

Does Online Review Variation and Online Review Recommendations Effect Tourist Behaviour? The Instrument validation

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Abstract

The modernization of technology, particularly in the hospitality and tourism industry, has motivated the tourist to change their style in daily life; from the traditional style to the online style in travel decision. Yet, travellers are gradually looking for travel reviews online by looking at travel reviews before making any booking on the tour packages. Therefore, this study aims to examine the reliability and validity tests of review variation and review recommendations on tourist behaviour. Around 100 questionnaires were distributed amongst the tourist in Kuala Lumpur area to validate the measurement instrument for this study. Hence, this study provides overall support for the proposed instruments for further research as the measuring instruments used in this study are reliable, and the data are proven by rational normal.

Keywords: *Review Variation, Review Recommendations, Tourist Behaviour*

INTRODUCTION

The advances in the last one decade in technology have enabled us to move forward from the traditional approach towards new technological advances, specifically in the hospitality and tourism industry (Hashim, Safri, Yusoff, Omar, Velayuthan, Hashim, Aziz, Awang, Ahmad, & Fatt, 2019; Hashim, Ramlee, S. I. F., Yusoff, Nawi, Awang, Zainuddin, Abdullah, Ahmad, Rahim, & Fatt, 2019; Aziz et al., 2019). In 2019, there are 4.39 billion internet users in the world; an increase of 366 million (9 per cent) compared to January 2018 (Statista, 2020). In Malaysia, 29 million people accessed the internet in 2019. The number of users is projected to increase to 33.5 million by 2025 (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2020). It is therefore acknowledged that the rapid growth of Internet usage has led to higher sales volumes for the country (Zain, Ghazali & Daud, 2020). With access to internet connections via computers and mobile phones, whether in homes, offices or cyber cafes and libraries, nowadays the trend of online travel review has become a common routine for tourists to plan their trip (Nik Hashim et al., 2019).

A highly successful alternative approach has been developed in online travel reviews involving finding for information and accommodation as a tourist (Nawi, Hashim, Shahril, & Hamid, 2019; Chang, Chou & Lo, 2014; Yeo, Goh & Rezaei, 2017). As a reflection of its growth, there are three million accommodations available in more than 65,000 cities accommodate more than 160 million guests, such as Airbnb shared their reviews (Airbnb has around 160 million users, 2020). From a brief survey by Trip advisor Review (2020), the world's largest platform reports 463 million to browse 859 million reviews and opinions. As a result of this review, the current study shows that the average user read at 6 to 12 reviews from TripAdvisor. However, the results also show that 98% of TripAdvisor tourist like to see word choices, photos and videos via travel reviews. Due to that reason, it is suggested that online travel reviews as a tool to update and publish the latest travel experiences with hotel and tourist destinations (Renugadevi & Janabai, 2017).

In recent years, the performance of the hotel industry in Malaysia has faced lower tourists or guests (Samengon et al., 2020) compared to the hotel industry in Thailand. This can be shown from the increasing numbers of user's reviews site, which Thailand tourist arrivals increased up to 39 million in 2019 compared to Malaysia, which has deserved a drop from 2017 to 2018, from 25.83 million dipped to 25.95 million (Tourism Malaysia, 2020). Furthermore, due to Covid-19 pandemic, the world economy closed almost overnight (UNWTO, 2020). This pandemic has faced the hospitality industry with unprecedented challenges. Although the hospitality industry is slowly recovering previously, the COVID-19 crisis continues to have a profound effect on how the hospitality business operates. The hospitality business is expected to make significant changes to their operations within the COVID-19 business environment to ensure the health and safety of employees and customers and increase customer readiness to protect their business (Gössling et al., 2020). Therefore, it is crucial for the local hotel industry to increase its competitive ability and to obtain a higher number of loyal customers inconsistent manner. The national statistic shows that Malaysia's average length of stay data was reported at 6.5 night in December 2018, where this record shows an increase from the previous number of 5.7 night for Dec 2017. There is a body of evidence that shows Malaysia's Average Length with 28 observations and the data reached an all-time high of 7.800 Night in 2002 and a record low of 4.6 night in 1991 (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2020).

Therefore, to overcome previous gaps and issues related to travel review, the purpose of this study is to examine the reliability and validity of the proposed scale measurement and how it can contribute to tourist behaviour especially in the hotel industry. Meanwhile, the validity test aims to ensure that problems will occur that can cause the main objective to fail the determinants of travel reviews, as well as the tourist behaviour outcomes. More specifically, this study proposes to evaluate the online review variation and online review recommendation. This will show the potential and also a potential mechanism to serve as a more effective alternative to increase the number of online travel review among international and domestic tourists.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The survey questions were divided into four parts. Part One was questioning on a demographic profile, whereas part two consists of question on review variation variable. Next part three, the survey also included the question related to review recommendations. Finally, the last part consists of questions on tourist behaviour. A seven-point Likert scale was employed in this study, starting from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The details of the scale that were used in this research are shown in Table 1. As for the data analysis for this pilot study, IBM SPSS version 25 has been used to analyse the data. A total of 100 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents in the Kuala Lumpur area. Following the rules of thumb by Sekaran and Bougie (2016), the respondent more than 30 and less than 500 are sufficient for research while as stated by Babbie (1990), a 50 per cent response rate is acceptable for analysis and 70 per cent response rate is excellent for a general survey

Table 1: Instrumentation for the study

Part	Variables	Items	Source
1	Demographic Profile	4	-
2	Review Variation	5	Nawi et al. (2019)
3	Review Recommendations	5	Nawi et al. (2019)
4	Tourist Behaviour	4	Nik Hashim et al. (2019) Hashim et al. (2020)

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

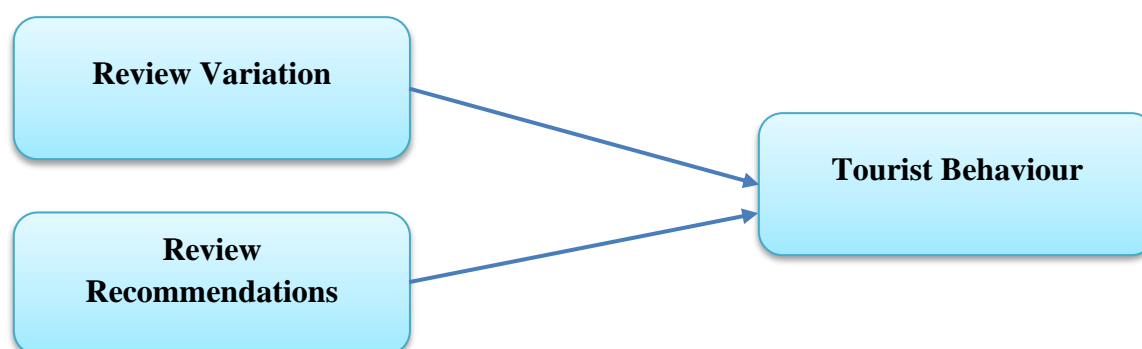


Figure 1: A conceptual framework

RESULTS

Demographic Profile

Based on the table 2 below, the highest respondent is male with 60 percent from the total of respondent. Concerning age, the majority of respondents aged between 36-45 years (65%) followed by 26-35 (21%) and the least respondents were from the age of 56-65 years (2%). In term of the educational qualification, 72 per cent of respondents have a Bachelor's Degree while 17 per cent respondents are Diploma holders, and at least the primary and secondary school level 2 per cent.

Table 2: Demographic profile

Variables	Percentage (%)
Gender	
Male	60
Female	40
Age	
16-25	6
26-35	21
36-45	65
46-55	6
56-65	2
Education Background	
Primary	2
Secondary	2
Diploma	17
Bachelor	72
Master	7

Result of Reliability Test

Reliability tests were performed to provide information on consistency through the data collected. The reliability tests are an indication of the stability and consistency measured by an instrument and to access the “goodness” of the measure (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Furthermore, Pallant and Manual (2007) stated that reliability tests are commonly used to measure stability between items and scale consistency. Referring to the above mention, Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient is one of the indicators for internal consistency in quantitative measurements. Each questionnaire was interpreted on an interval scale and calculated separately. In this study, instrument cases for independent variables include review variation and the review recommendation, while the dependent variable of tourist behaviour serves as a reliability test for construction items. The most common indicator for measuring internal consistency is the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient and the scale above 0.70, indicated that the item is highly reliable. The score in Cronbach's Alpha states that all measurements of variables

in the range of 0.972 are the highest and 0.898 are the lowest. This explains that the reliability between the items is high, as suggested by previous researchers. Therefore, it is stated that all variable credential is highly reliable and interrelated between items. Table 3 demonstrated the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for all variables.

Table 3 Reliability Coefficient for Each Section of the Questionnaire

Variables	No of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Review Variation	5	.898
Review Recommendation	5	.972
Behaviour	4	.934

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this pilot study is to prove the validity and reliability of the measuring instrument to study the influence of review variation and review recommendation on the tourist behaviour before the actual research is conducted. Pre-tests are completed by evaluating the content and validity of the questionnaire face from an expert. Furthermore, the value of skewness and kurtosis proves that the data is rationally normal, thus revealing the study process can be implemented. Overall, the questionnaire was validated through a validity check of "reliability and construct" practice. Based on the results of the pilot study, all items are reliable with Cronbach's Alpha exceeding the value of 0.7, which means there is no need to delete items. Data collected from more than 300 tourists for further study is expected to provide the tourist behaviour results on online travel review in the Kuala Lumpur.

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