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Assessing Critical Quality Factors in Travel Websites Using Analytic Hierarchy Process

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Abstract

Assessing website quality has been one of the important challenges in the recent business studies. The quality of travel websites can impact on the customers' online hotel booking decision. Many factors have been identified in the previous research for improving e-commerce websites. However, in case of travel websites, few studies are conducted with limit number of quality factors. This study is then conducted to fill this gap by providing a comprehensive framework of website quality factors in tourism context. The proposed framework includes attractiveness, system quality, information quality and service quality factors. The data is collected through two travel websites, Booking.com and TripAdvisor.com. The analysis is performed using Analytic Hierarchy Process through Expert Choice software. The results of our data analysis are provided and discussed.

Keywords: Travel websites, Quality factors, AHP, Booking.com, TripAdvisor.com

1. Introduction

Hotels have been making use of the internet as a marketing means to form direct communication with consumers (Schmidt, Cantallops, & dos Santos, 2008). Hotel websites are not just online channels to provide information on products and services, but also a profitability electronic platform. Detailed hotel websites provide vital information and additional benefits for consumers to generate sales volume and enhance the credibility of the hotel . In the case that users do not regard a hotel website as beneficial, it will entail a waste of website maintenance (Chung & Law, 2003). The company will be rewarded by the website users in the case that they provide beneficial services for their customers.

The theory of "website quality" was initially introduced by Jeong et al. (Jeong, Oh, & Gregoire, 2003) to the hotel sector. Scholars defined hotel website quality as the general effectiveness or excellence of a website in regard to providing intentional messages to its viewers and audience. Although, the quality of websites is an integral parameter concerning e-commerce since the perception of consumers on website quality has a direct and positive influence on their purchasing intention (Hsin Chang & Wen Chen, 2008; Nilashi et al., 2016c).

Consumer perception on website quality is on the basis of website traits in accordance to consumer needs and exhibits the overall excellence of the website (Afshardost, Farahmandian, & SaqiqEshaghi, 2013). The quality of websites is a multi-dimensional structure (Chang, Kuo, Hsu, & Cheng, 2014). Prior researches have investigated website quality in terms of numerous points of views.

Website quality consists of system, information and service quality (Lin, 2007). The numerous aspects of website quality may be classified as service quality, ease of use, information quality, enjoyment and security (Hasanov & Khalid, 2015). Website design is vital in determining website characteristics and also in attaining the service quality provided for consumers via the website. The proliferation of the applicability of the internet has given way to numerous researches on hotel websites pertaining to the hospitality and tourism management sector. The majority of such researches are focused on vital components in the success of hotel websites as a means for online marketing.

Online purchasing is the procedure of purchasing via the internet and consists of online purchasers who access online sales websites to seek, choose, buy, utilize and dispose products and services to meet their requirements (Ariff, Yan, Zakuan, Rahim, & Ismail, 2014). Online booking intent is the inclination and propensity of