they tell you that the hotel is packed and recommend you another hotel but there is a price difference and the refund is almost a month"*.

In terms of communication between the tourists and the representatives of the online travel agencies as stated in Table 7, after the sales transaction, they never return the calls of the tourists. In most of the cases, the tourists have a hard time to communicate

comfortably with the representatives, which cost them time and extra payments due to the time limits of the sales package. In several instances, the representatives' wrong guidance for the hotels leads to the loss of comfort and extra money of the tourists. Reaching the online website is a pain. It needs to be updated frequently. One of the e-complaints of tourists is that *"The communication between the agency representatives and the customer is weak. They do not pay attention to what the customers want, and return their phone calls"*. Another typical e-complaint is that *"The guide is not qualified to fulfill the requirements of the tour, knows a foreign language but the communication is poor and the capability of transferring knowledge is weak, loses interest for travelers who do not attend extra tours"*.

According to the e-complaints of tourists shown in Table 8, the humane approach and the professionalism of the online travel agency representatives are very poor and the customer representatives do not pay attention to the fulfillment of the customer needs. Instead, they are more interested in the sales figures and lose their interest after-sales period. They do not focus on problem-solving and only offer solutions that create extra spending for the customers. Due to the poor understanding of what the customers need for their travel experiences, the training of the customer representatives is necessary to increase the satisfaction and happiness level of the customers. Otherwise, online travel agencies will not create loyal customers who can trust them with a strong bond and a repurchase intention for the future.

In overall findings, this exploratory study comes up with seven fields of e-complaints of tourists for OTAs. In the comparison of the findings of the literature about e-complaints, the customers look for fairness and pay attention to service contracts (Gong et al., 2015) and the website quality of OTAs affect customers' trust and loyalty (Albayrak et al., 2019; Dutta et al., 2017a). Besides, the customer services and the communication with the customers (Nurhikmawati & Puspitasari, 2018), or the service quality in e-complaints (Sangpikul, 2019), are important findings in the literature. On the other hand, in this study, the hotels' physical condition and related services, institutionalism perspective of OTAs, staff training concerning the customer representatives for providing excellent services, and the concerns for price differences play an important role in the minds of tourists.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The fundamental purpose of this study is to understand and analyze the e-complaints about online travel agencies through a popular Turkish website "sikayetvar.com". The study results show that the majority of the tourists as the stakeholders of the OTAs are very sensitive towards the quality of hotels as the quality and services of the hotels are mentioned in the OTAs' website, the reservation system and the payments, tours' declared program, and the changes in the cost of travel experience. The results mainly reveal that the tourists mainly complain about the hotels' poor quality, changing costs, lack of service quality, poor customer services, and lack of institutionalism, poor communication between the online travel agency representatives and the tourists, and the need for staff training for the agencies. The recent categorization of e-complaints of tourists for OTAs in this study will further the perspectives in the current literature to

serve better to the potential tourists in the tourism market and help OTAs to reevaluate their quality of services from various angles. Apart from the findings in literature, as a difference, the tourists emphasize the matter of institutionalism of OTAs, the customer representatives' training for providing excellent services, and the poor conditions of hotels they witness, in their e-complaints. Overall, the following points can be underlined to lessen the e-complaints about online travel agencies for the future:

- **Hotels' condition:** If online travel agencies promote the hotels they are selling to customers, they should know the quality of the hotel or what type of services they offer in advance. They should frequently check the services of hotels to make sure that when the customers arrive at the hotel, they see and what they saw on the website is the same.
- **Cost:** There should be a set price with clear information about the products and services including the discount period and refund policy without discomfoting the customers.
- **Service quality:** Considering the e-complaints of the customers, increasing the service quality of the online travel agencies by setting quality standards and satisfactory applications.
- **Customer services:** The customer representatives should make sure that the customer is satisfied and happy with their travel preferences.
- **Institutionalism:** Being professional and having a systematic and helpful approach to satisfy the needs of tourists. Building trust between the online travel agency and the tourists is critical and the representatives should be able to take responsibility while providing comfort for the tourists.
- **Communication:** Improving the communication between the agency's customer representatives and the customers without ignoring any communication gap, and their demand during the sales.
- **Staff training:** It is necessary to train online travel agency representatives. They should understand what the customers look for in a tour, hotel or touristic service and take corrective action at the right time.

In a competitive environment like the tourism and hospitality industry, the industry and the practitioners should pay attention to e-complaints of tourists and make the necessary adjustments in their organizations for proving excellent quality services to the tourists. For the case of OTAs, considering the rivals in the tourism market, OTAs should train the staff members professionally to satisfy the needs of the customers along with an excellent communication and an institutional approach. Since the customer representatives in the OTAs are the first people to contact with on the phone, in a way the sound of the travel agencies, it is critical to make the customers happy if the travel agencies are expecting a return from the customers in the future.

The study comes with some limitations. This qualitative study only analyzes the e-complaints of tourists with a limited sample in a time limit for the online travel agencies through content analysis. For future research, based on the e-complaints on a Turkish website, other international complaint websites can be comparatively analyzed to understand the differences and similarities in travelers' complaints about various touristic destinations and the level of travel services.

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