

THE ROLE OF “ONLINE USER GENERATED HOTEL REVIEWS” IN
ACCOMMODATION PURCHASE BEHAVIOUR OF KUALA LUMPUR
INTERNATIONAL FREE INDEPENDENT TRAVELLERS

SEYED SHAHABEDDIN POURFAKHIMI ABARGHOUEI

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the award of the degree of
Master of Science (Tourism Planning)

Faculty of Built Environment
Universiti Teknologi Malaysia

June 2012

*To my beloved Father and Mother
For their love,
and their unconditional and endless support,
throughout my life*

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This dissertation would not have been possible without the support, contribution and guidance of several individuals who assisted and contributed in the completion of this study. First and foremost, my deepest gratitude and appreciation goes to my distinguished supervisor, Professor Dr. Zainab Khalifah, for her valuable guidance, instructions, enthusiasm and encouragement. The valuable opportunity of working on this study under her supervision was a fortune for me, and I am really grateful for having this chance. Moreover, I am truly indebted and thankful to Professor. Dr. Amran bin Hamzah for his advices, instructions, knowledge and guidance. My Master's degree is owed to the expertise, knowledge and teachings of above professors whom having the opportunity of attending their lectures was one of my most valuable lifetime fortunes. Furthermore, my sincerest thankfulness goes to the entire academic staff of Faculty of Built Environment, University Teknologi Malaysia, especially Dr. Hairul Nizam Ismail, who his knowledge, encouragement and sincerity will never be forgotten.

I would like to express my deepest and sincerest gratefulness and gratitude to Mr. Ali Karbasizadeh, the president of Chika International Industrial Group, for his encouragement, advices and valuable financial support for this study. Furthermore, I would like to thank the entire board members of Chika International Industrial Group, especially Mr. Mahdi Karbasizadeh, the deputy president of the Chika group for supporting me during my Masters studies in Malaysia.

Special thanks go to the president and staff of Malaysia Tourism Information Centre (MaTIC) for their permission to conduct several interviews within their centre. Moreover, I owe sincere and earnest thankfulness to Mr. Abdullah bin Ali and Mrs. Suraya binti Abdullah for their kindness and generosity, as my beloved hosts, during the entire time of my residence in Kuala Lumpur for conducting this study. I also would like to thank my fellow students in University Teknologi Malaysia, Gong Xiao Ye and Farah Syzwani binti Muhd Shukri for their support, accompany and encouragement. I would like to thank my friend, Azade Shoa Ahmadi, for her assistance during the data collection and conducting interviews. In addition, my deepest appreciation and gratefulness goes to the all anonymous participants of this research, who generously and patiently dedicated their valuable travel time in Kula Lumpur for answering all the questions of this study. Last but not least, I would like to express my deepest eternal appreciation and gratitude to my friend and fellow student, Mr. Muhammad Irfan Abdullah, for his valuable support, advices and encouragement throughout my master studies in Malaysia, and especially during the preparation of this research.

ABSTRACT

Since the advent of web 2.0 technology, an increasing number of travellers use Internet for travel planning, booking their hotels and finding information about their travel destinations. Prior studies revealed that online user-generated reviews have a significant influence on the sales of experience products. In this research, in order to analyse the influence of online user generated hotel reviews on the accommodation purchase behaviour of Kuala Lumpur international free independent tourists, their behaviour towards online user generated reviews and the role of these reviews in their accommodation purchase behaviour were studied through empirical research. The tourists' behaviour towards online user generated reviews was defined through five elements, namely use and trustworthiness of online user generated reviews as a source of information for hotel selection, travellers' reference to online reviews before selecting a hotel, the position of online reviews amongst the other important hotel selection factors and the travellers' willingness to write an online review about their recent hotel. The data derived from the individual interviews was analysed through standard statistical methods including Pearson correlation for finding significant correlations amongst ordinal variables and Kruskal-Wallis H test to find significant differences in the behaviour of travellers from different nominal variable groups. The results of data analysis show that, online reviews were used by more than 91% of the respondents of this research and ranks number one amongst the other sources of information. In terms of trustworthiness, online reviews were rated "trustworthy" by more than 83% of the respondents. Lastly, while a significant majority of respondents find online reviews a more important hotel selection factor than "number of stars" and "brand", most of the respondents reported that "location" and "facilities" of a hotel, is a more important factor for them for selecting a hotel.

ABSTRAK

Sejak teknologi web 2.0 diperkenalkan, terdapat peningkatan penggunaan internet bagi pelancong merancang perjalanan mereka, penempahan hotel serta mencari maklumat mengenai destinasi pelancongan mereka. Kajian sembelum ini telah membuktikan bahawa '*online user-generated reviews*' mempunyai pengaruh besar dalam penjualan produk berasaskan pengalaman. Kajian ini menganalisis pengaruh 'penjana ulasan hotel di talian terhadap pelancong antarabangsa yang berdikari dalam tingkah laku penentuan tempat penginapan, tingkah laku pelancong terhadap '*online user generated reviews*' dan peranannya dalam tingkah laku penentuan tempat penginapan dikaji melalui penyelidikan empirical. Tingkah laku pelancong terhadap '*online user generated reviews*' dikaji melalui lima pekara iaitu tahap kepercayaan kepada '*online user generated reviews*' sebagai sumber maklumat pemilihan hotel, rujukan pelancong terhadap ulasan di talian sebelum pemilihan hotel, kepentingan ulasan di talian berbanding faktor lain dalam pemilihan hotel and kesanggupan pelancong mencatat ulasan di talian tentang hotel penginapan. Pengkajian data dari setiap individu ditemuramah telah dianalisis menggunakan '*standard statistical methods*' dan '*Pearson correlation test*' bagi mencari perkaitan yang signifikan di antara pembolehubah '*ordinal*' dan '*Kruskal-Wallis H test*' mencari perbezaan signifikan tingkah laku pelancong dari kumpulan pembolehubah '*nominal*' yang berbeza. Penemuan dari data analisis menunjukkan penggunaan ulasan di talian melebihi 91% daripada responden kajian ini dan merupakan pilihan pertama berbanding sumber maklumat lain. Dari segi kebolehpercayaan, 83% responden yakin kebolehpercayaan ulasan di talian. Akhir sekali, majoriti responden memilih kepentingan ulasan di talian daripada kepentingan factor "bilangan bintang" dan "jenama" dalam pemilihan hotel, kebanyakan responden dicatatkan memilih faktor "lokasi" dan "kemudahan" hotel lebih penting dalam pemilihan hotel.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE
	DECLARATAION	ii
	DEDICATION	iii
	ACKNOWLEDGMENT	iv
	ABSTRACT	v
	ABSTRAK	vi
	TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
	LIST OF TABLES	xi
	LIST OF FIGURES	xvii
	LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xxiv
	TERMINOLOGY	xxv
	LIST OF APENDEICES	xxvii
1.	INTRODUCTION	1
	1.1 Introduction	1
	1.2 Statement of research	3
	1.3 Research questions	5
	1.4 Expected findings	7
	1.5 Research goal and objectives	9
	1.6 Importance of the study	10
2.	BACKGROUND OF PROBLEM	15
	2.1 Introduction	15
	2.2 Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM)	16
	2.3 E-Tourism	16

2.4	Web 2.0	21
2.5	Tourism 2.0	23
2.6	The influence of UGC on consumer decision making	25
2.7	Earlier studies	26
3.	BACKGROUND OF CASE STUDY	31
3.1	Introduction	31
3.2	Background of case study	31
3.2.1	Study area	32
3.2.2	Kuala Lumpur hotels	33
3.2.3	Online reviews about Kuala Lumpur hotels	34
3.3	Research methodology	35
3.3.1	Research Flowchart	37
3.3.2	Theoretical Framework	38
3.3.3	Questionnaire	41
3.3.4	Respondents	43
3.3.5	Data Analysis	44
3.3.5.1	Descriptive Methods	44
3.3.5.2	Cross-tabulation	45
3.3.5.3	Cronbach's Alpha reliability test	45
3.3.5.4	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	46
3.3.5.5	Kruskal-Wallis H Test	46
4.	FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS	47
4.1	Introduction	47
4.2	Data Collection	48
4.3	Research findings	50
4.3.1	Respondents' demographic profile	50
4.3.2	Respondents' travel pattern	58
4.3.2.1	Travel companions	58
4.3.2.2	Duration of stay	60

4.3.2.3 Respondents' trip recurrence	62
4.3.2.4 Hotel room prices	64
4.3.2.5 Hotel booking method	68
4.3.2.6 Purpose of visit	70
4.3.3 Respondents' accommodation purchase behaviour	72
4.3.3.1 Use of sources of information	73
4.3.3.2 Trustworthiness of sources of information	75
4.3.3.3 Sources of information according to their frequency of use and trustworthiness	81
4.3.4 Behaviour towards online user generated hotel reviews	84
4.3.4.1 Online reviews versus other hotel attributes	84
4.3.4.2 Refer to online reviews before selecting a hotel	90
4.3.4.3 Type of more influential reviews	93
4.3.5 Respondents' perception of accuracy of online reviews	94
4.3.5.1 Accuracy of online reviews in general	94
4.3.5.2 Accuracy of online reviews (recent hotel)	96
4.3.6 Importance of reviewer personal characteristics	98
4.3.7 Willingness to write an online review about recent hotel	101
4.4 Data Analysis	102
4.4.1 Reliability test	102
4.4.2 Significant Relationships with reference to demographic characteristics	103
4.4.2.1 Gender	103
4.4.2.2 Age	106
4.4.2.3 Education	110
4.4.2.4 Origin	115
4.4.3 Significant Relationships with reference to travel pattern	122
4.4.3.1 Travel Companions	122

4.4.3.2	Duration of stay	129
4.4.3.3	First time visitors	129
4.4.3.4	Respondents' accommodation expenditure	130
4.4.3.5	Booking method	139
4.4.3.6	Purpose of visit	146
4.4.4	Significant Relationships between respondents' accommodation purchase behaviour and its behaviour towards online reviews	146
4.4.4.1	Use of sources of information and behaviour toward online reviews	147
4.4.4.2	Trustworthiness of sources of information and respondents' behaviour towards online reviews	156
4.4.5	Significant relationships related to the respondents' behaviour towards online reviews	161
4.4.5.1	Use of online reviews as a source of information	162
4.4.5.2	Trustworthiness of online reviews as a source of information	167
4.4.5.3	Preference of online reviews versus other hotel selection factors (price, location, facilities, number of stars and brand)	172
4.4.5.4	Refer to online reviews before hotel selection (in general)	183
4.4.5.5	Willingness to write an online review about the recent hotel	187
5.	CONCLUSION	191
5.1	Introduction	191
5.2	Conclusion	192
5.3	Limitations of the study	198
5.4	Further studies	199
	REFERENCES	201
	Appendices A - D	214-277

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE NO.	TITLE	PAGE
3.1	Registered star rated hotels in Kuala Lumpur	34
3.2	Kuala Lumpur hotels' online reviews	34
3.3	Questionnaire questions	42
4.1	Data collection	49
4.2	Respondents demographic background	51
4.3	Respondents' country of origin	56
4.4	Respondents' travel companions	59
4.5	Respondents' duration of stay	60
4.6	Respondents' trip recurrence	63
4.7	Hotel room prices	65
4.8	Respondents' hotel booking method	69
4.9	Respondents' purpose of visit	71
4.10	Use of sources of information	73
4.11	Trustworthiness of sources of information (count)	76
4.12	The mean trustworthiness rate for sources of information	78
4.13	Online reviews versus price, facilities, location, stars and brand	85

4.14	The rate of respondents' reference to online reviews before selecting a hotel (in general)	90
4.15	Respondents' reference to online reviews before selecting recent hotel (Total sample size)	91
4.16	Respondents' reference to online reviews before selecting recent hotel (from the part of sample size who generally refer to online reviews)	92
4.17	Type of more influential reviews	93
4.18	Respondents' perception towards accuracy of online reviews in general (mean value)	94
4.19	Respondents' perception towards accuracy of online reviews in general (percentage per rate)	95
4.20	Respondents' perception towards accuracy of online reviews for their recent hotel (mean value)	96
4.21	Respondents' perception towards accuracy of online reviews for their recent hotel (percentage per rate)	97
4.22	Importance of reviewer personal characteristics (mean value)	98
4.23	Importance of reviewer personal characteristics (per Likert scale rate)	100
4.24	Respondents who may write a review (from total sample size)	101
4.25	Respondents who may write a review (from total respondents who generally refer to online reviews before selecting hotel)	101
4.26	Cronbach's Alpha test result	102
4.27	Significant relationships with reference to gender	103
4.28	Preference of location versus online reviews according to the gender	104
4.29	Willingness to write a review about recent hotel according to the gender	104
4.30	Significant relationships with reference to age	106

4.31	Use of travel guide books according to the age group	106
4.32	Preference of online reviews versus hotel number of stars according to the age group	107
4.33	Trustworthiness of travel guide books, travel agencies and online reviews according to the age groups	109
4.34	Significant relationships with reference to education	110
4.35	Use of tourism offices, brochures & catalogues and searching individually according to the education level	111
4.36	Trustworthiness of friends and relatives according to the education groups	113
4.37	Reference to online reviews (in general) according to the education level	114
4.38	Importance of the age of the reviewer according to the education level	115
4.39	Significant relationships with reference to the origin	116
4.40	Use of travel agencies, online reviews, searching individually, taxi drivers and media advertisement according to the origin	117
4.41	Preference of online reviews versus location and brand according to the origin	119
4.42	Reference to online reviews before selecting hotel and willingness to write a review about recent hotel according to the origin	120
4.43	Significant relationship with reference to travel companions	122
4.44	Use of travel guide books, travel agencies and tourism offices according to the travel companion groups	123
4.45	Trustworthiness of travel agencies according to the travel companions	125
4.46	Preference of online reviews versus location, number of stars and brand according to the travel companion groups	126

4.47	Reference to online reviews before selecting a hotel and willingness to write a review about the recent hotel with reference to the travel companion groups	127
4.48	Significant relationships with reference to hotel price	130
4.49	Use of travel guide books, travel agencies, official hotel websites and searching individually within the location according to the accommodation expenditure	131
4.50	Trustworthiness of travel guide books, travel agencies and searching individually within the location according to the accommodation expenditure	133
4.51	Preference of online reviews versus price, number of stars and brand according to the accommodation expenditure	135
4.52	Type of more influential reviews according to the accommodation expenditure	137
4.53	Importance of the age of the review writer according to the accommodation expenditure	138
4.54	Significant relationships with reference to the booking method	139
4.55	Use of travel guide books, travel agencies, online reviews and searching individually within the location according to the type of booking	140
4.56	Trustworthiness of travel agencies, online reviews and official hotel websites according to the type of booking	142
4.57	Preference of location, number of stars and brand according to the type of booking	143
4.58	Reference to online reviews before selecting a hotel (in general) according to the type of booking	144
4.59	Willingness to write an online review about recent hotel according to the type of booking	145
4.60	Significant relationships between use of sources of information and respondents' behaviour towards online reviews	147

4.61	Preference of online reviews versus number of stars according to the usage of travel guide books	148
4.62	Preference of online reviews versus number of stars and brand according to the usage of travel agencies	149
4.63	Willingness to write an online review about the recent hotel according to the usage of travel agencies	150
4.64	Willingness to write an online review about recent hotel according to the usage of tourism offices	151
4.65	Preference of online reviews versus price, number of stars and brand according to the use of online reviews	152
4.66	Preference of online reviews versus price and brand and reference to online reviews before selecting a hotel (in general) according to the usage of official hotel websites	153
4.67	Reference to online reviews before selecting a hotel (in general) according to the usage of other travel websites	154
4.68	Preference of online reviews versus number of stars according to the use of taxi drivers	155
4.69	Significant relationships between trustworthiness of sources of information and respondents' behaviour towards online reviews	156
4.70	Significant relationships related to the respondents' use of online reviews as a source of information (ordinal variables)	162
4.71	Significant relationships related to the respondents' use of online reviews as a source of information (nominal variables)	162
4.72	Use of online reviews according to the use of travel agencies, official hotel websites and other travel websites	164
4.73	Significant relationships related to the trustworthiness of online reviews as a source of information (ordinal variables)	167

4.74	Significant relationships related to the trustworthiness of online reviews as a source of information (nominal variables)	168
4.75	Trustworthiness of online reviews according to the use of travel guide books and online reviews	170
4.76	Significant relationships related to the preference of online reviews versus other hotel selection factors (ordinal variables)	173
4.77	Significant relationships related to the preference of online reviews versus other hotel selection factors (nominal variables)	174
4.78	Significant relationships related to the referring to the online reviews before selecting a hotel in general (ordinal variables)	183
4.79	Significant relationships related to the referring to the online reviews before selecting a hotel in general (nominal variables)	184
4.80	Significant relationships related to the willingness to write an online reviews about the recent hotel (ordinal variables)	187
4.81	Significant relationships related to the willingness to write an online reviews about the recent hotel (nominal variables)	188

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE NO.	TITLE	PAGE
3.1	Research flowchart	37
3.2	Sources of information	38
3.3	Five main elements of respondent' behaviour towards online reviews	39
3.4	The overall framework of the study	40
3.5	Elements of accommodation purchase behaviour	41
4.1	Respondents' gender	51
4.2	Respondents' age distribution	54
4.3	Respondents' education level	55
4.4	The continental origin of the respondents	55
4.5	Respondents' travel companion	59
4.6	Respondents' duration of stay (nights)	61
4.7	Respondents' duration of stay (Time range)	62
4.8	Respondents' trip recurrence	63
4.9	Respondents' hotel room price per night and per room	66
4.10	Distribution of respondents based on their accommodation expenditure	66
4.11	The normal distribution of respondents per hotel price	67

4.12	Distribution of respondents based on their hotel booking method	70
4.13	Distribution of respondents based on their purpose of visit	71
4.14	Use of sources of information	75
4.15	Trustworthiness of sources of information based on the percentage of each trustworthiness rate	77
4.16	Trustworthiness of sources of information (mean value)	79
4.17	Histograms of trustworthiness of different sources of information	80
4.18	Sources of information and their frequency use and trustworthiness	83
4.19	Online reviews versus price	86
4.20	Online reviews versus facilities	86
4.21	Online reviews versus location	87
4.22	Online reviews versus number of stars	88
4.23	Online reviews versus brand	88
4.24	Comparison of different hotel factors based on the percent of respondents who prefer them versus online reviews	89
4.25	The position of online reviews compare to other factors based on its importance for respondents	89
4.26	Respondents' reference to online reviews before selecting a hotel (in general)	90
4.27	Respondents' reference to online reviews before selecting their recent hotel (total sample size)	91
4.28	Respondents' reference to online reviews before selecting recent hotel (from the part of sample size who generally refer to online reviews)	92

4.29	Type of more influential reviews	93
4.30	Respondents' perception towards accuracy of online reviews (in general)	95
4.31	Respondents' perception towards accuracy of online reviews for their recent hotel	97
4.32	Importance of reviewer personal characteristics (mean)	99
4.33	Comparison of the importance of each reviewer personal characteristics based on the percentage of each Likert scale point	100
4.34	Significant relationships concerning the gender	105
4.35	Relationships between age and (i) respondents use of guide books and (ii) preference of online reviews versus number of stars	108
4.36	Relationships between age and trustworthiness of travel guide books, travel agencies and online reviews	109
4.37	Relationships between education level and use of (i) tourism offices, (ii) brochures & catalogues and (iii) searching individually within the location	112
4.38	Trustworthiness of friends and relatives according to the education groups	113
4.39	Relationship between level of education and referring to online reviews before selecting a hotel	114
4.40	Importance of the age of reviewer according to the education level	115
4.41	Relationships between origin and use of (i) travel agencies, (ii) online reviews, (iii) searching individually within the location, (iv) taxi drivers and (v) media advertisement	118
4.42	Relationships between origin and the preference of online reviews versus (i) location and (ii) brand	119
4.43	Relationship between origin and refer to online reviews before selecting a hotel	120

4.44	Relationship between origin and refer to online reviews before selecting a hotel	121
4.45	Relationships between travel companions and use of (i) travel guide books, (ii) travel agencies and (iii) tourism offices	124
4.46	Relationship between travel companion and trustworthiness of travel agencies	125
4.47	Relationships between travel companion groups and preference of online reviews versus (i) location, (ii) number of stars and (iii) brand	127
4.48	Relationship between reference to online reviews before selecting a hotel and travel companion groups	128
4.49	Relationship between willingness to write an online review about recent hotel and travel companion groups	128
4.50	Relationships between the respondents' hotel price and use of (i) travel guide books, (ii) travel agencies, (iii) official hotel websites and (iv) searching individually within the location	132
4.51	Relationships between the respondents' hotel price and trustworthiness of (i) travel guide books, (ii) travel agencies and (iii) searching individually within the location	134
4.52	Relationships between respondents' hotel price and preference of online reviews versus (i) price, (ii) number of stars and (iii) brand	136
4.53	Relationships between respondents' hotel price and type of more influential reviews	137
4.54	Relationship between the respondents' hotel price and importance of age of the reviewer	138
4.55	Relationships between type of booking and use of (i) travel guide books, (ii) travel agencies, (iii) online reviews, (iv) official hotel websites and (v) searching individually within the location	141

4.56	Relationships between type of booking and trustworthiness of (i) travel agencies, (ii) online reviews and (iii) official hotel websites	142
4.57	Relationships between type of booking and preference of online reviews versus (i) location, (ii) number of stars and (iii) brand	143
4.58	Relationship between type of booking and reference to the online reviews before selecting a hotel	144
4.59	Relationship between type of booking and willingness to write a review about recent hotel	145
4.60	Relationship between use of travel guide books and preference of online reviews versus number of stars	148
4.61	Relationships between use of travel agencies and preference of online reviews versus (i) number of stars and (ii) brand	149
4.62	Relationship between use of travel agencies and willingness to write an online review about recent hotel	150
4.63	Relationship between use of tourism offices and willingness to write an online review about recent hotel	151
4.64	Relationships between use of online reviews and preference of online reviews versus price, number of stars and brand	152
4.65	Relationships between use of official hotel websites and preference of online reviews versus (i) price and (ii) brand and (iii) reference to online reviews before selecting a hotel (in general)	154
4.66	Relationship between use of other travel websites and reference to online reviews before selecting a hotel (in general)	155
4.67	Relationship between use of taxi drivers and preference of online reviews versus number of stars	155
4.68	Relationships between trustworthiness of guide books and preference of online reviews versus (i) location, (ii)	158

	facilities, (iii) number of stars and (iv) brand	
4.69	Relationships between trustworthiness of (i) official hotel websites and (ii) other travel related websites and refer to online reviews before selecting a hotel (in general)	158
4.70	Relationships between trustworthiness of (i) travel agencies and willingness to write an online review about recent hotel and trustworthiness of online reviews and preference of online reviews versus (ii) location, (iii) number of stars, (iv) brand, (v) refer to online reviews before selecting a hotel and (vi) willingness to write an online review about recent hotel	160
4.71	Relationships between use of online reviews and (i) use of travel agencies, (ii) use of official hotel websites, (iii) use of other travel websites, (iv) trustworthiness of online reviews and (v) trustworthiness of other travel websites	163
4.72	Relationship between use of official hotel websites and use of online reviews a source of information	165
4.73	Relationship between use of other travel websites and as use of online reviews a source of information	165
4.74	Relationship between use of travel agencies and use of online reviews a source of information	165
4.75	Relationships between trustworthiness of online reviews and (i) age, (ii) use of travel guide books, (iii) use of online reviews, (iv) trustworthiness of travel guide books, (v) trustworthiness of official hotel websites and (vi) trustworthiness of other travel websites	169
4.76	Relationship between trustworthiness of online reviews and use of travel guide books	171
4.77	Relationship between trustworthiness of online reviews and use of online reviews	171

4.78	Relationships between preference of online reviews versus brand and (i) hotel price, use of (ii) travel agencies, (iii) online reviews and (iv) official hotel websites and trustworthiness of (v) travel guide books and (vi) online reviews	175
4.79	Relationships between preference of online reviews versus (i) facilities and trustworthiness of travel guide books, location and trustworthiness of (ii) travel guide books and (iii) online reviews and price and (iv) hotel price, (v) online reviews and (vi) official hotel websites	179
4.80	Relationships between preference of online reviews versus number of stars and (i) age, (ii) hotel price, use of (iii) travel guide books, (iv) travel agencies, (v) online reviews, (vi) taxi drivers and trustworthiness of (vii) travel guide books and (viii) online reviews	181
4.81	Relationships between reference to online reviews before selecting a hotel and (i) education level, use of (ii) official hotel websites, (iii) other related websites and trustworthiness of (iv) online reviews, (v) official hotel websites and (vi) other travel websites	185
4.82	Relationships between willingness to write an online review about recent hotel and use of (i) travel agencies, (ii) tourism offices and (iii) trustworthiness of online reviews	189
5.1	Five main elements of travellers' behaviour towards online reviews	192

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANOVA	One Way Analysis of Variance
CGM	Consumer Generated Media
CRS	Computer Reservation System
e-WOM	Electronic Word of Mouth
GRS	Global Reservation System
OTA	Online Travel Agency
Sig	Significance
Std.	Standard
TIA	Travel Association of America
UCC	User Created Content
UGC	User Generated Content
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
WOM	Word of Mouth

TERMINOLOGY

Consumer generated content

User Generated Content (UGC), Consumer Generated Media (CGM), User Created Content (UCC), Consumer Generated Content and Peer Production are different names of a general phenomenon. User Generated Content is the production of content by the general public rather than professionals, officials or experts of a field (PCMAG, 2011). These contents are created and published by the end-users online (Hunter, 2011).

e-WOM:

The Abbreviate of “electronic word of mouth” which word-of-mouth generally refers to the personal communications between individuals concerning the perception of goods and services (Ye, Zhang, & Law, 2009). Consumers’ decision making process is strongly influenced by word-of-mouth (Goldenberg, Libai, & Muller, 2001). e-WOM is the electronic form of word of mouth, which consists of consumers’ communication through electronic based applications such as internet.

Online review

Online reviews, as a form of User Generated

Content, are daily written by millions of internet users worldwide. These reviews are considered as word-of-mouth, which has been recognized as one of the most influential resources of information transmission since the beginning of society, especially for experience goods (Godes & Mayzlin, 2004). The rapid growth of Internet applications on hospitality and tourism leads to an enormous amount of consumer-generated online reviews on different travel-related facilities (Ye, Zhang, & Law, 2009).

Online travel agencies

Online travel agencies (OTA), online travel agencies are defined as agencies for which most of their revenue comes from online sales. This is to differentiate online travel agencies from traditional travel agencies, hybrid agencies, and airline companies. Hybrid agencies originated from offline travel agents, but now have an e-presence (Kim, Kim, & Han, 2007).

LIST OF APENDEICES

APPENDIX	TITLE	PAGE
A	Use of sources of information and their trustworthiness according to the different demographic and travel pattern groups	215
B	Questionnaire	239
C	Interview results	240
D	Online reviews for Kuala Lumpur hotels	260

CHPATER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Internet is a worldwide, publicly accessible network of computers used by a variety of people for a vast range of activities (Jordan, 2008). One of the most popular activities undertaken by Internet users is searching for travel information (Horrigan, 2008). As it is stated by Litvin, Goldsmith, & Pan (2008), an increasing number of travellers are using the Internet for travel planning. Recent studies show that of the nearly 120 million adult users of the Internet in 2004, approximately 98 million users utilized the Internet to find travel information (Patkose, Stokes, & Cook, 2004).

On the other hand, traditionally Word-of-Mouth (WOM) has influenced consumer information search behaviour and purchase decisions (Brown, Broderick, & Lee, 2007). As it is mentioned by Goldenberg, Libai, & Muller (2001), Consumer decision making processes are strongly influenced by word-of-mouth from other consumers. As it is defined by Richins (1983), Word-of-mouth refers to interpersonal

communications among consumers concerning their personal experiences and evaluations of a firm or a product. As Sparks & Browning (2011) indicate:

Imagine for a moment that you are planning to visit another city and need to book a hotel. Not being familiar with the destination you ponder how to make a decision about where to stay. You could ask friends, check out a travel agency, or perhaps do a search on the Internet. What all these strategies have in common is that people often seek the advice of others as part of their decision-making. It is widely recognized that word of mouth, both positive and negative, has the potential to influence customer purchase decisions.

(Sparks & Browning, 2011)

In recent years, the World Wide Web transformed a business-to-consumer marketing to a peer-to-peer model for sharing of information (Kozinets, 1999). Invention of web 2.0 enabled internet users to collaborate and share information online (Webopedia). With the development of Web 2.0, user generated contents has become tremendously popular as some of the most frequently visited sites on the Internet are primarily user generated applications (Ellis-Christensen & Wallace). The increasing use of web 2.0 applications has generated numerous online user reviews (Ye, Law, Gu, & Chen, 2011) in the form of user generated contents.

The Internet and information technologies provide extensive opportunities for consumers to share their evaluations of products online (Zhanga, Yea, Law, & Li, 2010). Such communications exert a powerful influence on consumers' purchase behaviour especially in the presence of experience goods such as hospitality service (Murray, 1991). More consumers are now willing to rely on e-WOM as a key source of information about specific products (Litvin, Goldsmith, & Pan, 2008).

This study will focus on the role of hotel online reviews, as an important form of e-WOM in the accommodation purchase decision making process of international Tourists in Malaysia.

1.2 Statement of research

Prior studies revealed that online user-generated reviews have a significant effect on the sales of experience products (Chevlier & Mayzlin, 2006), (Duan, Gu, & Whinston, 2008), (Ye, Law, Gu, & Chen, 2011), (Ye, Law, & Gu, 2009), (Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009), (Zhanga, Yea, Law, & Li, 2010), (Sparks & Browning, 2011), (Jordan, 2008), (Kim & Kim, 2004), (Arsal, 2008)). In addition, the importance of word-of-mouth on business has been widely discussed and researched, particularly since the worldwide adoption of Internet technologies, which have revolutionized the distribution and influence of word-of-mouth (Anderson, 1998).

Several recent studies explore the issue of online reviews, or electronic word-of-mouth, focusing mainly on matters such as motivations of, and social dynamics between, users and contributors of review sites (Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, & Gremler, 2004). However, these studies do not investigate online reviews' impact on consumer decision making, i.e., to what extent exposure to online reviews affects consumers' attitudes and purchase decisions (Chevlier & Mayzlin, 2006).

This study aims to identify the role of online hotel reviews, which are available in the form of user generated content through well-known travel review

websites (e.g. Tripadvisor.com) (e.g. expedia.com, Travelocity.com and booking.com) in the international tourists' accommodation purchase behaviour. More specifically the focus will be placed on the accommodation purchase behaviour of international free independent tourists in Kuala Lumpur to identify to what extent; online reviews are a significant factor which can influence their hotel selection. Moreover the position of online word of mouth will be compared with other influential factors such as physical attributes of hotels such location or facilities and its value indicators such as price range, brand and number of stars. As another part of study, this research seeks to identify if the roles of online hotel reviews are more significant for the specific segments of Malaysian tourism market in terms of their demographic characteristics, namely age, education, nationality and gender.

Beside the demographic characteristics, this research attempts to find any meaningful relationship between the importance of online hotel reviews as a decision making factor for the Kuala Lumpur international tourists and their travel pattern, such the length of stay, the travel companions, purpose of visit and their accommodation purchase expenditure. In addition, the main sources of information research for international tourists of Kuala Lumpur and the position of online hotel reviews among them will be sought. And it will be studied that what type of reviews are more influential on the decision making process of Kuala Lumpur international free independent tourists. Finally, it will be studied whether and to what extent, international free independent tourists of Kuala Lumpur pay attention to the personal characteristics of a reviewer, namely its gender, age and nationality.

1.3 Research questions

Question Number 1: Numerous factors are influential on hotel selection decision making process of tourists (i.e. location, price, brand, facilities, and number of stars). For Kuala Lumpur tourists, to what extent, the valence of online user generated hotel reviews have a significant role in their decision making process, in compare with other factors?

Tourists may have numerous factors which can influence their decision making process to select their hotel in Kuala Lumpur. These factors can be categorized into physical attributes such as its location, the available facilities, room size or its value factors such as value for money, price, brand or number of stars. For the purpose of this research, the importance of the online reviews as a hotel selection factor for Kuala Lumpur international free independent tourists will be compared with other above mentioned factors. In other words, it will be studied that which of the above mentioned factors are more crucial for a traveller to select a hotel and what is the position of “being recommended by online reviews” or having “better online reviews” between the above factors.

Question Number 2:

- a. What are the main sources of information for international tourists of Kuala Lumpur to find hotels?
- b. What is the position of online user generated reviews, among other sources of information for Kuala Lumpur international tourists based on their reliability and trustworthiness and the frequency of reference?

A wide variety of information sources are available for tourists to find the necessary information about the accommodation facilities of a destination. Hotel's

official websites, guide books, travel agencies, internet travel websites, internet travel review websites, friends and relatives, tourism offices and media are only few samples of above mentioned information sources. In this study it will be sought to find out what are the main information sources for Kuala Lumpur international free independent tourists and what the position of online user generated reviews is between all available information sources.

Question Number 3: What is the relationship between the demographic characteristics and travel patterns of Kuala Lumpur international free independent tourists and their behaviour toward online reviews?

In this study, it will be tried to identify if the behaviour towards the online hotel reviews significantly has any relationship with the demographic characteristics and travel pattern of Kuala Lumpur international free independent tourists. Particularly it will be sought if any specific groups of tourists in terms of their demographic characteristics (e.g. age, education level, country of origin) and travel pattern (e.g. travel motivations, length of stay, budget) have different behaviour towards the online reviews in their accommodation purchase behaviour.

Question Number 4: Do online reviews reflect the actual conditions of accommodation facilities and are they in compliance with the evaluation of Kuala Lumpur Tourists?

The respondents will be asked to state to what extent they find the online reviews, published in well-known hotel review websites (e.g. Tripadvisor, booking.com and online travel agencies such as expedia, Travelocity, etc.), accurate and reliable.

Question Number 5: Do the international tourists of Kuala Lumpur pay attention to the personal characteristics of the review writers and to what extents, these personal characteristics are important for them?

As a relatively more innovative approach to research the role of online reviews in the accommodation purchase behaviour of Kuala Lumpur international tourists, the tourists will be asked to express to what extent the personal characteristics of the writer of online reviews are important for them. These personal characteristics include the age, sex and nationality of the writers.

1.4 Expected findings

From the findings of this research, generally the influence of online user generated hotel reviews on the decision making process of customers and their accommodation purchase behaviour is expected to be found out. Initially, the significance of user generated online hotel reviews among other influential factors for selecting hotels can be identified. The findings of this part will assist tourism planners, researchers and hotel industry stake holders, to identify the most important hotel selection factors for tourists and in addition, it can assist them to measure and identify the importance of online hotel reviews as an influential factor on the success of their business. The findings of this part may be used as marketing hints for the marketers of hotel and accommodation facilities to better understand the role of online reviews and its position against the other factors of an accommodation facility.

In addition, the information search behaviour, in terms of use of hotel selection sources of information and their trustworthiness for the Kuala Lumpur international free independent tourists will be studied. Therefore marketers can have a better understanding about the information search behaviour of tourists, and sources of information which have more influence on the decision making process of tourists. In addition, it will be sought to show which sources of information are considered more reliable or trustworthy by international tourists of Kuala Lumpur. Furthermore, it will be attempted to find out how international tourists of Kuala Lumpur usually search for the information in the context of web search. The findings of this part of study are expected to tremendously help marketers to develop more effective marketing and promotional plans. In addition, tourism planners may use the findings of this research, to better understand the information search behaviour of tourists.

Through studying the relationship of the international free independent travellers behaviour towards online hotel user generated reviews with demographic characteristics and travel pattern of tourists, it can be shown that which groups of travellers are mostly exposed with online user generated reviews and for the current key market segments of Malaysian tourism, to what extent, online user generated reviews can play a significant role. Findings of this part will assist tourism planners and marketers to further understand the importance of user generated reviews on purchase behaviour of tourists in Malaysia. In addition, the marketing planners will notify that which part of their target markets are mostly exposed to the online reviews and therefore can adjust their marketing strategies based on the findings of this research. Moreover it will help the tourism review web developers to better understand their main target groups and therefore take more effective steps for development of websites and its marketing policies.

Furthermore it will be examined that to what extent, online reviews are reflecting the current and actual conditions of facilities in Kuala Lumpur accommodation market. The findings of this part of research will help tourism

academicians and researchers to have a broader understanding about the trustworthiness and constancy of online user generated hotel reviews.

As another expected finding of this research, it will be attempted to measure to what extent the personal details of the review writers are being considered by the review readers. The outcomes of this part of research can help review websites designers to establish more innovative and effective recommender and review systems to better fit the expectations of the users.

1.5 Research goal and objectives

The goal of this research is to analyse the influence of online user generated hotel reviews on accommodation purchase behaviour of Kuala Lumpur international free independent travellers.

1. To identify to what extent, online user generated hotel reviews play a significant role in hotel selection process of travellers in compare with other factors such as price, location, brand and stars;
2.
 - a. To identify which sources are the main sources of finding information about the hotels for the international tourists in Malaysia and;

- b. The position of online reviews, between other sources of data, as an influential factor on decision making process of Malaysia's international free independent tourists in their accommodation purchase behaviour;
3. To identify how online reviews influence the accommodation purchase of Malaysia's international free independent tourists, in relation with demographic characteristics and travel pattern of tourists;
4. To identify to what extent online reviews reflect the actual conditions of accommodation facilities of Kuala Lumpur.
5. To identify whether and to what extents the personal details of the review writers are a matter of concern for the international free independent tourists of Kuala Lumpur.

1.6 Importance of the study

According to recent studies, an increasing number of travellers are daily consulting with online user generated travel reviews to decide about their trip or purchase a travel package online. According to Gretzel & Yoo (2008), three-quarters of travellers have considered online consumer reviews as an information source

when planning their trips. Another study shows that up to 70% of adults currently use consumer ratings and reviews (Forrester, 2006).

In 2006, Pew Research found that of the 75% of American adults who use the Internet, 91% utilized online search engines to find information. In addition, 81% of Internet users used the Internet to look for information online about a service or product they were intended to purchase. Furthermore, searching for travel information was among the most popular online activities, with 73% of Internet users searching for travel information (Horrigan, 2008). As an instance, merely on one of the most globally well-known hotel review websites, Tripadvisor.com, which contains more than 45 million travel reviews and opinions from travellers around the world for more than 457,000 hotels from 85,000 cities, each month 50 millions of potential visitors consult online reviews (Tripadvisor, 2011).

The Travel Association of America (TIA) found that 31% of all travellers are actually booking or making travel reservations online. This figure represents an increase from 29% of all travellers who booked online in 2003 and an increase from 10% of all travellers who booked online in 1999 (Patkose, Stokes, & Cook, 2004). In 2004, the top three items booked or purchased online were airline tickets (82% of online travel bookers), overnight lodging accommodations (67%), and activities (66%) (Patkose, Stokes, & Cook, 2004).

A research in 2006 showed that more than 35% of Internet users have rated products online (Lenhart, 2006). According to Gretzel & Yoo (2008), Up to 2004, 44 per cent of U.S. Internet users had presented their thoughts on the Internet, and the majority of consumers reported that they trusted the opinions which were posted online by other consumers. Several studies proved that online user-generated reviews could significantly influence the sales of products like books, CDs, and movies (Ghose & Ipeiritis, 2006). A recent study revealed that traveller reviews have a significant impact on online sales, with a 10 percent increase in traveller review

ratings boosting online bookings by more than five percent (Ye, Law, Gu, & Chen, 2011).

According to another survey with more than 2000 U.S. adults, between 79% and 87% of the readers of online reviews of restaurants, hotels, and travel services reported that the reviews had a significant influence on their purchase decisions. More importantly, based on the strength of the reviews that they read, 41% of restaurant review readers subsequently visited a restaurant, and 40% of hotel review readers subsequently stayed at a hotel (comScore & Kelsey, 2007). Another study illustrate that among the visitors, 84 per cent were affected by reviews when making their travel reservations (Milan, 2009).

Reviews provided by other travellers are often perceived by readers to be more up-to-date, enjoyable, and reliable than information provided by travel service providers (Gretzel & Yoo, 2008). For many consumers of tourism or hospitality product a review of what is being ‘said’ in cyber space forms part of the information collection process when selecting a product (Sparks & Browning, 2011). Inarguably, consumers are relying more on online search strategies, by using blog pages, forums or review sites when making product decisions (Xinag & Gretzel, 2010). Therefore, consumer’s decision-making process is strongly influenced by WOM (Goldenberg, Libai, & Muller, 2001).

Online user-generated reviews are of use to both consumers and online retailers (Zhu & Zhang, 2006), or as Park, Lee, & Han (2007) define, an online consumer review has a dual role: it provides information about products and services, and serves as a recommendation.

As informants, online consumer reviewers deliver additional user oriented information (Zhanga, Yea, Law, & Li, 2010). In other words, they offer special solutions to the “problem” of intangibility of experience products (Klein, 1998). The WOM process makes it easier for consumers to spread their words, and facilitating

access to such opinions, various opinion websites have shown a profound effect on consumer purchase decisions (Zhanga, Yea, Law, & Li, 2010). Therefore, as part of product decision-making or choice, potential buyers can enter a community of past-purchasers to obtain information prior to making a purchase (Sparks & Browning, 2011).

These reviews become an important source for international travellers to get travel-related advice, which in turn, leads to the ultimate online reservations for business owners (Ye, Law, Gu, & Chen, 2011). On the other hand, online consumer reviews as recommenders, provide either a positive or negative signal of product popularity (Zhanga, Yea, Law, & Li, 2010). As it is proved by a recent research, subjectivity and polarity of the ratings in reviews had a significant influence on online sales of certain products (Ghose & Ipeirotis, 2006).

A recent study on the impact of New York Times book reviews on book sales (Sorensen & Rasmussen, 2004) established unsurprisingly that positive reviews had a more positive impact on book sales than negative reviews. But it also more surprisingly found that negative reviews had a positive impact on book sales. The authors explained the latter finding by referring to reviews' "informative," as opposed to persuasive, component (Sorensen & Rasmussen, 2004). Marketing theorists would relate this informative component of a review to consumers' product or brand awareness (Keller, 1993). Even though negative reviews lower consumer attitudes toward the reviewed hotels, enhanced hotel awareness compensates for this effect, yielding a near neutral net effect on consideration (Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009).

Positive online reviews improve the perception of hotels among potential consumers. Exposure to online reviews enhanced hotel awareness, and that positive reviews improved the attitudes of travellers toward hotels (Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009). They can significantly influence the popularity and sales of certain products

(Chevlier & Mayzlin, 2006). In addition, they pass on a strong sense of a hotel or destination to travellers, and, more importantly, contain valuable information about product improvement (Ye, Law, Gu, & Chen, 2011). Certain online reviews could reduce cognitive loads of readers and thus result in more sales (Ghose & Ipeirotis, 2006). Furthermore, these reviews can lead to product or service quality improvement (Au, Law, & Buhalis, 2010). These reviews have the potential to enhance or detract from a brand and, consequently, to impact on a firm's reputation (Sparks & Browning, 2011). Since the Internet will serve as a major communication channel between hotels and consumers, hotel managers should setup an effective communication strategy and to simplify their electronic reviews (Ye, Law, Gu, & Chen, 2011). Many tourism and hospitality businesses have not taken notice of the online e-complaint trend, and they thus fail to respond actively (Harrison-Walker, 2001).

Understanding e-WOM is especially important for those products whereby consumers potentially obtain information (search), book or buy online, such as hotels, airlines and restaurants (Li, Pan, Zhang, & Smith, 2009). Online word-of-mouth can have important implications for managers in terms of brand building, product development, and quality assurance (Dellarocas, 2003). Tourism managers thus need to be aware that an increasing number of travellers will make their purchases online, and that the purchase decisions of these travellers will be strongly influenced by online reviews (Ye, Law, Gu, & Chen, 2011).

Hotel managers need to be more cognisant of what is written about their hotels in third party online reviews (Ye, Law, & Gu, 2009). Proper use of traveller reviews could, therefore, help a tourism business to improve their services and gain a competitive edge (Ye, Law, Gu, & Chen, 2011). Furthermore, some authors suggest that Hotel practitioners should motivate consumers to write online reviews (Ye, Law, Gu, & Chen, 2011). A growing reliance on the Internet as an information source when making choices about tourism products raises the need for more research into electronic word of mouth (Sparks & Browning, 2011).

REFERENCES

- Akehurst, G. (2009). User generated content: the use of blogs for tourism organisations and tourism consumers. *Serv Bus* 3, 51-61.
- Alexa. (n.d.). *Alexa, The Web Information Company*. Retrieved June 27, 2012, from Alexa.com: <http://www.alexa.com/>
- Anderson, E. (1998). Customer satisfaction and word-of-mouth. *Journal of Service Research*, 1(1), 5-17.
- Arsal, I. (2008). *THE INFLUENCE OF ELECTRONIC WORD-OF-MOUTH IN AN ONLINE TRAVEL COMMUNITY ON TRAVEL DECISIONS: A CASE STUDY*. Ann Arbor: Clemson University.
- Au, N., Law, R., & Buhalis, D. (2010). The impact of culture on eComplaints: Evidence from Chinese consumers in hospitality organisations. In U. Gretzek, R. Law, & M. Fuchs, *from Chinese consumers in hospitality organisations* (pp. 285-296). New York: Springer-Verlag.
- Berger, H., Dittenbach, M., Merkl, D., Bogdanovych, A., Simoff, S., & Sierra, C. (2007). Opening new dimensions of e-Tourism. *Virtual Reality*, 75-87.
- Booking.com. (2012, Juner 23). *241 Hotels found in Kuala Lumpur, 221 available. Showing 201 – 220*. Retrieved June 23, 2012, from Booking.com: http://www.booking.com/searchresults.en-gb.html?sid=2f7c3ca0da4cbb125494e88bd6b68224;dcid=1;checkin_monthday=1;checkin_year_month=2012-9;checkout_monthday=2;checkout_year_month=2012-9;city=-2403010;class_interval=1;dest_id=-2403010;dest_type=city;inac=0;o
- Booking.com. (n.d.). *240 Hotels found in Kuala Lumpur*. Retrieved June 27, 2012, from Booking.com: http://www.booking.com/searchresults.en-us.html?sid=2f7c3ca0da4cbb125494e88bd6b68224;dcid=1;class_interval=1;i

df=1;inac=0;offset=0;redirected_from_city=0;redirected_from_landmark=0;review_score_group=empty;score_min=0;si=ai%2Cco%2Cci%2Cre%2Cdi;src=index;s

- Borouji Hojeghan, S., & Nazari Esfangareh, A. (2011). The 2nd International Geography Symposium GEOMED2010: Digital economy and tourism impacts, influences and challenges. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 308-316.
- Brosdahi, D. J., & Carpenter, J. M. (2011). Shopping orientations of US males: A generational cohort comparison. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 18 (6), 548-554.
- Brown, J., Broderick, A. J., & Lee, N. (2007). Word of mouth communication within online communities: conceptualising the online social network. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 21(3), 2-20.
- Buhalis, D. (2003). *eTourism: Information technology for strategic tourism management*. Pearson: Financial Times-Prentice-Hall.
- Buhalis, D., & Jun, S. H. (2011). *E-Tourism*. Oxford, UK: Goodfellow Publishers Limited.
- Buhalis, D., & Law, R. (2008). Progress in information technology and tourism management: 20 years on and 10 years after the internet - The state of eTourism research. *Tourism Management*, 609-623.
- Burns, E. (2006, June 05). *Online Retail Revenues to Reach \$200 Billion*. Retrieved May 15, 2011, from ClickZ Marketing News & Expert Advice : <http://www.clickz.com/clickz/stats/1696437/online-retail-revenues-reach-usd200-billion>
- Chatterjee, P. (2001). Online reviews: do consumers use them? *ACR 2001* (pp. 129-134). Association for Consumer Research.
- Chevlier, J., & Mayzlin, D. (2006). The effect of word of mouth on sales: online book reviews. *Journal of Marketing Research* 43 (3), 345-354.
- Chu, R. (2001). What online Hong Kong travelers look for on airline/travel Websites? *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 95-100.
- Clemons, E., Gao, G., & Hitt, L. (2006). When online reviews meet hyperdifferentiation: a study of the craft beer industry. *Journal of Management Information Systems* 23 (2), 149-171.

- comScore, I., & Kelsey, T. G. (2007, 11 29). *Online Consumer-Generated Reviews Have Significant Impact on Offline Purchase Behavior*. Retrieved 05 16, 2011, from comScore, Inc.:
http://www.comscore.com/Press_Events/Press_Releases/2007/11/Online_Consumer_Reviews_Impact_Offline_Purchasing_Behavior
- D'Ambra, J., & Wilson, C. (2004). Use of the World Wide Web for international travel: integrating the construct of uncertainty in information seeking and the task-technology fit(TTF) model. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology* 55(8), 731-742.
- DBKL, D. B. (Not available). *Kuala Lumpur Structural Plan 2020*. Retrieved June 26, 2012, from Portal Rasmi Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur:
http://www.dbkl.gov.my/pskl2020/english/economic_base_and_population/index.htm
- Dellarocas, C. (2003). The digitization of word-of-mouth: promise and challenges of online feedback mechanisms. *Management Science* 49 (10), 1407-1424.
- Duan, W., Gu, B., & Whinston, A. (2008). Do online reviews matter? — An empirical investigation of panel data. *Decision Support Systems* 45, 1007-1016.
- Dunne, P. M., & Lusch, R. F. (2008). *Retailing (2nd edition)*. Mason, Ohio: South-Western CENGAGE Learning.
- Eftekhari, M. H., Barzegar, Z., & Isaai, M. (2011). *Web 1.0 to Web 3.0 Evolution: Reviewing the impacts on tourism developments and opportunities*. Tehran, Iran: Sharif University of Technology.
- Ellis-Christensen, T., & Wallace, O. (n.d.). *What is User Generated Content?*
 Retrieved May 16, 2011, from WiseGeek: <http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-user-generated-content.htm>
- Euromanitor. (2011, January 6). *Euromonitor International's top city destinations ranking*. Retrieved June 26, 2012, from Euromanitor International:
<http://blog.euromonitor.com/2011/01/euromonitor-internationals-top-city-destinations-ranking.html>
- Expedia.com. (n.d.). *165 matching hotels found in Kuala Lumpur (and vicinity)*. Retrieved June 27, 2012, from Expedia.com.my:
<http://www.expedia.com.my/Hotel-Search>

- Forrester, R. (2006). Teleconference: Tapping the Power of User-Generated Content. Accessed online.
- Garcia-Crespo, A., Chamizo, J., Rivera, I., Mencke, M., Colombo-Palacios, R., & Gomez-Berbis, J. M. (2009). SEPTA: Social pervasive e-Tourism advisor. *Telematics and Informatics*, 306-315.
- Garcia-Crespo, A., Lopez-Guadrado, J. L., Colomo-Palacios, R., Gonzalez-Carrasco, I., & Ruiz-Mezcua, B. (2011). Sem-Fit: A semantic based expert system to provide recommendations in the tourism domain. *Expert Systems with applications*, 13310-13319.
- Ghose, A., & Ipeirotis, P. (2006). Towards an Understanding of the Impact of Customer Sentiment on Product Sales and Review Quality. *workshop on information technology and systems*, (pp. 1-6). Milwaukee, US.
- Gibs, J. (2009, October 5). *Social Media: the next great gateway for content discovery*. Retrieved November 2011, 2, from Nielsen Wire: http://blog.nielsen.com/nielsenwire/online_mobile/social-media-the-next-great-gateway-for-content-discovery/
- Godes, D., & Mayzlin, D. (2004). Using online conversations to study word of mouth communication. *Journal of Marketing Science* 23(4), 545-560.
- Goldenberg, J., Libai, B., & Muller, E. (2001). Talk of the network: A complex systems look at the underlying process of word-of-mouth. *Marketing Letters* 12(3), 211-223.
- Gretzel, U., & Yoo, K. (2008). Use and impact of online travel reviews. In P. O'Connor, W. Hopken, & U. Gretzel, *Information and communication technologies in tourism* (pp. 35-46). New York: Springer-Verlag.
- Gruber, T. (2008). Collective knowledge systems: Where the social web meets the semantic web. *Web semantics: Science, Services and Agents on the World Wide Web*, 4-13.
- Gursoy, D., & McCleary, K. W. (2004). An integrative model of tourists' information search behavior. *Analns of tourism research*, 353-373.
- Gursoy, D., Maier, T. A., & Chi, C. G. (2008). Generational differences: An examination of work values and generational gaps in the hospitality workforce. *International Journall of Hospitality Management*, 27 (3), 448-458.

- Harrison-Walker, L. J. (2001). E-complaining: A content analysis of an internet complain forum. *Journal of Service Marketing* 15(5), 397-412.
- Hennig-Thurau, T., Gwinner, K. P., Walsh, G., & Gremler, D. D. (2004). Electronic word of mouth via consumer opinion platforms: what motivates consumers to articulate themselves on the Internet? *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 18(1), 38-52.
- Horrigan, J. (2008, Feb 13). *Online Shopping* . Retrieved May 16, 2011, from Pew Internet & Americal Life Project:
<http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2008/Online-Shopping.aspx>
- Hostelbookers. (2012, June 23). *Kuala Lumpur Accommodation Search Results, Malaysia*. Retrieved June 2012, 2012, from Hostelbookers.com:
http://www.hostelbookers.com/results/loc/dd/dst/3223/arr/2012-09-01/ngt/1/ppl/1/#/rating_min%3D0/rating_max%3D100/price_min%3D0/price_max%3D131/shared%3Dtrue/private%3Dtrue/hos%3Dtrue/hot%3Dtrue/apt%3Dtrue/cam%3Dtrue/gue%3Dtrue/suburb%3D/table_sort%3Dpriv
- Hostelbookers.com. (n.d.). *Kuala Lumpur Accommodation Search Results, Malaysia*. Retrieved June 27, 2012, from Hostelbookers.com:
<http://www.hostelbookers.com/results/loc/dd/dst/3223/arr/2012-09-01/ngt/2/ppl/1/#/hos=true/hot=true/apt=true/cam=true/gue=true>
- Hostels.com. (n.d.). *Hostels in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*. Retrieved June 27, 2012, from Hostels.com:
<http://www.hostels.com/findabed.php?ChosenCity=Kuala%20Lumpur&ChosenCountry=Malaysia&Search=1>
- Hotels.com. (n.d.). *Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*. Retrieved June 27, 2012, from Hotels.com:
<http://www.hotels.com/search.do?destination=Kuala+Lumpur%2C+Malaysia&searchParams.arrivalDate=01-09-2012&searchParams.departureDate=02-09-2012&rooms=1&searchParams.rooms%5B0%5D.numberOfAdults=2&children%5B0%5D=0&asaReport=HomePage%3A%3ANoSuggest&destinati>
- Hunter, A. (2011). *User Generated Content*. Retrieved May 17, 2011, from SEO Glossary.com: <http://www.seoglossary.com/article/746>
- Ibrahim, Y. (2009).

- Jay, C. (n.d.). *e - Tourism*. Retrieved November 2, 2011, from Buzzle.com Intelligent Life on the Web: <http://www.buzzle.com>
- Jordan, E. J. (2008). *ONLINE TRAVEL INFORMATION SEARCH BEHAVIORS: AN INFORMATION FORAGING PERSPECTIVE*. Ann Arbor: Clemson University.
- Kahler, M. (n.d.). *Best Websites for Budget Hotels – Budget Hotel Websites*. Retrieved June 27, 2012, from About.com: http://budgettravel.about.com/od/budgetaccommodations/tp/hotel_reviews.htm
- Keller, K. L. (1993). Conceptualizing, measuring and managing customer-based brand equity. *Journal of Marketing*, 57(1), 1-22.
- Kim, D. J., Kim, W. G., & Han, J. S. (2007). A perceptual mapping of online travel agencies and preference attributes. *Tourism Management* 28, 591-603.
- Kim, M.-J., Chung, N., & Lee, C.-K. (2011). The effect of perceived trust on electronic commerce: Shopping online for tourism products and services in South Korea. *Tourism Management*, 256-265.
- Kim, W. G., & Kim, D. J. (2004). Factors affecting online hotel reservation intention between online and non-online customers. *Hospitality Management* 23, 381-395.
- Kim, W. G., & Lee, H. Y. (2004). Comparison of web service quality between online travel agencies and online travel suppliers. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing* 17, 105-116.
- Klein, L. R. (1998). Evaluating the potential of interactive media through a new lens: search versus experience goods. *Journal of Business Research* 41(3), 195-203.
- Koh, N. S., Hua, N., & Clemons, E. K. (2010). Do online reviews reflect a product's true perceived quality? An investigation of online movie reviews across cultures. *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications* 9, 374-385.
- Kozinets, R. (1999). E-tribalized marketing? The strategic implications of virtual communities. *European Management Journal* 17 (3), 252-264.
- L. J. Reid, S. D. (1993). Communicating tourism supplier service: Building repeat visitor relationships. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*, (2) (2/3), 3-19.

- Lane, D. (2011). *Pearson's Correlation*. Retrieved June 26, 2012, from HyperStat Online Contents: <http://davidmlane.com/hyperstat/A34739.html>
- Lenhart, A. (2006, 11 06). *User-Generated Content* . Retrieved 05 16, 2011, from Pew Internet & American Life Project: <http://www.pewinternet.org/Presentations/2006/UserGenerated-Content.aspx>
- Lester, D., Forman, A., & Loyd, D. (2006). Internet shopping and buying behavior of college students. *Services Marketing Quarterly*, 27 (2), 123-138.
- Li, K. W., & Law, R. L. (2007). A novel English/Chinese information retrieval approach in hotel Website searching. *Tourism Management*, 28 (3), 777-787.
- Li, X., Cheng, C.-K., & Kim, H. P. (2008). A systematic comparison of first-time and repeat visitors via a two-phase online survey. *Tourism Management*, 29 (2), 278-293.
- Li, X., Pan, B., Zhang, L., & Smith, W. W. (2009). The effect of online information search on image development: insights from a mixed-methods study. *Journal of Travel Research*, 48(1), 45-57.
- Litvin, S. W., Goldsmith, R. E., & Pan, B. (2008). Electronic word-of-mouth in hospitality and tourism management. *Tourism Management* 29, 458-468.
- MacFarland, T. W. (1998). *Kruskal-Wallis H-Test for Oneway ANOVA by Ranks*. Retrieved June 26, 2012, from Nyx: http://www.nyx.net/~tmacfarl/STAT_TUT/kruskalw.ssi
- Martin, C. A. (2005). From high maintenance to high productivity: what managers need to know about generation Y. *Industrial and Commercial Training*, 37 (1), 39-44.
- Mawer, F. (2010, October 6). *The best hotel review websites (TripAdvisor not included!)*. Retrieved June 27, 2012, from Daily Main: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/travel/article-1317864/Top-online-alternatives-TripAdvisor-trusted-hotel-reviews.html>
- McKercher, B., & Wong, D. Y. (2004). Understanding tourism behavior: Examining the combined effects of prior visitation history and destination status. *Journal of Travel Research*, 171-179.
- Milan, R. (2009, September 24). *Travel Reviews - Consumers Are Changing Your Brand And Reputation Online*. Retrieved May 15, 2011, from Travel Industry Wire: <http://www.travelindustrywire.com/article29359.html>

- Montejo-Raez, A., Perea-Ortega, J. M., Garcia-Cumbreras, M. A., & Martinez-Santiago, F. (2011). Otium: A web based planner for tourism and leisure. *Expert systems with applications*, 10085-10093.
- Morgan, N., Pritchard, A., & Piggott, R. (2003). Destination branding and the role of the stakeholders: the case of New Zealand. *Journal of Vacation Marketing* 9 (3), 285-299.
- Morosan, C., & Miyoung, J. (2008). Users' perceptions of two typer of hotel reservation web sites. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 27 (2), 284-292.
- Motour. (2012, January 2012). *Pengelasan Hotel Sehingga Januari 2012*. Retrieved June 26, 2012, from Official Portal: Ministry of Tourism Malaysia: <http://www.motour.gov.my/en/download/finish/27-statistik-pelesenan/135-hotel-rating.html>
- Murray, K. (1991). A test of service marketing theory: consumer information acquisition. *Journal of Marketing* 55 (1), 10-15.
- Nunally, J. (1978). *Psychometric theory*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Nusair, K. ., Parsa, H. G., & Cobanoglu, C. (2011). Building a model of commitment for Generation Y: An empirical study on e-travel retailers. *Tourism Management*, 32 (4), 833-843.
- Oppermann, M. (1998). Travel horizon: A valuable analysis tool? *Tourism Management*, 19 (4), 321-329.
- Orbitz.com. (n.d.). *97 matching hotels*. Retrieved June 2012, 27, from Orbitz.com: [http://www.orbitz.com/shop/hotelsearch?type=hotel&interstitial=true&search=Search&hotel.hotelRoom.adlts=2&hotel.rooms\[0\].adlts=2&hotel.keyword.key=Kuala%20Lumpur,%20Malaysia&hotel.rooms\[0\].chlds=0&hotel.type=keyword&hotel.rooms\[0\].snrs=0&hotel.keyword.dl=](http://www.orbitz.com/shop/hotelsearch?type=hotel&interstitial=true&search=Search&hotel.hotelRoom.adlts=2&hotel.rooms[0].adlts=2&hotel.keyword.key=Kuala%20Lumpur,%20Malaysia&hotel.rooms[0].chlds=0&hotel.type=keyword&hotel.rooms[0].snrs=0&hotel.keyword.dl=)
- O'Reilly, T. (2005). *What is Web 2.0: Design Patterns and Business Models for the Next Generation of Software*. Retrieved November 2, 2011, from O'Reily Net: <http://www.oreillynnet.com>
- Pan, B., MacLaurin, T., & Crotts, J. (2007). Travel blogs and the implications for destination marketing. *Journal of Travel Research*, 46(1), 35-45.

- Papathanassis, A., & Knolle, F. (2011). Exploring the adoption and processing of online holiday reviews: A grounded theory approach. *Tourism Management* 32, 215-224.
- Park, D., Lee, J., & Han, J. (2007). The effect of online consumer reviews on consumer purchasing intention: the moderating role of involvement. *International Journal of Electronic Commerce* 11 (4), 125-148.
- Patkose, M., Stokes, A., & Cook, S. (2004). *Travelers use of the Internet: 2004 Edition*. Washington D.C.: Travel Industry Association of America.
- PCMAG. (2011). *Definition of: user-generated content*. Retrieved May 17, 2011, from PCMAG.COM:
http://www.pcmag.com/encyclopedia_term/0,2542,t=user-generated+content&i=56171,00.asp
- Pew Center Reports. (2010, February 24). *Millennials: Confident. Connected. Open to Change*. Retrieved June 23, 2012, from Pew Research Center:
<http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2010/02/24/Millennials-confident-connected-open-to-change/>
- Pew, R. C. (2010, September). *Trend Data*. Retrieved May 15, 2011, from Pew Internet & American Life Project : <http://www.pewinternet.org/Static-Pages/Trend-Data/Online-Activities-Daily.aspx>
- Prentice, R., & Andersen, V. (2000). Evoking Ireland - Modeling tourist propensity. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 27 (2), 490-516.
- Richins, M. (1983). Negative word-of-mouth by dissatisfied consumers: a pilot study. *Journal of Marketing* 47 (1), 68-78.
- Rodríguez, M. C. (2010). *On-line opinions and the role of "value" in the tourism industry in the Caribbean: A fuzzy data envelopment analysis approach to model island competitiveness*. Puerto Rico: UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO.
- Rosenberg, M. (2009, March 27). *Baby Boom, The population baby boom of 1946-1964 in the United States*. Retrieved June 23, 2012, from www.about.com:
<http://geography.about.com/od/populationgeography/a/babyboom.htm>
- Saks, G. (2007, March). *TRAVELTRENDS*. Retrieved May 15, 2011, from [compete, inc.;](http://www.traveltrends.com)

https://media.competeinc.com/med/uploads/files/traveltrends_consumer_generated_travel_content.html

Santos, J. R. (1999, April). *Cronbach's Alpha: A Tool for Assessing the Reliability of Scales*. Retrieved June 26, 2012, from The journal of extension:

<http://www.joe.org/joe/1999april/tt3.php>

Sigala, M. (2008). *Social marketing strategies and distribution channels for city destinations: enhancing the participatory role of travellers and exploiting their collective intelligence*. IDEA publishing.

Sigala, M. (2011). Preface: Special issue on Web 2.0 in travel and tourism: empowering and changing the role of travellers. *Computers in Human Behavior* 27 (2), 607-608.

Sorensen, A., & Rasmussen, S. (2004). *Is any publicity good publicity? A note on the impact of book reviews*. Stanford University.

Sparks, B. A., & Browning, V. (2011). The impact of online reviews on hotel booking intentions and perception of trust. *Tourism Management*, 1-14.

Straus, W., Howe, P., & Markiewicz, P. (2006). *Millennials and the Pop Culture: Strategies for a New Generation of Consumers*. Great Falls, Virginia: Life Course Associates.

Strauss, W., & Howe, N. (1991). *Consumer Behavior*. London: The Dryden Press.

Sullivan, P., & Heitmeyer, J. (2008). Looking at Gen Y shopping preferences and intentions: exploring the role of experience and apparel involvement. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 32 (3), 285-295.

Thielfoldt, D., & Scheef, D. (2004, August). *Generation X and The Millennials: What You Need to Know About Mentoring the New Generations* . Retrieved June 23, 2012, from American Bar Association:

<http://apps.americanbar.org/lpm/lpt/articles/mgt08044.html>

Tripadvisor. (2011, February). *Fact Sheet*. Retrieved May 15, 2011, from

Tripadvisor.com: http://www.tripadvisor.com/PressCenter-c4-Fact_Sheet.html

Tripadvisor.com. (2011, August). *Fact Sheet*. Retrieved November 10, 2011, from

Tripadvisor: www.tripadvisor.com/PressCenter-c4-Fact_Sheet.html

Tripadvisor.com. (n.d.). *Kuala Lumpur Hotels*. Retrieved June 27, 2012, from

Tripadvisor.com:

http://www.tripadvisor.com/HACSearch?geoOrName=geo&q=Kuala+Lumpur%2C+Malaysia&inDay=1&inMonth=09%2F2012&checkIn=mm%2Fdd%2Fyyyy&outDay=2&outMonth=09%2F2012&checkOut=mm%2Fdd%2Fyyyy#02,1340800749350,bc_airports:S,bc_convention_centers:S,nameContains:S,cat:-1

UCLA. (n.d.). *What does Cronbach's alpha mean?* . Retrieved June 26, 2012, from UCLA Academic Technology Services:

<http://www.ats.ucla.edu/stat/spss/faq/alpha.html>

UNCTAD. (2011). *E-tourism in developing countries: more links, fewer leaks*.

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

UNWTO. (2011). *UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, Advance release January 2011*. United Nations World Tourism Organization.

UNWTO. (2011). *UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, Interim Update, April 2010*. . United Nations World Tourism Organization.

Vermeulen, I. E., & Seegers, D. (2009). Tried and tested: The impact of online hotel reviews on consumer consideration. *Tourism Management* 30, 123-127.

Wan, C.-S. (2002). The web sites of international tourist hotels and tour operators in Taiwan. *Tourism Management*, 155-160.

Wang, J. (2008). Improving decision-making practices through information filtering. *International Journal of Information and Decision Sciences* 1, 1-4.

Wang, Y., & Fesenmaier, D. R. (2004). Towards understanding members' general participation in and active contribution to an online travel community. *Tourism Management* 25, 709-722.

Web 2.0 Summit. (2011, October). *Web 2.0 Summit*. Retrieved November 10, 2011, from Web 2.0 Summit: <http://www.web2summit.com/web2011>

Webopedia, .. (n.d.). *Web 2.0*. Retrieved May 17, 2011, from Webopedia: http://www.webopedia.com/TERM/W/Web_2_point_0.html

Werthner, H., & Ricci, F. (2004). E-COMMERCE AND TOURISM. *COMMUNICATIONS OF THE ACM*, 101-105.

William, E., & Martell, E. P. (2007). *Tourism 2.0: The social Web as a platform to develop a knowledge-based ecosystem*. Canary Islands, Spain: University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria.

- World-gazetteer. (2012). *Malaysia: largest cities and towns and statistics of their population*. Retrieved June 26, 2012, from World Gazetteer: <http://www.world-gazetteer.com/wg.php?x=&men=gcis&lng=en&des=gamelan&geo=-152&srt=pnan&col=dhoq&msz=1500>
- World-Gazetteer. (2012). *World: metropolitan areas*. Retrieved June 26, 2012, from World Gazetteer: <http://world-gazetteer.com/wg.php?x=&men=gcis&lng=en&dat=32&srt=npan&col=aohdq&pt=a&va=&srt=pnan>
- Xie, H. (., Miao, L., Kuo, P.-J., & Lee, B.-Y. (2011). Consumers' responses to ambivalent online hotel reviews: The role of perceived source credibility and pre-decisional disposition. *International Journal of Hospitality Management* 30, 178-183.
- Xinag, Z., & Gretzel, U. (2010). Role of social media in online travel information search. *Tourism Management*, 31, 179-188.
- Ye, Q., Law, R., & Gu, B. (2009). The impact of online user reviews on hotel room sales. *International Journal of Hospitality Management* 28, 180-182.
- Ye, Q., Law, R., Gu, B., & Chen, W. (2011). The influence of user-generated content on traveler behavior: An empirical investigation on the effects of e-word-of-mouth to hotel online bookings. *Computers in Human Behavior* 27, 634-639.
- Ye, Q., Zhang, Z., & Law, R. (2009). Sentiment classification of online reviews to travel destinations by supervised machine learning approaches. *Expert Systems with Applications* 36, 6527-6535.
- Yilmaz, B. S., & Ozdogan, O. N. (2010). BLOGS AS A MEANS OF INFORMATION SHARING AMONG TOURISM CONSUMERS: THE CASE OF TURKEY. *Tourism & Hospitality Management* 2010, (pp. 1639-1648). Turkey.
- Yoo, D. (2011). Hybrid query processing for personalized information retrieval on the Semantic Web. *Knowledge-Based Systems*.
- Zhang, Z., Yea, Q., Law, R., & Li, Y. (2010). The impact of e-word-of-mouth on the online popularity of restaurants: A comparison of consumer reviews and editor reviews. *International Journal of Hospitality Management* 29, 694-700.

Zhu, F., & Zhang, X. (2006). The influence of online consumer reviews on the demand for experience goods: The Case of Video Games. *twenty-seventh international conference on information systems (ICIS)*, (pp. 367-382). Milwaukee, US.