

HOTEL WEBSITE DIMENSION: ANALYZING CUSTOMERS' PREFERENCES

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ABSTRACT

The revolutionary of technology in this modern era is explicitly giving significant impacts to hotel industry and hotel website is use as part of for marketing and business purposes. Various attributes and dimensions have developed through the hotel website. This study is empirically investigates the most important hotel website dimensions to be considered in relation to the international tourists' preferences. The hotel website dimensions are measured through two categories of variables which are website interactivity and website information. Sample of 400 foreign tourists at Kuala Lumpur International Airport were selected. The most important dimension that attracts online purchasing was selected throughout the study. The study also concluded that website information was the most important variables in hotel website dimension. Practically, this research has shown the importance of understanding in choosing the best and appropriate website dimension to encourage customer to purchase via online.

Keywords: *hotel websites, internet, website interactivity, website information, and customer preferences*

INTRODUCTION

Hotel industry is one of the fastest growing service industry and continuously providing a very bright future in contributing country economy (Public Bank, 2005). Hotels are reported of competing each other in giving the best products and services to the customers and technology through its various gadgets are the valuable tool used by hotels in marketing their products and interacting customers. Smith and Jenner (1998) noted that in this technological advancement era hotel would not be improved if they are still using conventional ways like newsletters and tele-marketing in communicating with their customers, therefore to survive in this competitive environment, hoteliers should cut down their distribution costs by adopting new marketing distribution channels. Many commentators in fact argued that the revolutionary of technology explicitly giving significant impacts to hotel organization (Wei, Hein, Hubert & Thomas 2001). In line with that, hotel business is moving unabated onto the Internet and it is a new source of information as well as mean of communication. Around the world as projected, 85 per cent of large hotel companies and 50 per cent of midsize companies will be using the Internet for marketing and business purposes by the year 2015 (Crain's Chicago Business, 2009).

Looking at the rapid technology advancement, Starkov (2002) contend that it is important for the hotel managers to create and implement the most effective marketing tool and website is one of the new technology mode for information and communication with the customers. Yelkur and DaCosta (2001) argue hotel website effectively enhancing awareness, visibility, creating a clear image and platform in promoting and positioning hotel products to the customers and it acts as the widest information gathering tool by providing broad, deeper, materials and richer advertisement contents, cost and time saving, and a user-friendly hotel information seeking (Heung, 2003). Website is also lessening the hotels dependency on intermediaries, discounters or traditional channels (Starkov, 2002). In response to this e-business opportunity, many hotel organizations are reporting of establishing their own websites to facilitate the promotion and on line reservation are found to be the main objectives for hotel in developing its website (Huang and Lin, 2006). In Malaysia, for instance almost all four and five stars hotels in Kuala Lumpur having its own hotel website (Malaysian Accommodation Directory, 2010). A hotel website stays open all the time and can be accessed by potential customers at their leisure

time and it welcomes customers from all over the world without physical and geographical barriers (Law and Leung, 2000).

Despite this, the successful of e-marketing is slightly depend on functionality and usability of the website design (Legoharel, Fiscer-Lokou, & Gueguen, 2002; Buhalis & Law, 2008) as presentation and satisfaction with the website information is a major determinant of e- customers intention to purchase on line (Jeong, Oh and Gregoire, 2003) and well-designed website lead to favorable attitude toward purchase behavior (Liu et al, 2000) and travelers or customers expect websites to be informative, interactive, and attractive (Chu, 2001). With this notion, this paper is empirically analyzing customer's preferences on the hotel website dimensions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Internet was started by Advanced Research Projects Agency Networks (ARPAnet) funded by the United States military after the cold war with the aim of having a military command and control center that could withstand nuclear attack (Zakon, 2010). On the same note, ARPA net was also responsible in creating the TCP/IP communications standard, which defines as data transfer on the Internet today. The ARPAnet was then quickly taken over by civilian computer experts incorporated with the few great computers existed at that time. As time goes, Internet has become the greatest tool that connects people all over the world and Zakon (2010) argued that users feel that the knowledge of the Internet is crucial and each individual need to know how to use the Internet. This is proven with the increment on the numbers of world Internet usage which were from 360,985,492 to 1,966,514,816, with growth percentage of 444.8 percent in 2009 (Internet World Stats, 2010).

Table 2.1: World Internet Usage and Population Statistics

WORLD INTERNET USAGE AND POPULATION STATISTICS						
World Regions	Population (2010 Est.)	Internet Users Dec. 31, 2000	Internet Users Latest Data	Penetration (% Population)	Growth 2000-2010	Users % of Table
Africa	1,013,779,050	4,514,400	110,931,700	10.9 %	2,357.3 %	5.6 %
Asia	3,834,792,852	114,304,000	825,094,396	21.5 %	621.8 %	42.0 %
Europe	813,319,511	105,096,093	475,069,448	58.4 %	352.0 %	24.2 %
Middle East	212,336,924	3,284,800	63,240,946	29.8 %	1,825.3 %	3.2 %
North America	344,124,450	108,096,800	266,224,500	77.4 %	146.3 %	13.5 %
Latin America/ Caribbean	592,556,972	18,068,919	204,689,836	34.5 %	1,032.8 %	10.4 %
Oceania / Australia	34,700,201	7,620,480	21,263,990	61.3 %	179.0 %	1.1 %
WORLD TOTAL	6,845,609,960	360,985,492	1,966,514,816	28.7 %	444.8 %	100.0 %

Sources: Internet World Stats, 2010

Nowadays, internet is the greatest and the best information sources whereby E-mail and Web sites are one of the parts of it. Howe (2010) contend that the net is becoming integral in this globalization area and act as medium that catalyst the revenue-generating for business activities through e-commerce and e-supply chain management on the marketplace. This is also called as web services which have been adopted many business operations including the hotel industry.

The rapid adoption of internet technology by hotel companies have yielded numerous studies on it adoption and the impact on the hotel operations. Noone and Mattila (2009) noted that internet aids hotels to communicate with their customers by providing the information on it facilities and services. Orfila-Sintes and Mattsson, (2009) on the argued in the past few years customers can only browsing the information regarding the hotel, and send e-mail for further inquiry through it web services. However, in the recent year, via web services customer not only able to make reservation but enable to check price availability, submitting their

request and payment automatically with little or no human intervention and this E – commerce is one of the fastest growing element in today's hotel business. In fact, Paynter & Lim (2001) posited that E-commerce not only eliminates the traditional purchase approach but increase the speed and reduce hotel company cost of purchasing transactions.

Hotel Website Dimensions

Many scholars argued that the most common way to market the hotel products and services in this modern era is through the websites. Websites enable anyone with an Internet connection access, irrespective of geography, time zone, or computer system to surf and gain information about the hotels David et al (1999) and hotels can reduce most of their administration cost by introducing hotel websites (Benckendorff & Black, 2000). Jahng et al. (2000) contends that website design is important in attracting potential customers to visit and get to know the particular hotel products. In fact, website design in both functionality and usability senses is also becoming of critical importance (Buhalis & Law, 2008). Liu et al. (2000) identified some key design factors of e-commerce websites. These key design factors consist of information quality, service quality, playfulness, system design quality, and system use. They deduced that a well-designed website would lead to better customer recall and recognition and a favorable attitude toward the site and its products.

On tourism perspective, travelers or customers expect websites to be informative, interactive, and attractive (Chu, 2001). Baloglu & Pekcan, (2006) claimed that to use the internet to its fullest potential, hotel companies should continuously redesign their websites for ease and convenience and upgraded their web technology to make them more personalized for customers. The design, content, and management of website should also be taken into consideration for successful e-marketing (Legohérel, Fiscer-Lokou, & Gueguen, 2002). Using the websites, the hotel can initiate web campaigns, develop brand and integrate branding strategy on the web, gather customer information, improve customer service, and streamline online reservations (Conoly, Olsen, & Moore, 1998; Mullen, 2000; Karpinski, 2001; Baloglu & Pekcan, 2006).

Website Interactivity

Despite the latent for interactivity provided by the Internet, less attention has been looking on how interactivity might be more fully utilized (Johnson et al., 2006). Rice (1984) defined interactivity as the capability of a computer-enabled communication system that permits exchange of roles between the sender and receiver in real or delayed time so that communicators have more control over the structure, pace, and content of the communication. Ku (1992) proposed six interactivity dimensions: (1) immediacy of feedback, (2) responsiveness, (3) source diversity, (4) communication linkages, (5) equality of participation, and (6) ability to terminate. Dholakia et al. (2000) on the other hand suggested website interactivity consists of (1) control, (2) responsiveness, (3) real time interactions, (4) connectedness, (5) personalization/customization, and (6) playfulness. Lee (2005) identified (1) user control, (2) responsiveness, (3) personalization, and (4) connectedness as important components to interactivity while Ha and James (1998) outlined five interactivity dimensions aimed to fulfill communication requirements: (1) playfulness, (2) choice, (3) connectedness, (4) information collection, and (5) reciprocal communication.

On the website design and user preference, Rhodes (1998) suggested that good information, uncomplicated design, and little grammatical errors were required to establish website dependence, and users tended to trust websites that are more usable. Lu and Yeung (1998) projected a framework for effective commercial Web applications, and a key component of the effectiveness relates to the usefulness of a website, which further divides into functionality and usability levels. Performance attribute can include the usability of language, layout & graphics, information architecture, user interface & navigation and general (Yeung & Law, 2004). According to Hashim & Murphy (2006) websites can reassure consumers that the business is reliable and trustworthy by a branded website address. It can guide consumers to the hotel that they want to seek and an effective online strategy lets existing or potential visitors remember or guess the correct website address (Ilfeld & Winer, 2002). Same goes with electronic mail, often abbreviated to e-mail. Some people think of a web site's home page as being similar to the front of a printed sales brochure. Hashim & Murphy (2006) suggested that the domain name of the e-mail address should match with the website address to avoid confusion by the customers. For

instance, Concorde Hotel owns concorde.com; the e-mail should match the address such as info@concorde.com. Much of the business world relies upon communications between people who are not physically in the same building, area or even country. E-mail provides a way to exchange information between two or more people with no set-up costs and that is generally far less expensive than physical meetings or phone calls (Schmidt et al., 2007). Litvin et al., (2008) argued that email distribution has successfully allowed hotel marketers to sidestep the traditional marketing tradeoff of distribution breadth versus message depth and should be adopted aggressively. E-mail allows hotels to transcend communication barriers and establish dialogue directly with customers. Hotel websites can contain electronic forms for customer completion and hotels can reply directly via electronic mail. E-bulletins, newsletters, delivered via e-mail can keep the hotel customers informed about new features or promotion (Sands, 2003).

Website Information

Website information or content quality is the relevance information provided by hotels on their websites (Bhatti, Bouch, & Kuchinsky, 2000) and information is similar to the content analysis considered in many papers (Heldal et al., 2004; Huizingh, 2000; Robbins & Stylianou, 2003). According to McCarthy (1995) "content is the king" therefore it must be included on its website for the potential clients to know and should be presented it in the most adequate manner. Law & Bai (2008) asserted that online purchasers of travel websites viewed quality information, purchase information and service/product information significantly important and Rong et al. (2009) listed five attributes of information which are importance in the hotel website. The attributes are:

1. *Hotel Facilities Information*: a general description of the hotel property and information on the facilities and services available to customers.
2. *Reservation Information*: the facilities and services available on the website for online reservations.
3. *Contact Information*: facilities for direct communications between a hotel and its customers.

4. *Surrounding Area Information*: information related to the nearby environment.

The quality of the information including the fundamentals of enjoyment and playfulness is an important factor in the achievement of a hotel website (Au Yeung and Law, 2003) and the quality of contents is one of the most important reasons why travelers make a booking on a particular site (Grandon, 2002).

Online Purchase Intention

Many scholars emphasized on the understanding of customers' purchase intentions because their behavior can usually be predicted by their intention and purchase intention has been considered indispensable in loyalty construct (Dick and Basu, 1994; Jacoby and Chestnut, 1978). Oliver and Rust (1997) asserted that behavior intention should include cognitive, affective and action. Intentional measure can be more effective than behavioral measure in capturing the consumers' mind because customers may make purchases due to constraints instead of real preferences (Day, 1969). Purchase intention is reportedly correlated to actual behavior (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980; Oliver and Bearden, 1985) and this relationship has been empirically tested in hospitality and tourism businesses (Buttle and Bok, 1996; Ajzen and Driver, 1992). Using an electronic survey of 1743 online shoppers and hotel customers, Jeong et al. (2003) found that customers' information satisfaction turns out to be an important factor of online behavioral intentions, and that website quality is essential for information satisfaction.

Hotel Website Dimension and Online Purchase Intention Relationship

In relation with hotel website dimension, Hackman et al (2006) posited that since internet usage has growing rapidly, it is vital to identify how potential customers perceive hotel websites, because such information may give an indication of how online hotel reservations can be increased and a hotel's profitability can be improved. Wong & Law (2005) investigate the customer perceptions on hotel website dimension that prompt them to make decision to purchase online and the understanding of their shopping behaviour and allow hotel to build a successful web page. Well designed

and easy to navigate websites will provide hotels with an inexpensive and effective platform for marketing and advertising, which potentially increase their competitiveness in the marketplace (Parets, 2002). On the same note, Legohérel, Fiscer-Lokou, & Gueguen, (2002) deduced that well designed, content, and management of website should be taken into consideration for successful of e-commerce and the content of it must frequently updated not only to meet the customers need but let the full potential of hotel in integrating the new information (Wan, 2002).

METHODOLOGY

As this study looking at the importance of hotel website dimensions, a quantitative method through self-administered questionnaires was used for data gathering. The foreign tourists who arrive at Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) were chosen as the samples. This approach was opted for to ensure that the information obtained would be based upon actual experiences of using the hotel website. In getting the right information, a set questionnaire addressing the objectives was designed. There were two dimensions investigated which were website interactivity and website information. The first section (Section A) which consisted of twenty one items were used to measure the important of website interactivity that includes 1) ease of use (10 items), 2) visual appearance (5 items), and 3) personalization (6 items). All questions in this section were adapted from Stepchenkova et al. (2009). Thirty-four items probed in section B were adapted from Rong et al. (2009) used to measure website information quality. This dimension consists of 1) facility information (11 items), 2) reservation information (10 items), 3) contact information (8 items), and 4) surrounding area information (5 items). All items in both sections are based on Six points Likert scale range from 1-Very Unimportant, 2-Unimportant, 3-Slightly Important, 4-Important, and 5-Very Important.

Survey questionnaire was administered by the researchers with assistance of airport security guard. The experiences of foreign tourists were tapped with a screening question *"Have you ever browse or purchase via any hotel website?"*. A set of the questionnaire was then given for them if the answer "yes". Owing to the time constraint and budget, only fifteen days were spent for data collection process. In light with positive feedback

and the absence of any obvious problems with either the instrument or the process, a total of 400 responses were obtained. The data were coded and keyed in Social Statistical Package (SPSS) Version 18. The reliability test was then undertaken for Section A and Section B separately. The result showed that the instrument and items used was reliable with coefficient alpha value at 0.72 for Section A and 0.88 for Section B.

DATA ANALYSIS

The importance of Hotel website interactivity

a. *Ease of Use*

A descriptive statistic looking at the mean score was applied in examining the importance of hotel website interactivity related to ease of use. The respondents' scores are presented in Table 1. It is observed that the mean scores of the overall items in the range between 3.08 and 3.86 which indicated majority of the respondents place greater importance on the web interactivity related to ease of use. As such an effective navigation tool is the most important attributes to the respondents in this dimension (M= 3.86, SD=1.123). Their greater importance are also given to hyperlinks to websites of local attractions, hotels, meeting centers, and restaurants (M= 3.84, SD=0.927), home button on all pages (M=3.83, SD=1.201), unbroken links (M= 3.77, SD=0.910), site map (M=3.76, SD=1.193), link popularity (M=3.75, SD=1.092), load time (M= 3.70, SD=1.133) and search engine (M= 3.70, SD=1.133). The very least important in this category was given to HTML Code (M= 3.08 (SD=0.963). Together these indicate that hotel website interactivity which associated the ease of use on it related attributes were important to the hotel customers.

Table 1: Mean Score and Standard Deviation of Website Interactivity:
a) Ease of Use

Website Interactivity a) Ease of Use	Mean	Std. Deviation
Unbroken Links	3.77	.901
HTML Code	3.08	.963
Browser Compatibility	3.54	1.093
Load Time	3.70	1.133
Link Popularity	3.75	1.092
Effective Navigation Tools	3.86	1.123
Home Button on All Pages	3.83	1.201
Site Map	3.76	1.193
Search Engine	3.70	1.133
Hyperlinks to Websites of Local Attractions, Hotels, Meeting Centers, Restaurants	3.84	.927

Scale: 1-Very Unimportant, 2-Unimportant, 3-Slightly Important, 4-Important, and 5-Very Important.

b. *Visual Appearance*

On the website interactivity which relate to visual appearance, respondents place greater important that visual appearance of the website should effective in use of space ($M=4.11$ ($SD=0.9$), must be cleared and readable text ($M=4.10$, $SD=0.951$). In addition, sufficient contrast between text and background ($M=3.96$, $SD=0.904$), use of colors and imagery ($M=3.96$, $SD=0.943$) and uncluttered page layout ($M=3.61$, $SD=0.924$) are also important to the respondents. This result signify that visual appearance through it elements attract customers of looking at the hotel website.

Table 2: Results of Mean Score and Standard Deviation of Website Interactivity:
b) Visual Appearance

Website Interactivity b) Visual Appearance	Mean	Std. Deviation
Clear and Readable Text	4.10	.951
Uncluttered Page Layout	3.61	.924
Sufficient Contrast Between Text and Background	3.96	.904
Use of Colors and Imagery	3.96	.943
Effective Use of Space	<u>4.11</u>	<u>.900</u>

Scale: 1-Very Unimportant, 2-Unimportant, 3-Slightly Important, 4-Important, and 5-Very Important.

c. *Personalization*

Analysis on the last sub-dimension of website interactivity relates to personalization revealed that opportunity to send an E-postcard received greater importance from the respondents. This is evident when this item received the higher mean score ($M=3.90$, $SD=2.762$). The same feeling were also to the link to social networking website ($M=3.88$, $SD=1.039$), sign up for visitors ($M=3.79$, $SD=1.139$), web pages in more than one language ($M=3.71$, $SD=1.009$), and interactive trip Planner $M=3.60$, $SD=0.998$). Despite this, respondents perceived translation of service is just slight important to them ($M= 2.84$, $SD=1.123$). What could be said from this analysis is those customers perceive personalization as one of the important elements in hotel website.

Table 2(c): Results of Mean Score and Standard Deviation of Website Interactivity:
c) Personalization

Website Interactivity c) Personalization	Mean	Std. Deviation
Web Pages in More Than One Language	3.71	1.009
Translation Service	2.84	1.123
Interactive Trip Planner	3.60	<u>.998</u>
Opportunity to Send an E-postcard	<u>3.90</u>	2.762
Sign Up for Visitors	3.79	1.139
Link to Social Networking Website	3.88	1.039

Scale: 1-Very Unimportant, 2-Unimportant, 3-Slightly Important, 4-Important, and 5-Very Important

The importance of Hotel website information

a. *Hotel Facilities Information*

The following table in this section illustrated the result of the mean scores and standard deviation for the second independent variables. Table 3(a) showed the mean scores and standard deviation of attributes in the Hotel Facilities Information section. All of the items considered to be slightly important by the respondents. Furthermore, the most important among the items was Photos of Hotel Features attribute with the mean score of 4.27. It was also the most constant item with the value 0.960 of the standard deviation. All other items were in the range of $M=3.60$ to $M=3.99$ with the standard deviation between 1.014 and 1.325. The result shows that it is important for the hotel facilities information to be available in hotel website.

Table 3(a): Results of Mean Score and Standard Deviation of Website Information:
a) Hotel Facilities Information

Website Information a) Hotel Facilities Information	Mean	Std. Deviation
Photos of Hotel Features	<u>4.27</u>	<u>.960</u>
Hotel Description	3.60	1.014
Hotel Facilities	3.80	1.033
Guest Room Facilities	3.96	1.114
Hotel Location Maps	3.99	1.193
Hotel Promotion	3.97	1.218
Virtual Tours	3.93	1.325
Restaurants	3.91	1.253
Frequent Guest Program	3.90	1.151
Meeting Facilities	3.85	1.179
Employment Opportunities	3.81	1.129

b. *Reservation information*

The second sub-dimension in Website Information was the Reservation Items. The mean score and standard deviation of the items were analyzed and the results showed in table 3(b). According to the table,

most of the items achieve the mean score above 4.00. They were Room Rates $M=4.16$ ($SD=0.961$), Online/Real-time Reservation $M=4.12$ ($SD=1.071$), Reservation Policies $M=4.12$ ($SD=1.112$), View or Cancel Reservation $M=4.21$ ($SD=1.238$), Worldwide Reservation Phone Number $M=4.35$ ($SD=1.253$), Secure Payment System $M=4.39$ ($SD=1.335$), Check-in/Check-out Time $M=4.15$ ($SD=1.182$), and Payment Options $M=4.03$ ($SD=0.929$). From the results, it can be concluded that Secure Payment System is the most important item by having the highest mean score. However, Payment Option is the most stable item which has the lowest standard deviation value. These results indicate that customers prefer the reservation information to be accessible in hotel website.

Table 3(b): Results of Mean Score and Standard Deviation of Website Information:
b) Reservation Information

Website Information b) Reservation Information	Mean	Std. Deviation
Room Rates	4.16	.961
Check rates & availability	3.80	1.057
Online/Real-time Reservation	4.12	1.071
Reservation Policies	4.12	1.112
View or Cancel Reservation	4.21	1.238
Worldwide Reservation Phone Number	4.35	1.253
Secure Payment System	<u>4.39</u>	1.335
Check-in/Check-out Time	4.15	1.182
Special Request Forms	3.98	1.117
Payment Options	4.03	<u>.929</u>

c. *Contact Information*

Table 3(c) shows the outcome of the mean score and standard deviation analysis. Based from the table, it can be concluded that the most important items in Contact Information attributes, that having the highest mean scores was Contact Person $M=4.13$ ($SD=0.952$). The other items in the sub-dimension were in the range of slightly important with mean scores between 3.79 and 3.99. Although E-mail Address was not having the highest mean score it can be considered significant

because of the lowest score of standard deviation, $SD=0.787$. The results indicate that contact information is important within the hotel information dimension.

Table 3(c): Results of Mean Score and Standard Deviation of Website Information:
c) Contact Information

Website Information c) Contact Information	Mean	Std. Deviation
E-mail Address	3.99	<u>.787</u>
Telephone Number	3.79	.992
Address	3.91	.974
Fax Number	3.87	1.058
Online Forum	3.84	1.143
Feedback Form	3.79	1.266
Frequently Asked Question	3.96	1.112
Contact Person	<u>4.13</u>	.952

d. *Surrounding Area information*

The last attributes of the Website Information was the Surrounding Area Information. The mean scores and standard deviation results of this section were presented in table 3(d). According to the table, the highest mean score and the lowest standard deviation value was from the last item which was Public Holidays $M=4.14$ ($SD=0.796$). It was the most important and the most constant item in the sub-dimension. The others were also in the range of slightly important by having the mean scores between 3.76 and 4.05 ($SD=0.874$ to $SD=1.097$). From the results, it designates the important of surrounding area information in hotel website.

Table 3(d): Results of Mean Score and Standard Deviation of Website Information:
d) Surrounding Area Information

Website Information d) Surrounding Area Information	Mean	Std. Deviation
Transportation	3.89	1.097
Airport Information	3.76	.866
Main Attraction of the City	3.98	.973
General Information of the City	4.05	.874
Public Holidays	<u>4.14</u>	<u>.796</u>

The extraction of overall results was done after analyzing the mean score and standard deviation of each item by every sub-dimension in the questionnaire. The dimension was investigated to find for the most important hotel website sub-dimension and also the most important hotel website dimension. The mean score and standard deviation of each sub-section were analyzed. Based on table 4, the researcher has combined both independent variables into one table so that comparison of mean scores can be done. The results stated that Reservation Information has the highest mean score which was 4.13 (SD=0.603). It means that the attribute was the most important sub-dimension among all. Despite that, others also were in the array of slightly important with the mean scores between 3.62 and 3.96. However, Ease of Use also has a significant value of standard deviation which was 0.487. It means that it was the most constant sub-dimension among these two variables.

Table 4: Results of Mean Score and Standard Deviation of Hotel Website Sub-Dimension

Hotel Website Sub-dimension Website Interactivity (IV1) Website Information (IV2)	Mean	Std. Deviation
IV1a) Ease of Use	3.67	<u>.487</u>
IV1b) Visual Appearance	3.95	.515
IV1c) Personalization	3.62	.695
IV2a) Hotel Facilities Information	3.91	.587
IV2b) Reservation Information	<u>4.13</u>	.603
IV2c) Contact Information	3.91	.509
IV2d) Surrounding Area Information	3.96	.544

The final test of the mean scores and standard deviation was to find the most important independent variables which were Website Interactivity and Website Information. The results from table 5 stated that Website Information was the most important variables with the mean score of 3.98 (SD=0.458). On the other hand, Website Interactivity get a slightly less mean score than the contender which was 3.72 (SD=0.458). Nevertheless, Website Interactivity has the lowest standard deviation score and can be concluded that it was the most constant variable.

Table 5: Results of Mean Score and Standard Deviation of Hotel Website Dimension

Hotel Website Dimension	Mean	Std. Deviation
IV1 - Website Interactivity	3.72	.458
IV2 - Website Information	3.98	.485

DISCUSSION

In this paper, the objective was to determine the most important attributes and variables in hotel website dimension. The results were analyzed by comparing the mean score of each attributes and variables. From the results, Effective Navigation Tools is the most important item under Ease of Use (Website Interactivity). The mean score was 3.86 compare to others in the section. The results supported Siddiqui et al. (2003) as they stated that, ease of navigation and searching are important aspects of e-commerce web site design, and those web sites should cater for different categories of consumer from the inexperienced to the experienced. In the section of Visual Appearance (table 2(b)), Effective Use of Space has the highest mean score which was 4.11, and be the most important item in the section. Similar result by Rowley (2000) noted that consumers' approaches to product searching on web sites are a key factor in successful e-business and that any approaches that can enhance productivity visibility and effective use of space are key in defining and maintaining competitive advantage. Opportunity to send E-postcard was the most important item in the section of personalization (table 2(c)). The mean score was 3.90.

Under the variable of Website Information, in the section of Hotel Facilities Information the most important item was Photos of Hotel Features (M=4.27). Secure Payment System (M=4.39) was the most important item in

Reservation Information. Ranganathan and Grandon (2002) found security and privacy to be the two key elements affecting online sales. Among the item in Contact Information, the results stated that 4.13 as the mean score of Contact Person which was the most important in the section. Rong et al (2009) also considered Contact Person to be an important attribute. In Surrounding Area Information section, the respondent considered knowing the information about Public Holiday as the most important item with the scores of 4.14. However, this result was contradicting Rong et al (2009), because they noted that this was the most unimportant item.

After analyzed each of the item, the result of each sub-dimension were determined. Apparently the most important sub-dimension was Reservation Information with a mean score of 4.13. From the findings also, the most important were concluded. According to the results, the researcher found out that Website Information is the most important variables. The results similar with the findings of Yeung and Law (2003) and they noted that the quality of the information on a website is an important factor in the success of a hotel website. Law and Bai (2008) stated, on the basis of their empirical findings, that online purchasers of travel websites viewed quality information, purchase information, and service/product information.

Implications

The study provides understanding regarding the consumers' needs and wants regarding online purchasing. The findings determined the results pertaining to tourists' preferences about website interactivity and website information. Practically, this study has shown the importance of understanding in choosing the best and appropriate website dimension to encourage customer to purchase via online. The contribution of the results was very crucial to the managerial level of the hotel and the designers of hotel websites. In order to obtain an excellent view of hotel website dimension, a clear understanding of website characteristics and attributes need to be considered. Thus, the research has the capability to show them tourists' preferences and expectation when they browse hotel website, and leads to their purchasing decision. The designers will able to structure the hotel website efficiently by proper planning in choosing the most important attributes and dimension from customers' point of view. Consequently, the cost of building hotel website will be used effectively and not wasted on unnecessary information or/and applications.

Finally, this study contributes to the academicians and researchers theoretically. The findings supply additional insight or information regarding hotel website dimension, tourist purchase intention, and results from different perspective. It can add to improvement of future studies or prospect on framework regarding subject matter.

LIMITATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There were several limitations regarding the studies that need to be highlight so that it can be consider for the future research. Firstly, in order to generalize millions of international tourist arriving in Malaysia, 400 samples might be small. Although, as stated by Krejcie & Morgan (1970) that the number would be enough and acceptable, other approach can also be used and the result might be different compare to current results. Maybe by providing bigger samples for future research the result will be more accurate. Moreover, from this respondent's data, other information such as comparison of results according to their background profiles can be made. These will leads to variation on the results and it is highly recommended for further studies. Lastly, the sampling method used was convenience sampling. There were inconsistencies on selecting the respondents. For example, probably in terms of gender there are more men than women; continence of residence, there are more from North America rather than Oceania. By using different kind of sampling method such as cluster or stratified sampling, the selection of the respondent will be much more consistent, and the results will probably show distinction compare to current results. Despite these limitations, the researcher believes that this paper helps to fill some important gaps in the understanding the preferences of international tourists on hotel website dimensions, provides additional empirical support to the relevant literature, and suggests useful directions for future research.

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