

TOURIST REVIEWS OF WHALE WATCHING EXPERIENCES: EXPLORING TRIPADVISOR COMMENTS.

Abstract

Cetacean activities (including whales, dolphins, and porpoises) based tourism has seen a significant rise globally, attracting more than 13 million visitors each year. Understanding visitor satisfaction is an important element for small operators within this rather competitive industry, to enhance organisational performance. While previous studies have explored whale watching satisfaction quantitatively within an Australian context, this study proposes a more global and qualitative approach through the use of online reviews from TripAdvisor. An initial study of 5246 reviews shows significant patterns within the quantitative review elements. The outlined qualitative data shows differences between 1 and 5 star reviews, and lends itself to the possibility of further exploration.

Keywords: cetacean based tourism; whale watching; TripAdvisor; online reviews