

## Tourist Loyalty Toward Online Travel Reviews: Examining the Reliability and Validity of Instrument

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### Abstract

*Technology advancement in tourism industry shows an increased interest and was picked up extensively within the research community. Advances over the past ten years in technology have allowed us to evolve from a traditional approach towards the online approach in our daily life activities. This is a growing and competitive area of research related to online travel review, and it is not only important for acquiring new knowledge about tourist loyalty but also useful for industry's expectation and assumption. With this issue, this paper attempt to examine the reliability test and validity of instrument on tourist loyalty toward online travel reviews. To date, tourists are increasingly seeking for online travel reviews by viewing travel reviews before making a purchase for accommodation. Moreover, travel reviews are one of the online marketing tools for hotels to monitor customer's attitudes and make corresponding changes on how they deliver their best service in the future. There has been an increased recognition that more attention needs to be paid to this area of study. Thus, 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: Travel Reviews; Tourist Loyalty; Online Review, Reliability and Validity Instruments*

### INTRODUCTION

Advances over the past ten years in technology have allowed us to evolve from traditional method towards the advancements of new technology, particularly in the travel industry (Hashim, Zulkifli, Aziz, Naw, Awang, Muhammad, & Yusoff, 2020; Hashim, Safri, Yusoff, Omar, Velayuthan, Hashim, Aziz, Awang, Ahmad, & Fatt, 2019; Hashim, Ramlee, S. I. F., Yusoff, Naw, Awang, Zainuddin, Abdullah, Ahmad, Rahim, & Fatt, 2019). One of the key advancement technologies in this industry is online travel reviews which play as a key enabler of tourist loyalty (Suhartanto, Triyuni & Leo, 2017). A very successful alternative approach has been developed in online travel reviews which involves seeking information and accommodation as a tourist (Naw, 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 serving over 160 million guests, for example, Airbnb sharing their reviews (Airbnb has about 160 million users, 2020). From the short review by Trip advisor Review (2020), the world's largest platform reported 463 million to browse 859 million reviews and opinions. As a result of this review, the current study shows that average users looked at 6 to 12 reviews from TripAdvisor. Yet, the result also indicates that 98% of TripAdvisor tourist like to see a choice of words, pictures and videos through travel reviews. Renugadevi and Janabai (2017) have suggested that online travel reviews as a tool to update and publish the latest travel experience.

In recent years, hotel industry performance in Malaysia was facing lower tourists or guests Samengon, Hashim, Naw, Ahmad, Othman, Ridzuan, Simpong, Awang, Yusoff, Aziz, & Ramlee, 2020) as compared to the hotel industry in Thailand. This can be shown from the increasing numbers of user's reviews site, which Thailand tourist arrivals have increased up to 38.28 million in 2018 compared to Malaysia, which has deserved a drop from 2017 to 2018, from 25.83 million dipped to 25.95 million (Tourism Malaysia, 2020). Thus, 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).

Thus, to address the previous gaps and issues related to travel review, the aim of this study is to examine the reliability and validity of proposed scale measurement and how it may contribute to the tourist loyalty

particularly in hotel industry. While, the validity test aims to ensure that the problem will occur which may cause the main objective to fail the determinants of travel reviews, as well as the tourist loyalty outcomes. More specifically, this study proposes to evaluate the review valence, review variation, review volume and review recommendation. This will bring to light the potential mechanisms as well as also potentially serve as a more efficient alternative to increase numbers of online travel review among international and local tourist.

## METHODOLOGY

### Instrumentations & Measurement

The starting point of this study was to ensure the validity which all the measurement items were taken from previous studies. However, little modifications were done to make them adequate for the present study. Similar approaches have been used previously by Shehu and Mahmood (2014), which focused on testing the reliability and validity of the instruments. This is among the most interesting of the aspects of this method and it demonstrates a peculiarity not observed in other methods. As supported by Ghazali (2016), validation was performed in order to provide confidence in the results where respondents must specify their degree of agreement and disagreement based on their experience, by examining the appropriate responses to the questionnaire items regarding the research's key constructs. In order to provide credibility to the results, a seven-point Likert scale was employed in this study, starting from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The questionnaire for this study was divided into six parts. Part One were questions related to the review valence while Part Two were questions related to review variation variable. As for Part Three, the questions were to query about the review volume, and questions related to review recommendations were developed in Part Four. In addition, Part Five consisted of questions about tourists' loyalty and, finally, Part Six were questions on demographic profile. The details of the scale that were used in this research are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Research instrument for the study**

Parts	Variables	No of Items	Sources
1	Review Valance	5	Kordrostami (2016) Nawi, Hashim, Rahim, Bakar, Yusoff, Samengon, & Aziz (2020)
2	Review Variation	5	Darban & Li (2012) Nawi, Hashim, Rahim, Bakar, Yusoff, Samengon, & Aziz (2020)
3	Review Volume	5	Kordrostami (2016) Nawi, Hashim, Rahim, Bakar, Yusoff, Samengon, & Aziz (2020)
4	Review Recommendations	5	Schubert & Ginsburg (2000) Nawi, Hashim, Rahim, Bakar, Yusoff, Samengon, & Aziz (2020)
5	Guest Loyalty	5	Al-Maamari & Abdulrab (2017) Nawi, Hashim, Rahim, Bakar, Yusoff, Samengon, & Aziz (2020)
6	Demographic Profile	6	-

### Data Distribution

According to Schober, Boer and Schwarte (2018), there are a few assumptions on the nature of data as for the application of Pearson's Correlation Coefficient. First, the dependent and independent variables are supposed to be measured using interval or ratio scale measurement and the data to be derived from a random sample. Secondly, there must be a linear relationship upon examination. Lastly, the variables on examine are normally distributed variables which follows a bivariate normal distribution by sampling the population. Marshall and Samuels (2017) mentioned that, in order to test the normality in a larger sample ( $n > 30$ ), the evaluation of the Q-Q plots should be included in the assessment. The scatter of the normal Q-Q plot must have no obvious pattern which moving away from the line meaning that the scatters should lie as closely along the line in order for the data to be considered normally distributed. In sum, variables should be normally distributed to use Pearson's Correlation Coefficient. Both skewness and kurtosis tests were conducted, and the values showed positive scores. This indicated that the data are slightly right-skewed and peaked (leptokurtic) compared to a normal distribution (Std. Error), gives 0.406 for skewness and 0.787 for

kurtosis. Both numbers indicated within  $\pm 1.96$  limits, which meant the distribution of all combinations of constructs was normal and suggested that the departure from normality is not too extreme.

### Data Analysis

In this study, the tool that use to analyze the data is the IBM SPSS version 25. SPSS is a software that able to show the relationship between independent variables and dependent variable in term of descriptive analysis and correlation. The tool used provides flexibility to manage and handle either complex or simple issues, and the details of the procedure will be reported clearly this is section. Using the method proposed, it is useful for the researcher and the reliability analysis would help data analysis in this data analysis. A total number of 150 questionnaires was distributed to the prospective respondents in Klang Valley. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), the sample size larger than 30 and less than 500 is enough for the research. According to Babbie (1990), a response rate of 50 percent is adequate for analysis, 60 percent is good, whereas the response rate of 70 percent is very good for general survey methodology.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result of reliability test

The reliability test was undertaken to provide information about the consistency through the data collected. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), the reliability test is an indication of the stability and consistency which instruments measures and to access the “goodness” of the measure. Based on the above mention, the Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient is one of the indicators for the internal consistency in quantitative measurement. Each of the questionnaires was interpreted within the interval scale and calculated separately. Table 2 shows the Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient for all variables.

**Table 2 Reliability Coefficient for Each Section of the Questionnaire**

Variables	No of Items	Cronbach’s Alpha
Review Valance	5	.723
Review Variation	5	.938
Review Volume	5	.860
Review Recommendation	5	.927
Loyalty	5	.935

The reliability test is usually utilized to measure inter-item stability and scale consistency (Pallant, 2007). In addition, the reliability test was performed when the items were measured, and it can bond together as one item construct (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). In this study, the instrument case for the independent variables includes review valance, review variation, review volume, and the review recommendation. The dependent variable of tourist loyalty is performing as the reliability test for the item constructs. According to Pallant (2007), the most common indicator to measure internal consistency is Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient. As suggested by Pallant (2007), Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient of scale should be above .70, which indicates the item as highly reliable.

The scores in Cronbach’s Alpha state all variable measure in the range of .938 is the highest and the .723 is the lowest. This elucidates that the inter-item reliability is high as recommended by the previous researcher. Four (4) independent variable dimensions of review valance with scored  $\alpha = .723$  indicates highly reliability coefficient Cronbach’s Alpha. The review variation Cronbach’s Alpha score is  $\alpha = .938$ , which means high reliability. The review valance score  $\alpha = .860$  also indicates the high reliability coefficient Cronbach’s Alpha. The fourth variable in this study is review recommendation with a score of  $\alpha = .927$ . This is showing that all variable in this study is recorded at high reliability. The dependent variable Cronbach’s alpha score is  $\alpha = .935$ , and the dependent variable scores of the Cronbach’s alpha is considered as high. Thus, it is stated that all variable credential is highly reliable and highly inter-item correlate.

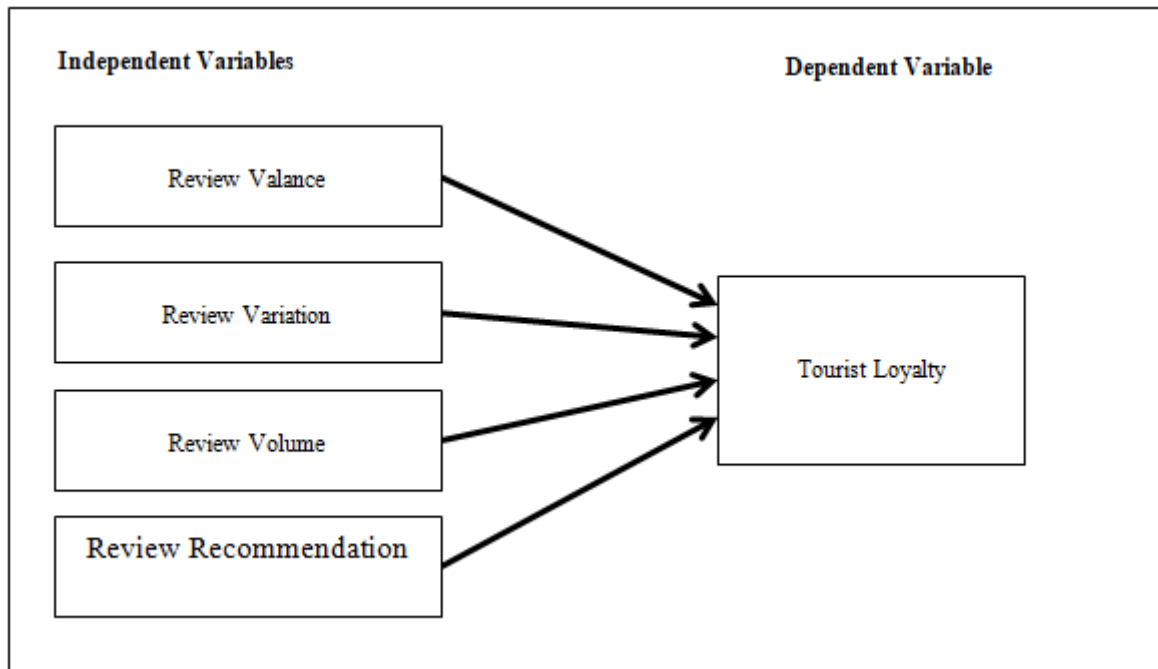


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

## CONCLUSION

Concisely, this study has been noted that there are four independent variables are tested; namely, review valance, review variation, review volume and review recommendation. Some of the broad conclusions drawn from the findings of this study are review recommendation factor is the most influencing roles of online travel reviews towards loyalty. However, other variables, which are the review variation, review volume, and review valance, contributed to this study. The results obtained from this study may have implications for understanding the importance of online travel review, particularly in the hotel industry. The pilot study is to produce the validity and reliability of the measuring instrument that lead to tourist loyalty towards online travel reviews. Based on the finding of the pilot study, all the items are reliable with Cronbach's Alpha above the value of 0.7, which means there is no need of deleting an item.

Furthermore, the values of skewness and kurtosis prove that the data is rationally normal, thus revealed the study process is feasible. Overall, the questionnaire has been validated through the examination of its practices "reliability and construct" validity. The data gathered from more than 400 tourist for further actual study expected would be able to give an outcome on tourist loyalty towards online travel reviews in Klang Valley. The significance of this study specifically for industry player and to the related fields and able to be a standard for future research. This is one of the conclusions that can be derived from this study. Hence, further improvements are expected to result in an improved understanding of review valance, review variation, review volume and review recommendation from the perspective of international and local tourists. This can be considered to be a significant step forward in enhancing and improving the performance of the hotel industry as well as to increase the number of tourists domestic and international.

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