To investigate relative effectiveness of the dimensions of interactivity

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Abstract

This thesis is about interactivity. It is about the dimensions of interactive communication which have become a major element of contemporary marketing practice. The concept of interactivity has been explored in the fields of advertising research, and communication and media studies. However, there is an overall absence of any published work concerning research into the dimensions of interactivity, in the marketing domain.

This thesis seeks to correct this situation and investigates the relative effectiveness of the dimensions of interactivity, set in the context of travel weblogs. The aim is to determine how three principal dimensions of interactivity namely, active control, two-way communication, and real-time communication, affects users' attitudes and usage intentions. This thesis also examines the effect of motive factors, such as social interaction, information of travel weblogs, and enjoyment, upon a user's attitudes and usage intentions. The relationships among these variables are examined within a research framework provided by this study.

Data was collected through an online questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The findings verify that the dimensions of interactivity and motivation factors can have positive influence upon users' attitudes and usage intentions.

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Last but no means least, on a personal note, I would like to dedicate this thesis to the memory of my tutor and friend, Mr. David Spurgeon, who was always there to help and advise me during my doctoral studies. He will never be forgotten.

Declaration

Whilst registered as a candidate for the above degree, I have not been registered for any other research award. The results and conclusions embodied in this thesis are the work of the named candidate and have not been submitted for any other academic award.

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CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Research

1.1.1 Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

The rapid and continuous development of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) has shaped the media landscape, through both human and technology mediated interaction (Raghavan, 2006; May *et al*., 2008). With the proliferation of ICT, the Internet has become a significant part of people’s daily lives and serves as an important medium for people to interact in the virtual world (Kwai Fun Ip and Wagner, 2008).

According to Internet World Stats (2010), 6845 million people had Internet access in 2010, penetrating approximately 28.7 percent of the population. A recent survey conducted by China Internet Network Information (CNNIC) indicates, the number of Chinese Internet users reached 384 million by December 31, 2009, and Internet penetration rate has risen at 28.9 percent. Compared to the end of 2008, the number of Internet users increased by 86 millions and the annual growth rate was raised with the same amount (CNNIC, 2010).

The Internet has touched every aspect of our lives, changing how we keep in touch, share information, and conduct business among other activities. As a communication medium, the Internet opens up opportunities for making communications more interactive and participatory (Bezjian-Avery et al., 1998; Rahman, 2008). Compared with traditional mass media, the Internet has more winning edge through facilitating user control, two-way communication, and real-time communication (McMillan and Hwang, 2002). For example, web users can select the information to access, as well as their browsing time. They can control the sequence to browse the web and access information at their own pace. Also, a real-time feedback application of the web facilitates reciprocal communications among users.

Reaping the benefits of modern technology, particularly Internet mediated communications, a large number of Internet-based conversational applications, such as weblogs, podcasts and other social networks have sprung up all over the information-based society. On behalf of the latest technology trends, weblogs or blogs as they are commonly referred to, have a great effect among individuals, research institutions, and corporations (Lee et al., 2006; Xifra and Huertas, 2008).

Together with the evolution of ICT, the number of weblog users has grown exponentially. According to the survey conducted by China Internet Network Information (CNNIC), the number of weblog users has risen to 221 million with a 57.7 percent utilisation rate by the end of 2009. Compared to the end of 2008, the number of weblog users and utilisation rate increased 59.40 million and 3.4 percent respectively. It is expected that the proportion of active weblog users will continue to grow by 2010 (CNNIC, 2010).

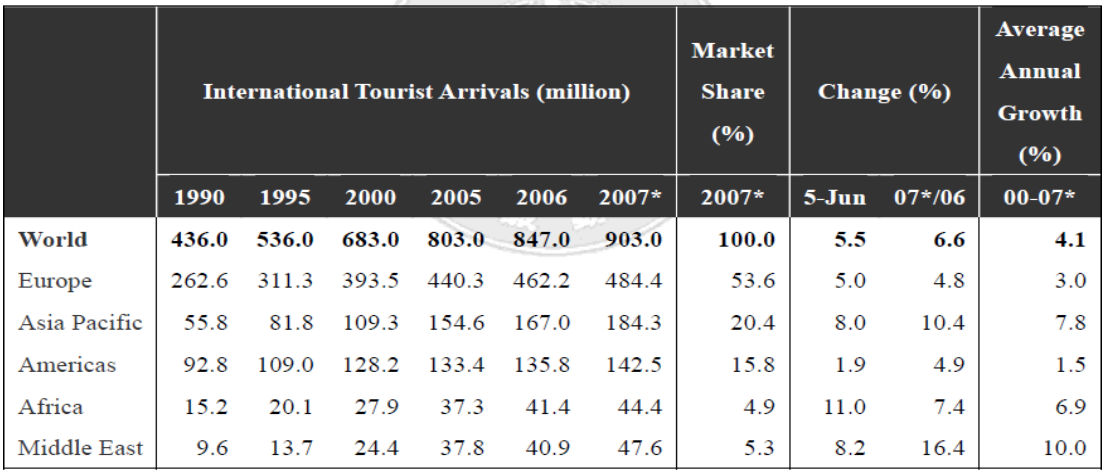
As a digitalised communication medium, weblogs are regarded as the most explosive outbreak in the information world, since it better supports online communications and facilitates human interaction owing to its outstanding interactive traits (Baker and Green, 2005; Dearstyne, 2005; Du and Wagner, 2006). As a conversational medium, weblogs have different capabilities to other Internet technologies. Weblogging has helped turn web consumers, such as end-users, into web content providers (Karger and Quan, 2004). It is worth noting that weblogs offer interactivity at a higher rate over other communication media by increasing the frequency of hyperlinks and feedback features (Trammell and Williams, 2006).

1.1.2 Tourism and ICT

The landscape for the Tourism experiences has continued to grow and diversify, and has become one of the largest and fastest growing economic sectors. The Tourism Industry generates an estimated 11 percent of global GDP and employs approximately 200 million people (Davison et al., 2005). According to UNWTO Tourism Highlights

(2008), worldwide international tourist arrivals reached 903 million in 2007, up 6.6 percent on 2006 (See Table 1.1). By the end of 2010, international arrivals are expected to reach 1 billion, and 1.6 billion by 2020 (UNWTO, 2008).

Table 1.1 International Tourist Arrivals



	International Tourist Arrivals (million)						Market Share (%)	Change (%)		Average Annual Growth (%)
	1990	1995	2000	2005	2006	2007*	2007*	5-Jun	07*/06	00-07*
World	**436.0**	**536.0**	**683.0**	**803.0**	**847.0**	**903.0**	**100.0**	**5.5**	**6.6**	**4.1**
Europe	262.6	311.3	393.5	440.3	462.2	484.4	53.6	5.0	4.8	3.0
Asia Pacific	55.8	81.8	109.3	154.6	167.0	184.3	20.4	8.0	10.4	7.8
Americas	92.8	109.0	128.2	133.4	135.8	142.5	15.8	1.9	4.9	1.5
Africa	15.2	20.1	27.9	37.3	41.4	44.4	4.9	11.0	7.4	6.9
Middle East	9.6	13.7	24.4	37.8	40.9	47.6	5.3	8.2	16.4	10.0

Source: World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), 2008

The Tourism Industry in China has comprehensively developed enormously in the last two decades. Since 1999, the Chinese government has been actively making efforts to push tourism development by establishing three “Golden Weeks” holidays. This has driven both domestic and international tourism development in China. According to recent statistics released by China National Tourism Administration (CNTA, 2009), the number of inbound travellers in China was about 9.3981 million person-times (people), and the number of outbound travellers was 3.6783 million person-times (people). While the number of domestic tourists reached one billion person-times (CNTA, 2009). World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) also predicted that China would become the most popular tourism destination of the world by 2020 with 100 million arrivals (WTO, 2008).

The fast development of ICT and the expansion of the Internet-based technologies have significantly revolutionised the Tourism Industry in the last decade. Tourism and ICT have had grown inseparably close and are transforming the way travel and

Tourism information is collected, and the way Tourism products are purchased. According to Wu and Chang (2005), interest in the integration of ICT in the Chinese Tourism Industry is growing. As an advertising and marketing medium, the Internet has greatly transformed the way in which corporations and institutions communicate and interact with their audiences (Alfonso and Miguel, 2006). Owing to its ability and utility, the Internet is being used to cope with the intangible nature of Tourism services through transforming marketing-mix variables to sustain a competitive edge for travel companies (Baloglu and Pekcan, 2006). Within what might be called the information intensive society, Tourism is ranked as the foremost industry in terms of volume of online transactions (Werther and Ricci, 2004).

E-tourism has been developed, which helps Tourism marketers and researchers to use digitalised communication media in the industry. As Li and Suomi (2008) explain, the Internet-based technologies provide new ways for individuals to learn about tourist destinations and their products and services directly from other consumers. For example, travellers can e-mail one another, post comments and feedbacks, and form different types of online communities (Pan *et al*., 2007).

With the help of an interactive platform, information can be accessed in a cost-effective way and importantly the online travel portals reduce cumbersome negotiations involved booking tickets and accommodation. This type of interactive platform is deemed as central to models of Internet marketing and Electronic Commerce in Chinese Tourism Industry (Wang and Fesenmaier, 2004). Thereby the Internet has become a major source of information for travellers and an interactive platform for Tourism business transaction.

With increasing amount of online travel information, Chinese tourists have a great number of choices as to where they travel and how they travel. More recently, there is growing concern about using weblogs as a mode of marketing communications (DeFelice, 2006). As one of digitalised communication media, weblogs pose new possibilities and demonstrate their enormous marketing potential for travel marketers (Dellarocas, 2003; Cayzer, 2004).

Nowadays more consumers are relying on searching and reading others’ opinions about a product and service, which can help them save decision-making time and make better decisions (Guernsey, 2000; Hennig-Thurau and Walsh, 2003). In this instance, travel weblogs reveal their effectiveness in searching information, sharing travel diaries, and making ticket deals, in associated with webloggers commenting on travel issues or policies (Stapells, 2006). Importantly, as an interactive platform, travel weblogs create virtual relationships in online communities, and generate new types of reality within the online context (Pan *et al*., 2007).

Given the substantial impact of the weblog, it is important for travel marketers to turn their interest toward corporate travel weblogs as a profitable and valuable means of marketing. In other words, it is essential for travel marketers to adopt corporate weblogging strategies to generate profits and use them as a communication tool to reach their consumers.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

Despite the increasing importance of weblogs in the Tourism Industry, academic studies pertaining to travel weblogs remain sparse. Among the relatively few studies, Douglas and Mills (2006) investigate nearly 350 weblog entries from the travel weblog site ‘travelpod.com’. Their study identifies the perceived brand images of travel webloggers across the Middle East and North Africa. Another case study conducted by Lin and Huang (2006), analyses Tourism-marketing responses. Pan *et al*., (2007) qualitatively analyse the opinions posted on leading travel weblogs. Their research finding ascertains how webloggers communicate about their travel experiences.

Although the research interest in the subject has recently increased in popularity, many studies centre on depicting the weblogging phenomena. Wherein, a few studies describe internal influences of weblog users, such as motivations (Park *et al*., 2010). In brief, little is known about how and why people participate in corporate travel weblogs and what factors influence them to participate in corporate weblogging activities. Research on webloggers' motivation is still limited in academic context. Previous Tourism studies have shown that motivation factors have a positive effect to behavioural intention (Jang and Feng, 2007; Huang *et al*., 2007; Huang *et al*., 2008; Vazquez and Xu, 2009; Alegre and Cladera, 2009).

In recent years, an increasing number of studies have been conducted to better understand the impact of weblogs on users' behaviours. For example, extant research of weblogs primarily placed their focus on webloggers' motives to use (Nardi *et al*., 2004; Huang *et al*., 2007; Hsu and Lin, 2008), potential applications of weblogs (Nelson, 2006; Baker and Moore, 2008a), and social-psychological variables related to weblogging phenomena (Thielst, 2007; Baker and Morre, 2008b; Ko and Kuo, 2009).

Nevertheless, up to this point, academic research on the motivation and intention to use travel corporate weblogs has not yet been published in China. This suggests the originality and value of this research. Given the importance of motivation concept, it is therefore necessary to invest more effort on consumer-oriented perspectives, such as deepening our understanding of motivations for visiting corporate travel weblogs, attitudes and behavioural intention toward corporate travel weblogs.

Interaction intention is another important issue in relation to corporate travel weblog studies. The concept of interactivity has increasingly received considerable scholarly attention across different academic disciplines. For instance, the vast majority of interactivity literatures resides in the field of Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC), Electronic Commerce (EC), Information Technology (IT) and Web-based education (e.g., distance learning).

While a plethora of literature on testifying the significance of the term ‘interactivity’, no consensus has been reached on probing the nature or content of its dimensions (Lee, 2005). Scholars propose different views which attribute to certain characteristics, from an experimental and conceptual manner (Rice, 1984; Rogers, 1986; Rafaeli, 1988; Rafaeli and Sudweeks, 1997; Morrison, 1998; Ha and James, 1998; Wu, 1999; McMillan and Downes, 2000; Heeter, 2000; Jensen, 2001; McMillan and Hwang, 2002; Sohn *et al*., 2003; Johnson *et al*., 2006).

Owing to the complexities and popularity of the concept, an explicit investigation of the dimensionality of interactivity construct has yet to be successfully addressed (Lee, 2005). Furthermore, no attempt has been made to extend the constructs of interactivity into a corporate weblogging environment. In this instance, this research is expected to provide an opportunity to broaden the contexts in which interactivity has been studied.

As stated earlier, interactivity can be one of the key functions on a corporate travel weblog site to build a positive virtual relationship between travel companies and weblog users (Pan *et al*., 2007). Importantly, interactivity is viewed as a central characteristic of weblogs and can have a positive impact on the attitude toward the weblog site (Thorson and Rodgers, 2006). Nevertheless, extant researchers in corporate weblog marketing have yet to comprehensively study the significance of interactivity functions in weblogging environment.

Given these gaps in our knowledge, it is critical to realise the multidimensional nature of interactivity particularly their relative effectiveness within a corporate weblogging setting. In brief, it is important for researchers to understand how people use interactive functions on corporate travel weblogs and how interactivity may influence attitudes toward a corporate travel weblog and towards prospective behavioural intentions.

To summarise, two research problems are identified as follows: (1) the extant studies show a lack of academic knowledge about the theory of ‘user motives’ and ‘user attitudes’ toward corporate travel weblogs and (2) the lack of academic studies regarding the importance of interactivity functions within a corporate travel weblogging context.

1.3 Research Aim and Objectives

The primary aim of this thesis is to determine how three principal dimensions of interactivity affect users’ attitudes and usage intentions. The aim of this study is reflected in three aspects:

1) To critically appraise the significance of the dimensions of interactivity considered as key features of corporate travel weblogs
2) To measure the importance of key user motives in the use of corporate travel weblogs.
3) To investigate the impact of proposed motives and interactivity on attitudes toward corporate travel weblogs and the influence of attitude on intention to revisit corporate travel weblogs.

1.4 Conceptual Framework

1.4.1 Interactivity in Travel Weblogs

New media are characterised by a transformation from traditionally one-sided communication owing to the development of the Internet (Van Dijk, 2006; Ramirez *et al.*, 2008; Mulhern, 2009; Chou *et al.*, 2009). As one of the most distinctive functions of the Internet, the concept of interactivity has gained widely scholars’ attentions across different research disciplines, including advertising, media and communication, marketing, and even education (Rafaeli, 1988; Rafaeli and Sudweeks, 1997; Ha and

James, 1998; Van Dijk, 1998; Wu, 1999; Dholakia *et al*., 2000; Coyle and Thorson, 2001; McMillan and Hwang, 2002; Klein, 2003; Rafaeli and Ariel, 2007; Hoffman and Novak, 2009). Previous studies have found that there is a positive relationship between effects of interactivity and websites. Some researchers in the field of media and communication supported the positive effects of interactivity, such as, interactive function keep users aroused and get involved (Raney, 2003), attracts users to stay longer (Ko *et al*., 2005), facilitate users to access online information (Sicilia, 2005). Websites with interactive contents are more likely to be ranked as top websites in comparison with websites with non-interactive content (Ghose and Dou, 1998).

Some scholars believe that the rise of weblogs may be more able to meet the increasing expectations and needs of users for interactivity (Stromer-Galley, 2000; Williams *et al*., 2005). For instance, engaging weblog users through interactivity (e.g., visiting webloggers' diaries, and typing comments), travel marketers can increase the individual's usage rate of their travel weblog sites and the user's level of involvement, which is expected to foster a positive attitude toward the company. Along with interactivity, motivation is also believed to influence attitude toward the corporate travel weblogs.

1.4.2 Motives to Use Travel Weblogs

According to Pan *et al*. (2007), webloggers' motivations for publishing and reading weblogs are diversified from the previous computer-mediated communication studies, such as information (Chen and Wells, 1999), social interaction (Stafford and Stafford, 2004), enjoyment (Luo, 2002; Papacharissi, 2004). Regarding the travel weblogs, the prerequisite for travel marketers is to satisfy their customers, through having a better understanding of consumer needs and wants. Likewise, a good understanding of users' needs and wants to visit corporate travel weblogs (e.g., why consumers use corporate travel weblogs) will provide insights into the success of corporate travel weblogs. In other words, it is important for travel marketers to understand why users have an interest in certain corporate weblogs and what factors motivate them to participate or revisit those corporate weblogs. Therefore, it is essential for travel marketers to understand corporate weblog user motives concept, which is of importance to marketing strategy (Akehurst, 2009).

In this study, Uses and Gratification theory (UGT) was employed to understand user motivations to visit and utilise travel weblogs. This theory originated from the mass media communication research fields. In the late 1950s, the theory was published by Katz (1959). It is defined as a psychological communication perspective that focuses on explaining how people use and select media for different purposes (Katz *et al.*, 1974). In other words, it focuses on the explanations for users' motivations and related behaviours. In comparison with traditional media studies, UGT researches focus mainly on audiences rather than communicators (Windahl, 1981). Interestingly, it is noted that in some quarters the importance of user motivations has remained unshakable (Ko *et al.*, 2005). For example, media researchers have verified the importance of some particular motivation factors, such as social interaction, information, and enjoyment (Lin, 1999; Ko *et al.*, 2005).

Apart from this, other researchers clarify the association between user motivation and users' attitude and behaviours. As Rubin (2002) states, one aspect of UGT studies has been "the links among media-use motives and their associations with media attitudes and behaviours" (p.532). Importantly, motivation is deemed as an important antecedent of media uses and gratifications (Rubin, 2002). For instance, previous advertising research has shown that the motivation is the most noteworthy antecedents of attitude toward the advertisement (Lutz, 1985). Chen and Well (1999) conduct a website research, and found that information and entertainment are two major antecedents of Attitude toward the Site (A_{ST}). Similarly, other studies also support the relationship between motivations and attitude toward the websites (Chen *et al.*, 2002; Ko *et al.*, 2002; Luo, 2002; Ko *et al.*, 2005; Gao and Koufaris, 2006).

1.4.3 Attitude toward the Websites

According to Eagly and Chaiken (1993, p.1), the term “attitude” is defined as “a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour”. It is a personal view that can be for or against, positively or negatively, favourable or unfavourable towards a particular object (Loudon and Della Bitta, 1993; Ajzen, 2001). In other words, this definition covers consumer feelings and evaluations associated with a particular object. Within the consumer behaviour context, it is defined as “a constant tendency to behave accordingly in a concrete situation regarding a certain object or a group of objects” (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2004). From a marketing perspective, Foxall *et al*. (1998) defined attitude as “a predisposition to respond in a consistent manner to a stimulus, i.e., a tendency to act or behave in some predictable way” (p.102). Foxall *et al*. (2002) stress, it is vital for marketers to understand and measure consumer attitude to develop appropriate marketing strategies.

Research on “attitude” is particularly important within an online context, for example attitude toward a website or attitude toward an online advertisement. According to Chen and Wells (1999), attitude toward a website can be defined as “a predispositions to respond favourably or unfavourably to web content in a natural exposure situation” (p.28). Building upon previous Attitude toward Advertising research (Lutz, 1985; Mackenzie *et al*., 1986), Chen and Wells (1999) develop their scale of measurement on “Attitude toward the Site (A_{TS})”, such as “general favourability toward the website” (p.28). In their study, several measurement of websites are included, such as visiting rate, clicking time, duration of time, and website satisfaction. Those elements are widely used to evaluate website effectiveness.

However, some other scholars come up with contradictory opinions aiming at the measurement of website effectiveness. This school of thought advocate adapting A_{TS} provide more valuable prediction when measuring website effectiveness. Previous studies on the relation between attitude and behaviour were examined in terms of the correspondence between attitudinal and behavioural entities (Ko *et al*., 2002; McMillan and Hwang, 2002; Luo, 2002; Ko *et al*., 2005). An ecommerce study by Gao and Koufaris (2006) also indicates the mediating role of A_{TS} on the brand and purchase intention.

1.4.4 Theory of Reasoned Action

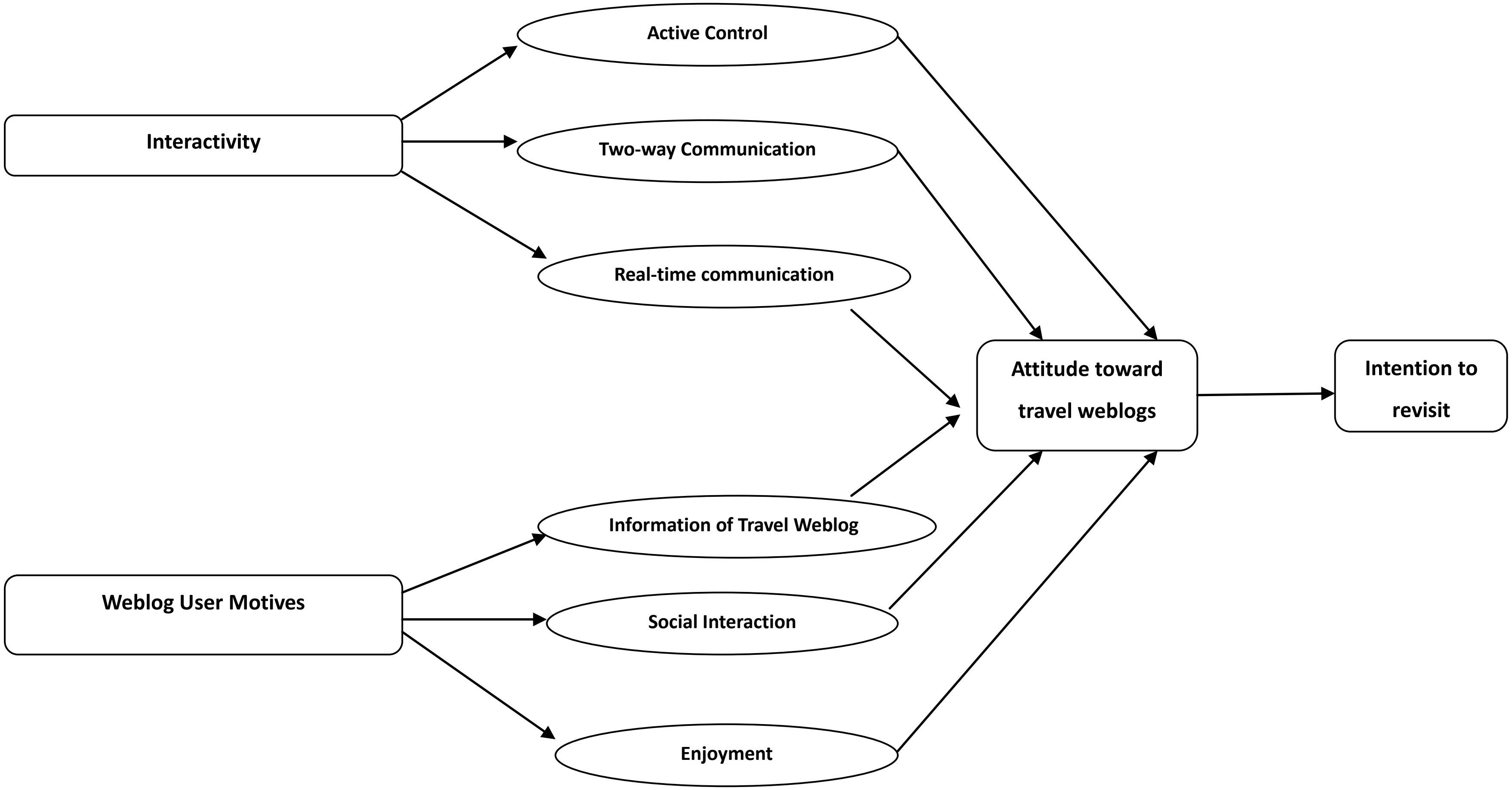
Since the 1970s, the theory of reasoned action has been accepted as a useful predictor of exercise behaviour (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975; Sheppard *et al*., 1988; Madden *et al*., 1992; Blue, 1995). In order to provide a better understanding of the consistency between A_{TS} and behavioural intention, this study applies the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975).

Introduced in the 1970s by Fishbein and Ajzen, the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) provides a conceptual model of attitude-behaviour consistency within a sequence of linked cognitive construct: belief, attitudes, intentions, and behaviour. This theory is appropriate and applicable when the behaviour being studied is under the volitional control of the individual (Ajzen, 2008). According to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), TRA proposes that attitude toward a certain object influences behavioural intention, which leads to actual behaviour. In other words, TRA is based upon the proposition that an individual's behaviour is determined by his or her behavioural intention. On the basis of the TRA, users with a positive Attitude toward the Site (A_{TS}) are hypothesised to increase a possibility of revisiting the website, which sequentially may generate the actual behaviour, revisiting the website (Koufaris, 2002).

1.5 Proposed Research Model of Attitude toward corporate Travel Weblogs

A research model of the effects of interactivity and user motives on attitude toward the travel weblogs is presented in Figure 1.1. Inside the model, three interactivity dimensions (active control, two-way communication, and real-time communication) and three motives (information of travel weblogs, social interaction, and enjoyment) are proposed as variables influencing attitude toward the travel weblogs.

Figure 1.1: A proposed research model of attitude toward travel weblogs (Drawn from the works of Mackensie *et al*., 1986; Wu, 1999; Chen and Wells, 1999; McMillan and Hwang, 2002; Luo, 2002; Ko *et al*., 2002; Kwon *et al*., 2003; Liu, 2003; Teo *et al*., 2003 and Cyr *et al*., 2007)


Active Control
Interactivity
Two-way Communication
Real-time communication
Attitude toward travel weblogs
Intention to revisit
Information of Travel Weblog
Weblog User Motives
Social Interaction
Enjoyment

The proposed research model is developed out of the literature which examines the detail in the following chapter. A summary can be seen at Table 1.2, essentially the research model is found in three perspectives. First, an appraisal of the importance of the dimensions of interactivity to be considered as key features of corporate travel weblogs, based on previous studies (Liu, 2003; McMillan and Hwang, 2002; Wu, 1999). Since interactivity is regarded as one of the most significant and well-known technical functions on the Internet, it is therefore expected that interactivity is equally important within a corporate weblog setting.

Secondly, to measure the importance of key user motives (Kwon, 2003; Liu, 2003; McMillan and Hwang, 2002; Wu, 1999; Teo *et al*., 2003; Cyr *et al*., 2007) in driving the use of corporate travel weblogs. Here the researcher will apply Uses and Gratifications theory as a theoretical framework. Since Uses and Gratifications theory is mainly focused on the measurement of media effects from a user-oriented perspective (Ko *et al*., 2005), it can therefore regarded as a functional device in understanding corporate webloggers' motives.

Third, examine the impact of interactivity and user motives on attitude toward the corporate travel weblogs, and the influence of attitude toward the corporate travel weblogs on intention to revisit the corporate weblog sites.

Fourth, according to previous literature, there are three most cited weblog users' motivations: generated as information provided by travel weblog, social interaction and enjoyment. On my theoretical position, this research is to apply interactivity theory to explore the motivations influence on people's attitudes towards corporate travel weblogs, in turn, to impact on people's intentions about using weblogs.

Table 1.2 Derivations of Variables in the Model

Constructs	Adapted From
Active Control	Liu, 2003; Wu 1999
Two-way Communication	Liu, 2003; McMillan and Hwang, 2002
Real-time Information	Liu, 2003; Luo, 2002

Social Interaction	Kwon, 2003; Ko *et al*., 2002
Information of Travel Weblogs	Teo, *et al*, 2003
Enjoyment	Cyr *et al.*, 2007
Attitude toward Travel Weblogs	Chen and Wells, 1999
Intention to Revisit Travel Weblogs	Mackensie *et al*., 1986

1.6 Contribution of Research

To achieve the objectives stated in Section 1.3, this research will contribute to the marketing literature from both academic and practical perspectives.

1.6.1 Theoretical Contributions

Although extant studies have identified and ratified the value of user motive constructs and interactivity dimensions in the Tourism Industry, few have identified its dynamics. In this instance, this research not only supports earlier studies arguing the central nature of motive and interactivity concept, but, more importantly, it adds support to those who contend that the given subjects may be even more important in a corporate travel weblogging setting.

From a theoretical perspective, the knowledge obtained through this research will enhance our understanding of the motivation factors influencing users' attitude toward corporate travel weblogs as well as behavioural intentions resulting from their attitude. Also, the research fills a gap in the literature concerning divergent conceptualisations of interactivity. In addition, this research contributes to the evolution of the interactivity concept, and should help future researchers across many academic disciplines, such as education, computing as well as marketing and management.

1.6.2 Practical Contributions

From a practical perspective, the findings will assist in providing a greater understanding of consumer-related factors that are important for determining their attitude and behavioural intentions. Meanwhile, it will provide practical information about how people use interactive functions on corporate travel weblogs and how interactivity may influence their attitude and behavioural intention toward those corporate weblog sites. In this instance, the findings of this research can be beneficial to marketers, web developers, web designers, consumers and corporate managers who can apply it for their own business use.

To this end, this study will furnish a set of guidelines for facilitating managerial decision-making and provides solutions for problems concerning the operation of organisations' corporate weblogs. For instance, marketers can use it for designing their marketing mix, web developers and designers can use the information to improve their corporate weblog performance, and corporate managers can allocate sufficient budget for promoting their online business.

1.7 Research Methodology

As a replication, the research design used in Creswell *et al*. (2009) work guides this research. Wherein, a mixed-methods sequential explanatory design is conducted in this study. Importantly, the research design is highly accepted among researchers and implies collecting and analysing first quantitative and then qualitative data in two sequential phases within one study (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998; Ivankova *et al*., 2006). In sum, by using the mixed research method, the quantitative phase of study provides a general understanding of the research problem (e.g., user motivation and interactivity within a corporate weblogging context). While the qualitative phase helps the researcher to refine and explain those statistical results by exploring participants' view in more depth.

Quantitative and qualitative methodologies incorporating an online survey, and semi-structured interviews, were used to collect data for this research. These methodologies are introduced briefly in this section, and then detailed more comprehensively in Chapters Four, Five and Six.

Following a review of the extant literature, a quantitative (online survey) approach was used to collect quantitative data, which was subsequently analysed, via reliability analysis, validity analysis, correlation analysis, and exploratory factor analysis. As for the quantitative data, SPSS version 16.0 was used to assist in analysing the data, and provided relevant statistical output results and details of hypotheses testing. All of the qualified respondents who use corporate travel weblogs were transferred into SPSS for statistical analysis (tables and figures). The primary purpose of this quantitative approach is to gain rich insights toward the significance of motives and interactivity concepts to the corporate travel weblogging context.

Also, a series of qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted to complement the findings from quantitative research. In this qualitative research phase, eight interview participants were selected using a purposive sampling method, in four companies studied, two from each company. These interviewees held positions of senior management in their companies. The qualitative analysis process was conducted to identify all concepts and themes in all transcribed responses and was undertaken using Microsoft Word capabilities such as word searching, and highlighting text in multiple colours. The primary purpose of this qualitative approach was to elicit insights into the relative effectiveness of user motive constructs and interactivity dimensions, through an understanding of the subjective experiences of the owners of Chinese corporate travel weblogs in more depth.

1.8 Organisation of this Thesis

This thesis is structured around seven chapters: an introduction, literature review, research methodology, quantitative data analysis and results, qualitative data analysis and results, conclusion, and implications for the future research.

Chapter One – Introduction

This chapter briefly sets the scene of this research by discussing the scope of the topic: an investigation of the relative effectiveness of the dimensions of interactivity within a corporate weblogging context. The chapter begins with a background to the current research, followed by a section describes the research problem. Wherein, a concise overview of the research topic is presented and the key issues within the corporate weblog marketing and consumer behaviour literature are outlined.

Research aim and objectives of the thesis are identified in the next section, followed by a presence of proposed research model. Then, the chapter identifies and justifies the hypothetical structural relationships, which develop research hypotheses for this study. This section is followed by the contribution of the current study. The proposed research methodology is then briefly discussed, followed by a definition of key terms.

Finally, the structure of the thesis is outlined prior to identifying the limitations and conclusion of this research.

Chapter Two - Review of Related Literature

This chapter contains a thorough literature review relevant to this study. Founded on interaction, and Uses and Gratifications theory, the chapter aims to address theoretical dimensions of the current research. This chapter is first designed to understand the roles and objectives of marketing communications within interactive context, which correspond to the role of corporate travel weblogs in interactional communications. This section is followed by a presentation of conceptual framework of this study. The review of the extant literature serves, among other purposes, to establish the definitions and dimensions of interactivity considered by researchers. It also identifies and isolates the key dimensions in order to determine their relative effectiveness within a corporate travel weblogging setting.

Apart from this, the key issues, and a range of variables associated with understanding consumer behaviour in the corporate travel weblogging context, are then identified and discussed. From this basis, a preliminary conceptual model of *User Responses towards Corporate Travel weblogs* and the general propositions are established.

Chapter Three - Research Methodology

This chapter presents the research paradigm, methodology, methods, and techniques of data analysis adopted for this study. The research design starts with a restatement of the research objectives, followed by a justification of the choice of the pragmatic research paradigm. The quantitative (i.e., online survey) and qualitative methodology (i.e., semi-structured interviews) are discussed. The chapter then explains the justification for the research methodology and method based on literature. The discussion of the methodology focuses on the selection of an appropriate target population, sampling techniques, development of questions, and conduct of data collection for each research method. Then, analysis techniques for the quantitative and qualitative studies are explained. In addition, ethical considerations are also stated.

Chapter Four – Quantitative Data Analysis and Results

This chapter reports and discusses the results of the online survey analysis. Its aim is to explore a pattern of motive and interactivity issues concerning users within corporate travel weblogging context, and to validate the hypotheses and the proposed research model. First, the response rate is determined to provide an indication of the generalisability of research findings. The demographic data of the sample is then examined to provide a better understanding of the sample's characteristic. This is followed by several analyses to test the research hypotheses developed in this study. Wherein, scale reliability analysis, validity analysis, correlation analysis, and exploratory factor analysis (CFA) are included.

Chapter Five – Qualitative Data Analysis and Results

This chapter is devoted to qualitative data analysis and results. Its aim is to refine and confirm the quantitative research findings from the previous chapter. To this end, the chapter intends to elicit insights into the relative effectiveness of user motive constructs and interactivity dimensions, through an understanding of the subjective experiences of the owners of Chinese corporate travel weblogs in more depth.

Chapter Six –Conclusion

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section provides a detailed discussion of the important research findings, in terms of the *User Responses towards Travel Corporate weblogs*. Of this, the results from the online survey and semi-structured interviews are critically highlighted and summarised. Also, research findings derived from the analysis are discussed and compared with those shown in the prior studies. The second section discusses the indications of the research findings. This section also includes consistency between quantitative and qualitative analysis results.

Chapter Seven – Implications for the Future Research

This last chapter concerns implications, and identifies directions for future research. It demonstrates how travel marketers and researchers can utilise the findings from this research. Studies on other dimensions of interactivity and constructs of user motives are also included.

1.9 Definition of Key Terms

The following terms are defined in order to help clarify the main concepts of this study:

1. *Uses and Gratifications Theory*

   Uses and Gratifications Theory is defined as the social and psychological origins of needs, which generate expectations of the mass media or other sources, which lead to differential patterns of media exposure (or engagement in other activities), resulting in need gratifications and other consequences, perhaps mostly unintended one" (Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch, 1974, p.20).

2. *Interactivity*

   According to Liu and Shrum (2002), interactivity is defined as "the degree to which two or more communication parties can act on each other, on the communication medium, and on the messages and the degree to which such influences as synchronize" (p.54)

3. *Active Control*

   Active control is defined as "a user's ability to voluntarily participate in and instrumentally influence a communication" (Liu, 2003, p.208).

4. *Two-way Communication*

   According to Liu (2003), two-way communication refers to the mutual communication: 1) between users and users or 2) between users and messages on the Internet.

5. *Real-time Communication*

   According to Liu (2003, p.16), real-time communication is defined as "the degree to which users' contribution to a communication and the responses they receive from the communication are simultaneous".

6. *Attitude toward the Website*

   Chen and Wells (1999) define attitude toward websites as web users' predispositions to respond favourably or unfavourably to web information and contents in natural exposure situation.

7. *Weblogs*

   Puhringer and Taylor (2008, p.178), weblogs are "one of form of a suite of internet-based tools grouped under the descriptor of 'Web 2.0'. They are essentially media through which individuals and organisations may present opinions or information about specific topics”.

8. *Corporate Weblogs*

   Smudde (2005) defines corporate weblogs as “hybrids of personal weblogs but authored by corporate executives, board members, etc., to get the message out about the company”.

9. *Online Discussion Forums*

   Caswell (2001, p.26) defines online discussion forums as “a form of text based CMC technologies used in the online environment to foster collaboration among users for various purposes. These are described as areas of the Internet that provide a common meeting place where participants can contribute to a dialogue and access information asynchronously”.

1.10 Conclusion

This chapter sets out the foundation of this research. It provides the context and justification for this study. The research problem and research objectives addressed in the study were introduced. The main purpose of this study is to determine how three principal dimensions of interactivity affect users’ attitudes and usage intentions. The study also examines the affect of motive factors upon users’ attitudes and usage intentions. The methodology underlying the purpose of the study was briefly described and justified. A chapter structure was provided for the whole thesis, followed by a presentation of key terms. On these foundations, the thesis proceeds with a detailed description of the research by beginning with the Chapter Two – Literature Review.

CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In the proceeding chapter, the main focus of this research was identified and determined. The priority of this study is to investigate how three principal dimensions of interactivity, namely, active control, two-way communications, and real-time communications, affect users' attitudes and usage intentions. The purpose of this chapter is to review existing literature and theories that are relevant to the research objectives, to provide a platform for this study. This chapter reviews the literature on interactivity.

First, this literature research endeavours to systematically synthesise various research streams on marketing communications literature, in order to provide the groundwork for the theoretical framework developed in this research. Secondly, this chapter is designed to examine the role of objectives of marketing communications within interactive contexts, which correspond to the role of travel weblogs in interactional communications. The chapter examines the concept of interactivity, including its origins, dimensions, and applications. Importantly, three key dimensions of interactivity are identified and isolated to determine their relative effectiveness within a corporate travel weblogging setting. To this end, the chapter provides a full exploration of corporate travel weblog phenomena through determining the dimensions of interactivity, which contributes to our knowledge of the role of travel weblogs within different interactive contexts.

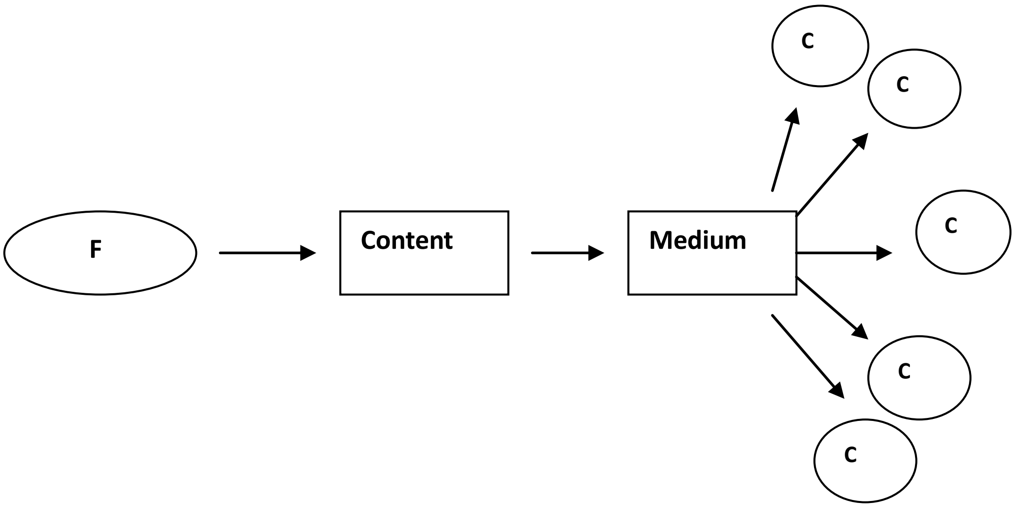
Beyond that, the key issues, and a range of variables associated with understanding consumer behaviour in the corporate travel weblogging context, are identified and discussed. Of this, Section 2.4 explains the origin of 'attitude-toward-the-website' and its application to corporate weblog research. In Section 2.5, Uses and Gratifications theory as a theoretical framework will be discussed. Therein, the development of the theory between its earliest beginnings and the present day will be described. Importantly, this section aims to examine audience uses of corporate travel weblog sites from a uses-and-gratifications perspective.

2.2 Interactional Approach to Marketing

2.2.1 Modes of the Communication Process

2.2.1.1 Mass Media Communication Mode

In the 1950s, Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) presented a traditional communication model which is reproduced in Figure 2.1. This communication model has widely been applied to understand the essential process mechanisms inside the communication, but arguably has its severe limitations because it is largely based on one-way communication.



Note: F = Firm; C = Consumer

Figure 2.1 Traditional one-to-many marketing communications model for mass media (Adapted from Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955)

For instance, in the situations where firms transmit contents through a medium to consumers, consumers are most likely to be passive recipients according to the model that has no explicit enablers for any feedback loops (Van Raaij, 1998; Pavlou and Stewart, 2008; Hoffman and Novak, 2009). In other words, when companies deliver messages through a medium which allows only a limited form of feedback from its target audiences, it is difficult to understand how customers are engaged with and participating into the communication process.

Therefore, it is critical to understand how to incorporate a feedback view or even multi-feedback dimensional view of the communicative interaction specifically among consumers. To do this, it is necessary to re-examine the following two issues:

-How are the technologies, specially the advanced Web-based tools, making significant impacts on the interactive mode?

-Are there any interactive modes emerged and yet not quite to be understood?

2.2.1.2 Human-Computer Interaction (HCI)

Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) research is performed to provide a scientific understanding of the interaction between humans and the computer technology and tools that being used. Inside the field of HCI research, the focal point for defining the interactivity concept is inclined to the direct communication between human and computers, human and other new media systems (Tan and Nguyen, 1993; Milheim, 1996; Hanssen et al., 1996; Burgoon et al., 2000). In other words, this research tradition depicts the interactive communication between a single human and a single computer or medium system (Shaw et al., 1993). In another study, HCI is explained and named as “interactive circuit” (Crawford, 1990), wherein, both user and computer are located in a continuous communication process.

As observed by Olson and Olson (2003, p.492), HCI is “the study of how people interact with computing technology” and the goal of HCI research is to understand how to design and engineer more *usable* artefacts. In other words, it is a disciplinary area of studying how computer systems are used to enable human communicative interactions, and how humans are interacting in situations.

HCI draws on many disciplines, including design, psychology, computer science, anthropology and economics (Thimbleby, 2004). According to Hewett *et al.* (1992, p.5), HCI is defined as “a discipline concerned with the design, evaluation and implementation of interactive computing systems for human use and with the study of major phenomena surrounding them”. The term HCI often rests on both the machine and the human foundation in terms of computer science, behavioural science and design (Tripathi, 2011, p.1).

Extant HCI studies that focus more on the computer perspective tend to examine issues such as interactive features (Raney, 2003), navigation applications (Heeter, 2000; Nielsen, 2000; Joshi and Sarda, 2010; Blackler and Hurtienne, 2007), system activities (Milheim, 1996; Kaltenbacher, 2008) and interfaces (Nielsen, 2000). In response to what this thesis is concerned here, specific research focuses must be made beyond HCI from the following three distinctive aspects.

First, the contemporary HCI research on the Web-based tool applications (e.g., weblogs) seem to move towards understanding users' behaviours in application domains, and moreover, how such understandings would inform the designers of the application tools to improve the uses of the Web effectively (Sikorski, 2008; Cho *et al*., 2009; Livari *et al*., 2010). The research emphasis and application concerns of HCI are various owing to the inherent complexity. In this instance, the conventional view of HCI research should be updated and developed. For example, online shopping users are attributed to the conventional concerns on the HCI research. The complex online consumer behavioural patterns (Cole *et al*., 2000; Clark, 2005, 2007) are increasingly becoming complex in the contexts of economical, cultural, emotional, environmental, psychological, and/or even ethical variables. Therefore, it is found that such a type of HCI research outcome (i.e., informing HCI designers in developing "better" tools) is not in the scope specific enough to serving the purpose of understanding the dimensional interactions in the contexts of communication modes. As discussed in section 2.2.1.1, the emerging Web-based communications are extending spheres of human mass communications and clearly are interactive, not linear. Yet, the interactive dimensions still need to be conceptualised.

Second, interactive dimensions need to be understood in the contexts of navigation of information space. Navigation of information space is a paradigm for thinking about HCI (Benyon, 1998). It is found, however, that HCI is mainly concerned with how the convergence or divergence of technologies (Joshi and Sarda, 2010), e.g., mobile phones (Woelfer *et al*., 2011), multi-agents (Pah *et al*., 2008), personal organisers and weblogs are interacting with and thus enabling information seekers. Typical HCI can be explained on the basis of goal-oriented, problem solving and/or autonomous agent approaches (Ismail and Ahmad, 2011). The design issues can be, for example, how HCI shifts attention from human, computers and tasks to communication, control and distribution of domain specific information between the component agents and devices. In navigated information spaces, the integral user experiences are inter-related within so called intuitive interactions or even unstructured interactions (Ram, and Shankaranarayanan, 1999; Blackler *et al.*, 2002; Blackler and Hurtienne, 2007). However, this thesis is concerned with how the interactive dimensions inform the marketing contexts where the consumers' participations and collaborations are taken place. For instance, on the weblogging context (which will be discussed in detail in section 2.6), the interactive function keeps users aroused and get involved (Raney, 2003), attracts users to stay longer (Ko, et al, 2005). Or, in a completely different manner, "empowering the users often turn out to cause the reverse: by excluding the user from unpredictable or unexpected interactions and from a deeper understanding of the system, or even preventing them from doing things the way they want to do them" (Kaltenbacher, 2008, p. 9).

Third, the navigated information spaces are not limited to informational mediums. Rather, the web mediated communications such as weblogs (which, again, will be discussed in section 3.6) are rapidly advancing crossing online communities. Such communities are more heterogeneous than ever before (Ung and Dalle, 2010; Kobayashi, 2010). The consumers' motives are highly dependent on their online dynamic experiences, exploration and experimentation. The notion interaction is about "an expression of the extent that in a given series of communication exchanges, any third (or later) transmission (or message) is related to the degree to which previous exchanges referred to even earlier transmissions" (Rafaeli, 1988; also see Figure 2.2 illustrates). Although the HCI theory is interested in how humans are navigating or navigated by surrounded information artefacts, it is argued here that, humans are not just information navigators. In the same manner, they also can be produced the spaces through their motives crossing, for example, common interests, preferences, enjoyments or other activities and practices. Because of this, the rise of weblogs may be more able to engage with users at an individual level of influence. The webloggers can be themselves producing information spaces to foster attitude towards a company or a brand.

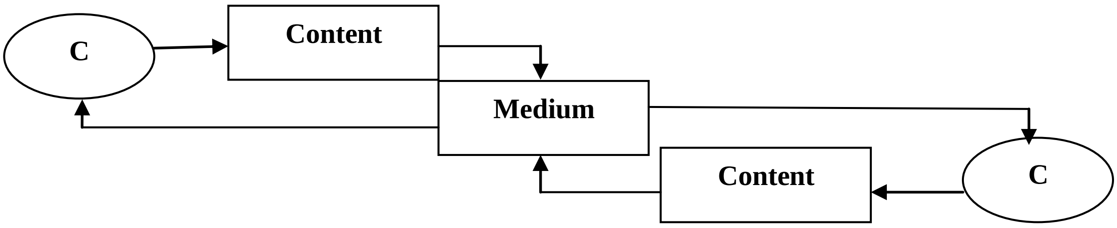
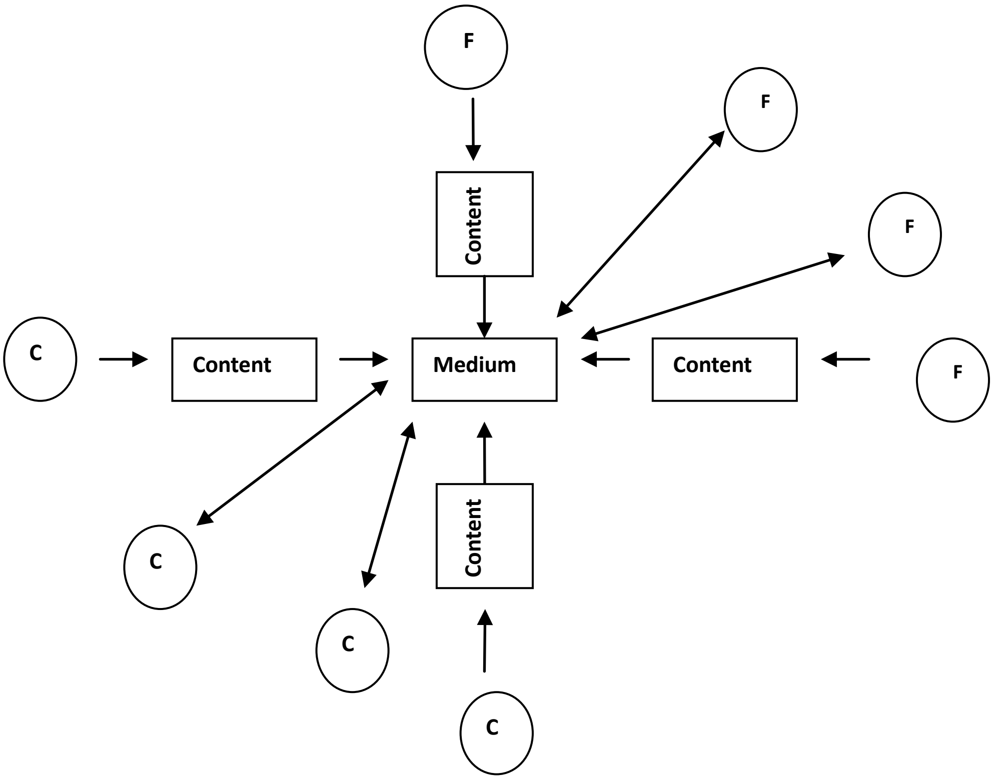


Figure 2.2 Model of Interpersonal and Computer-Mediated communication (Adapted from Rafaeli, 1988)

2.2.1.3 A New Mode for Hypermedia Computer-Mediated Environment

Keeping pace with the development of modern technology, interactive media emerge in the marketing arena. The rise of new media options through new technological developments brings a greater level of interaction between companies and customers. As Monsuwe, Dellaert and Ruyter (2004) state, customers in the new millennium are knowledgeable, sophisticated and selective due to the media fragmentation. Therefore, it would be a signal for marketers to understand the various challenges and opportunities along with the importance of adopting new media options and to consider how to optimize the media options.

Regarding the characteristics of interactive media, Hoffman and Novak (1996; 2009) present a new communication model which is shown at Figure 2.3.



Note: F =firm; C =consumer

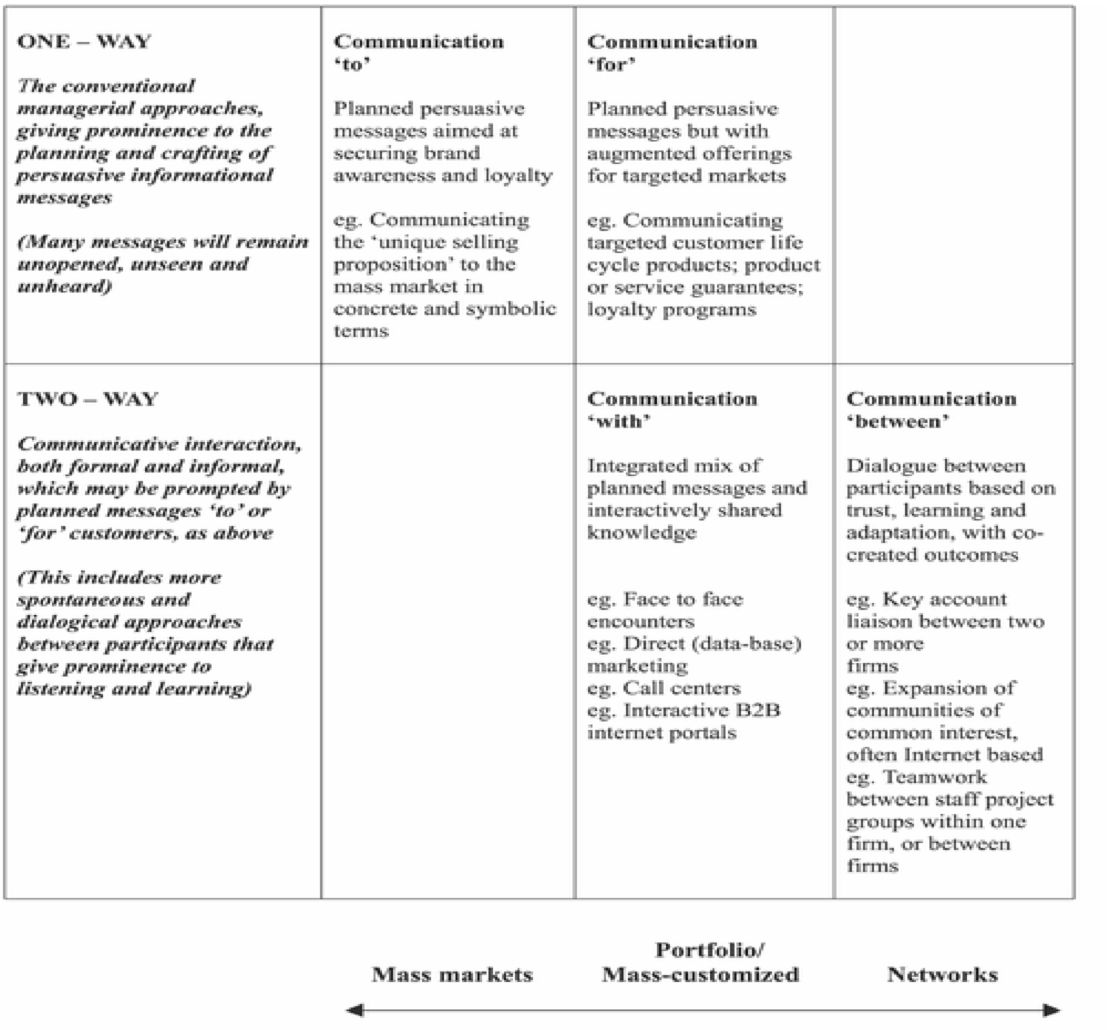
Figure 2.3 New models of marketing communications in a hypermedia computer-mediated environment (Adapted from Hoffman and Novak, 1996; 2009).

Traditional media will be functionally replaced by interactive media (Van Dijk, 2006; Ramirez *et al.*, 2008; Mulhern, 2009; Chou *et al.*, 2009). In comparison with the linear model, Pavlou and Stewart (2008) explain, this new communication model changes marketing communications from a one-way process to a two-way process with interaction between different numbers of communicators. According to Van Raaij (1998, p.3), interactive media have considerable effects which enable ‘information search’, ‘product comparison’ and ‘choice processes’ to be achieved. That is to say, companies can deliver personalized products and services in real time.

Unlike traditional forms of communications, which are one-way in nature, the two-way interaction process enables products and services to be tailored for each individual customer (Rafaeli and Sudweeks, 1997; Pavlou and Stewart, 2007). Meanwhile, customers are able to find the best deal in terms of cost-effective information searching and are allowed to give their feedback immediately by means of interactive media.

From the above, the key feature distinguishing Figure 2.1 from Figure 2.1 is personal interactivity, wherein media are important only as a means of connecting sender and receiver, and are only significant to the extent that they contribute to or otherwise interface with the transmission of messages from sender to receiver (Steuer, 1992). However, Figure 2.3 differs from Figure 2.2 in that interactivity can also be with the medium in addition to through the medium. Figure 2.1 and Figure 2.2 are contained within Figure 2.3. In other words, a hypermedia CME can also be used for computer-mediated communication among consumers and / or firms, as well as potentially for one-to-many mass communication.

Apart from this, Ballantyne (2004) demonstrates the potential of using a variety of forms of communication by presenting a '*Marketing Communication Matrix*' (Table 2.1). Ballantyne (2004) further concludes, the matrix of marketing communication reveals communication options on the monologue-dialogue dimension. Conversely, one-way messages from the focal firms directed 'to' or 'for' its customers or other audiences do not necessarily generate a response. In this linear mode, 'to' signifies the basic offering, while 'for' includes some value added and targeted format. On the other hand, two-way communication is categorized in 'with' and 'between' the focal firms and its customers or other audiences. In particular, dialogical interaction 'between' firms and their customers facilitates more spontaneous and creative communication towards business strategy and management (Varey and Ballantyne, 2006, p.14).



ONE – WAY ***The conventional managerial approaches, giving prominence to the planning and crafting of persuasive informational messages*** ***(Many messages will remain unopened, unseen and unheard)***	**Communication 'to'** Planned persuasive messages aimed at securing brand awareness and loyalty eg. Communicating the 'unique selling proposition' to the mass market in concrete and symbolic terms	**Communication 'for'** Planned persuasive messages but with augmented offerings for targeted markets eg. Communicating targeted customer life cycle products; product or service guarantees; loyalty programs	
TWO – WAY ***Communicative interaction, both formal and informal, which may be prompted by planned messages 'to' or 'for' customers, as above*** ***(This includes more spontaneous and dialogical approaches between participants that give prominence to listening and learning)***		**Communication 'with'** Integrated mix of planned messages and interactively shared knowledge eg. Face to face encounters eg. Direct (data-base) marketing eg. Call centers eg. Interactive B2B internet portals	**Communication 'between'** Dialogue between participants based on trust, learning and adaptation, with co-created outcomes eg. Key account liaison between two or more firms eg. Expansion of communities of common interest, often Internet based eg. Teamwork between staff project groups within one firm, or between firms
	Mass markets	**Portfolio/ Mass-customized**	**Networks**

Table 2.1 Marketing Communication Matrix (Ballantyne, 2004, p.116)

2.3 Marketing Communications within Interactive Context

2.3.1 Characteristics of the Internet as a medium

The Internet is recognised as an important marketing medium and channel by many academic researchers and marketers (Rafaeli and Sudweeks, 1997; Rao *et al*., 2003; Bart *et al*., 2005; Yadav and Varadarajan, 2005; Hoffman and Novak, 2009). Aldin and Stahre (2003) state that the internet is fast becoming the main communication medium for both companies and consumers, offering them a 'new and highly efficient way of accessing, organising and sharing information'.

A number of researchers identify the interactive nature of the Internet in a firm's efforts to build a good relationship with its customers (Rao *et al*., 2003; Bart *et al*., 2005; Yadav and Varadarajan, 2005). As Hoffman and Novak (2009) claim, the web frees customers from the traditional passive role, as receivers of communicated messages. Moreover, it gives them much more control over information search and access. Importantly, it facilitates relationship marketing and customer support to a greater degree than ever before (Li *et al*., 2006).

According to Sharma, Krishnan and Grewal (2001, p.400), firms are using various Web-based communication tools to assist in communicating the benefits of their products and services to their customers. The primary function of the Internet as a communication channel provides various information and services to customers online. Also, the Internet enables the company to retrieve feedback from customers and the opportunity to measure the quality of their communication with them (Georgick, 2004).

Considering the main differences of the Internet as a marketing medium in comparison with other media, Chaffey *et al.* (2009) state, the Internet is a digital medium that enables interaction, offering potential for one-to-one or many-to-many communication rather than one-to-many communication. Pavlou and Stewart (2008) agree that interactivity is one of the most important contributions that the Internet has, as it allows firms to have one-to-one dialogue with their customers.

According to Cotte et al. (2006), the unique characteristic of the Internet is that it offers new ways for facilitating kinds of 'interaction'. Importantly, the interactive potential of the Internet encourages interest in the possibility of developing marketing customer relationships. For relationship-building, it helps companies to identify attractive customers, both current and prospective, and to enhance customer loyalty through customizing and personalizing ranges of products and services in terms of '*interaction*' (Kierzkowski et al., 1996, p.8).

2.3.2 Theoretical Background of Interactivity Concept

In the preceding section of this chapter, it has been shown that the attributes of the Internet as a modern medium cover a larger number and variety of categories, than those of traditional media. Residing in the Internet's technological architecture, the concept of interactivity stands out in Computer-mediated communications (CMC) and becomes an indispensible element of successful online marketing (Ha and James, 1998; Wu, 1999; McMillan, 2000; McMillan and Hwang, 2002; Liu, 2003; Chen and Yen, 2004; Lee, 2005; Ko *et al*., 2005; Johnson *et al*., 2006).

However, it is still unclear what interactivity is. The conceptual difficulties are referred to by many scholars when examining the interactivity concept (Rafaeli, 1988; Moore, 1989; Schultz, 2000; Heeter, 2000; McMillan, 2002; McMillan and Hwang, 2002). The concept often remains either an "undefined or under-defined mode" in the academic literature (Rafaeli and Sudweeks, 1997; McMillan and Hwang, 2002). Various definitions and conceptualisations are applied to widely divergent phenomena and research disciplines, such as CMC (Hoffman and Novak, 2009), e-Commerce (Dholakia *et al*., 2000), Media (Ha and James, 1998), Marketing (Klein, 2003), and Advertising (Coyle and Thorson, 2001). The concept reveals a very large number of titles and publications and is very often cited in "communication discourse" (Rafaeli and Ariel, 2007, p.72). Scholars employ the term interactivity to refer to "everything from face-to-face exchanges to CMC" (McMillan and Downes, 2000, p.157).

2.3.3 Definition of Interactivity

Since the term is repeatedly specified as an important feature, the concept of interactivity has been used with numerous and various meanings from varied individual fields of scholarship. Many scholars from different scientific disciplines have defined interactivity from different angles (Rafaeil and Sudweeks, 1997; Wu, 1999; McMillan, 2002), and various definitions are referred to in the academic literature. To this end, it is difficult for researchers to seize the nature of the concept due to ambiguous multiple definitions (Ha and James, 1998).

Although there is little consistency in definition across extant literature, these different definitions have generated considerable interest in the interactivity research stream. In an effort to fulfil the interactivity scholarship, McMillan and Hwang (2002) extensively categorised conceptual efforts as three principal interactivity research streams: process, functional, and perception view of interactivity.

2.3.3.1 Process (i.e., contingency) View of Interactivity

Definitions that focus on process perspective leads to claims that interactivity is elaborated as a process of message exchange (Tremayne, 2005). From this point of view, scholars focus on exchanges and message responsiveness in a communication setting. This process-related research stream is particularly important in Computer-Mediated Communications (CMC), as it is regarded as the key advantage of the medium (Rafaeli, 1988; Miles, 1992; Morris and Ogan, 1997; Rafaeli and Sudweeks, 1997; Ha and James, 1998; Pavlik, 1998; Heeter, 2000; Fortin and Dholakia, 2005).

Rafaeli (1988) is a leading proponent of the conception of interactivity as situated within communication contexts. He defines interactivity as “an expression of the extent that, in a given series of communication exchanges, any third (or later) transmission (or message) is related to the degree to which previous exchanges referred to even earlier transmissions” (p.18). This definition is frequently quoted as a mainstay for theorising the concept of interactivity (Koolstra and Bos, 2009).

Building upon the work of Rafaeli (1988), some scholars focus on responsive nature of interactivity. Ha and James (1998), for example, define interactivity as “an extent to which the communicator and the audience respond to, or are willing to facilitate, each others’ communication needs” (p.461). This definition addresses the idea that interactive exchanges make the communicator and audience roles interchangeable (McMillan, 2002).

Others focus on the process of two-way communication, actions, and reactions (Rafaeli and Sudweeks, 1997; Pavlik, 1998; Heeter, 2000). According to Heeter (2000, p.7), interactivity is defined as “an episode or series of episodes of physical actions and reactions of an embodied human with the world, including the environment and objects and beings in the world. These actions and reactions are actual interactions, a subset of the range of potential interactions of the human and the world at that time and place".

Another broader definition of interactivity was offered by Rafaeli and Sudweeks (1997), which define interactivity from the perspective of interpersonal communication, as: “the extent to which messages in a sequence relate to each other and especially the extent to which later messages recount the relatedness of earlier messages.” This definition is consistent with Deighton’s (1996) work, which emphasised sequential conversations during the process of communication. Similarly, an experimental study conducted by Macias (2003) to investigate the role of interactivity on corporate website. This researcher proposes another process-oriented conceptualisation: “interactivity is the state or communicating, exchanging, obtaining and/or modifying content and/or its form with or through a medium."

Based upon the above definitions, it can be seen that scholars conceptualise interactivity from a process view. In particular, it seems to appear that this process-oriented vision interprets the meaning of interactivity from occurrences of entities (e.g., what happened) within the communication process, rather than the process itself.

2.3.3.2 Functional View of Interactivity

Some of the earliest research efforts were invested to find the distinctive function of interactivity, which can be applied in the Internet environment. This functional view leads to claims that interactivity is an attribute of technology (Steuer, 1992; Jensen, 1998; Lombard and Snyder-Dutch, 2001; Sohn *et al*., 2003; Sundar, 2004; Tremayne, 2005). As a leader in the focus on function, Steuer (1992) is concerned with rapidly developing communication technology, defined interactivity as a characteristic of the medium: “the extent to which users can participate in modifying the form and content of a mediated environment in real time” (p.84). Apparently this scholar talks about the users, in fact, he is addressing the feature of media technology. And his work directly pertains to the issue of website interactivity (Tannenbaum, 1998).

Likewise, Jensen (1998) defined interactivity as “a measure of a medium’s potential ability to let the user exert an influence on the content and/or form of the mediated communication” (p.201). It follows that these two definitions converged on modification, manipulation, and controllability of contents within Computer-Mediated Communication contexts. To this end, the key elements of interactivity according to Steuer (1992) and Jensen (1998) are the features that enable user control.

Other scholars gave much attention to the conceptualisation of interactivity, which often relied heavily on features to facilitate two-way communication and real-time interaction. Markus (1990), for example, suggests that interactivity is a characteristic of technologies that enable multidirectional communication. In the same vein, Ahren *et al*. (2000) focus also on features that facilitate two-way communication as well as on the multimedia features of the websites. Regarding the time required for interaction, Straubhaar and LaRose (1996) identified another key element of interactivity, namely, real-time interaction. They define the term interactivity as: “situations where real-time feedback is collected” (p.12). With reference to this time dimensions Aoki (2000) claims that the levels of interactivity can be measured in terms of the number of website tools, the immediacy of responses, and the degree of personalisation.

Based on the above function-oriented definitions of interactivity, it can be seen that the notion of interactivity has underlined a two-way communication nature in which users can control the form and content of media messages to fulfil their demands. However, the primary focus of these definitions is only resided in a specific technologies-based context. For example, functional perspective of interactivity mainly focuses on media technology, rather than human behaviours. With these definitions, it might not easy for researchers to distinguish different forms or levels of interactivity (Jensen, 1998).

2.3.3.3 Perception View of Interactivity

The scholars in the first and second stream seek to identify ‘process’ and ‘functions’ of interactivity. However, mere presence or absence of these two perspectives may not influence users’ perceptions of the concept only if they actually use them (Lee *et al*., 2004; Song and Zinkan, 2008). As Schumann *et al*. (2001) claim, “interactivity is the consumer’ choice to interact, thus interactivity is a characteristic of the consumer, and not a characteristic of the medium. The medium simply serves to facilitate the interaction.” (p.45). That is, the concept of interactivity is more appropriately comprehended not as an element of a medium, but as a perceptual variable (McMillan and Hwang, 2002). Now therefore it urges on us the necessity of studying how users perceive interactivity.

In this interactivity research stream, scholars mainly concentrate on the perceptions of participants within interactive communication contexts. This focus is in accord with marketing, advertising, and communication traditions, and is particularly important for advertising research (McMillan and Hwang, 2002). In contrast to ‘process’ and ‘functions’ views of interactivity, scholars define interactivity from a subjective perspective (Newhagen et al., 1995; Reeves and Nass, 1996; Morrison, 1998; Kiousis, 2002; Lee, 2000; McMillan and Downes, 2000; McMillan and Hwang, 2002; McMillan et al., 2003; Wu, 1999, 2000, 2005). According to Reeves and Nass (1996, p.253), “perceptions are far more influential than reality defined more objectively”. Accordingly, this perceptual view underscores that interactivity’s greatest potential lies in the generation of interactions that users perceived (Wu, 2005).

Newhagen *et al*. (1995) were the first to suggest the concept of perceived interactivity. These researchers conceptualise perceived interactivity based on “efficacy”, which is “a two-dimensional construct: internally based self-efficacy and externally based system efficacy” (p.166). Building upon the work of Newhagen *et al*. (1995), Song and Zinkhan (2008) interpret the two-dimensional construct as: “psychological sense of efficacy from users, and users’ sense of the media system’s interactivity” (p.100).

Kiousis (2002), for example, defines interactivity as “ability of users to perceive the experience to be a simulation of interpersonal communication and increase their awareness of telepresence” (p.379). Similarly, Thorson and Rodgers (2006, p.36) define interactivity as “the extent to which users perceive their experience as a simulation of interpersonal interaction and sense they are in the presence of a social other”. Wu (2000) also views interactivity as the subjective experience of users, and defines it as “the extent to which a person perceives he or she controls over the interaction process, his or her communicative counterpart (a person, a mass-mediated environment, or a computer-mediated environment) personalises and respond to his or her communicative behaviour” (p.41). This approach asks what personal characteristics of consumers make them differently perceive the same medium and message differently (Sohn *et al*., 2003).

From the above definitions, it can be seen that the perception of interactivity is more closely related to users, rather than communication and media themselves. This perceptual view mainly focuses on the subjective perceptions or experiences of users toward an interactive event.

To sum up, the researcher have reviewed literature that defines interactivity as being based in three research streams, namely, process (i.e., interactive activities within the communication process), functions (i.e., features of media technology), and perceptions (i.e., subjective perceptions or experiences of users within the communication process). Wherein, the researcher sheds some light on various definitions of interactivity and highlighted the differences between some of the terms. These conceptualisations help us to understand important aspects of interactivity, and provide a theoretical ground base for the current research. The researcher also found that records of a sustained inquiry into the 'process and functional view' of interactivity date from the 1980s to the 1990s. Some scholars first approached perceptual view of interactivity until the late 1990s. Since 2000s, the interactivity scholarship shifted to mainly focus on the subjective view of users within interactive communication context.

2.3.4 Dimensional Research of Interactivity

The proceeding discussion reveals the complexity of establishing a sound definition for interactivity, since the concept has been applied to a widely variety of scientific disciplines. While an increasing number of studies have testified the importance of the term, there is as yet no consensus on its dimensions.

In the early days, dimensional research of interactivity tended to be focused on a single perspective. Rafaeli (1988), for example, attempted to define interactivity as a one-dimensional continuum. However, interactivity cannot be precisely defined just based on process, function, and perception views (McMillan and Hwang, 2002). In order to fully appreciate its importance, interactivity must be looked upon as a multidimensional construct. As time passed, the multidimensional concept of interactivity has been approached across different research disciplines (Heeter, 1989; Steuer, 1992; Ha and James, 1998; Burgoon *et al*., 2000; Dholakia *et al*., 2000; Wu, 2000; McMillan and Downes, 2000; Liu and Shrum, 2002; McMillan and Hwang, 2002; Sohn and Lee, 2005).

In a new media study, Heeter (1989, p.223) provides an early attempt to conceptualise multidimensionality of interactivity. Her work presents a comprehensive understanding of the concept of interactivity and supplies a six-dimensional definition of the term: 1) complexity of choice available (the extent to which users can select a variety of information); 2) effort that users must exert (the extent to which media enable users to access information more easily); 3) responsiveness to the user (the degree to which media communication is similar to human conversation); 4) monitoring of information use (the capacity of system to track users); 5) ease of adding information (users can easily add or share information with mass audience, and 6) facilitation of interpersonal communication (the capacity of media enables two-way communication among users). Among the six dimensions of interactivity, it can be seen that Heeter's (1989) work applies to both traditional and new media context. It is assumed that an application of six dimensions she identified in the late 1980s might still meaningfully impact on contemporary society.

Steuer (1992, p.87), considering computer use, proposes interactivity as a concept based on three dimensions – speed of interaction, range, and mapping. Wherein, "Speed of interaction or response time" is related to the time of response between users and computers within the mediated environment. "Range" is the extent to which users can select and modify options within the mediated environment. "Mapping" refers to the way in which system change is controllable by users. Here, it can be seen that both "range" and "mapping" are all linked to the concept of control. For instance, in a weblog context, the controllability of weblog enables users to have full control over their communication activities by personal preferences. In this instance, users can experience greater interactivity.

In line with the studies by Heeter (1989) and Steuer (1992), some scholars attempt to identify the dimensions of interactivity within a computer-mediated communication setting (Ku, 1992; Hanssen *et al*., 1996; McMillan and Downes, 2000; Dholakia *et al*., 2000; Coyle and Thorson, 2001). Based on the notion of access and control, Ku (1992) proposed six dimensions of interactivity: 1) immediacy of feedback; 2) responsiveness; 3) source diversity; 4) communication linkages; 5) equality of participation, and 6) playfulness. In other work, Dholakia *et al*. (2000) also come up with a six criteria for online interactivity: user control, personalisation, responsiveness, connectedness, real time interaction, and playfulness. A qualitative study conducted by McMillan and Downes (2000) identify direction of communication, timing flexibility, sense of place, level of control, and responsiveness and perceived purpose of communication as six important dimensions of interactivity. Coyle and Thorson

(2001) claim that the aspects of interactivity are clustered around three items: mapping, speed, and user control. These three dimensions are important within computer-mediated environment.

Building upon Steuer's (1992) approach to the concept of interactivity, Ha and James (1998) offer five dimensions of interactivity by identifying the different degrees of communication that web users may need to experience: 1) playfulness; 2) the availability of choices; 3) connectedness; 4) information collection, and 5) reciprocal communication. "Playfulness" is the entertainment experience of users on an online occasion. The availability of choice has the same meaning as Heeter's (1989) "complexity of choice" dimension, which refers to the provision of several options to web users. "Connectedness" is related to the diverse connections through web hyperlinks that enable users to have more interaction. "Information collection" is based on the perspective of web site providers, rather than users. "Reciprocal communication" is the last dimension, which refers to the extent to which website visitors can communicate with the web site providers or owners.

Early work in communication and media studies proposed various dimensions to conceptualise interactivity. Most researchers contend that three dimensions appear frequently in the interactivity literature, no matter whether definitions are process, functional or perceptual (McMillan and Hwang, 2002; Liu and Shrum, 2002). Another advertising research conducted by Johnson *et al*. (2006) suggested four dimensions of interactivity: responsiveness, nonverbal information, speed of response, and reciprocity. In this study, they emphasised that "prior work has failed to explicitly account for nonverbal information as a distinct facet of interactivity" (p.37), defined as follows: "the extent to which the communication is perceived to be characterised by nonverbal information (the use of multiple channels for communicating information)" (p.41). Except for non-verbal information, other factors were related to previous dimensional studies (McMillan and Hwang, 2002; Liu, 2003).

Based on the extant interactivity literature studies, Liu and Shrum (2002), for example, suggest three key dimensions of interactivity: 1) active control; 2) two-way communication, and 3) synchronicity. In accord with Liu and Shrum's (2002) work, McMillan and Hwang (2002) operationalise the concept of interactivity associated with commercial websites, and underscore three factors: 1) direction of communication; 2) user control; and 3) time. To be brief, “direction of communication” covers the concepts of exchange, two-way communication, mutual discourse, feedback, and responsiveness (Newhagen, 1995; Rafaeli and Sudweeks, 1997; Ha and James, 1998; Duncan and Moriarty, 1998; Day, 1998). It can be seen that this dimension connects to the interpersonal interactivity within an online context. For instance, users can communicate with each other in Facebook or corporate weblog sites. “User control” refers to functionality of new media to provide new communication tools that enable users to have more control over their communication experience. “Time” has the same meaning as Liu and Shrum’s (2002) “synchronicity”, which refers to the speed of response concerned by both web users and developers. For example, users can easily and quickly access a certain corporate weblogs.

Each of the three dimensions identified above is central to the concept of interactivity, but in much of the literature, these concepts overlap and interrelated (McMillan and Hwang, 2002) (See Figure 2.4). Given this, McMillan and Hwang (2002) illustrate the overlapping concept as follows:

“Web-based interactivity involves communication among persons, the ability those persons have to control information and participate in active communication, and time-to-load the message, to find information, to communicate with others, and the loss of time as communication (p.34).”

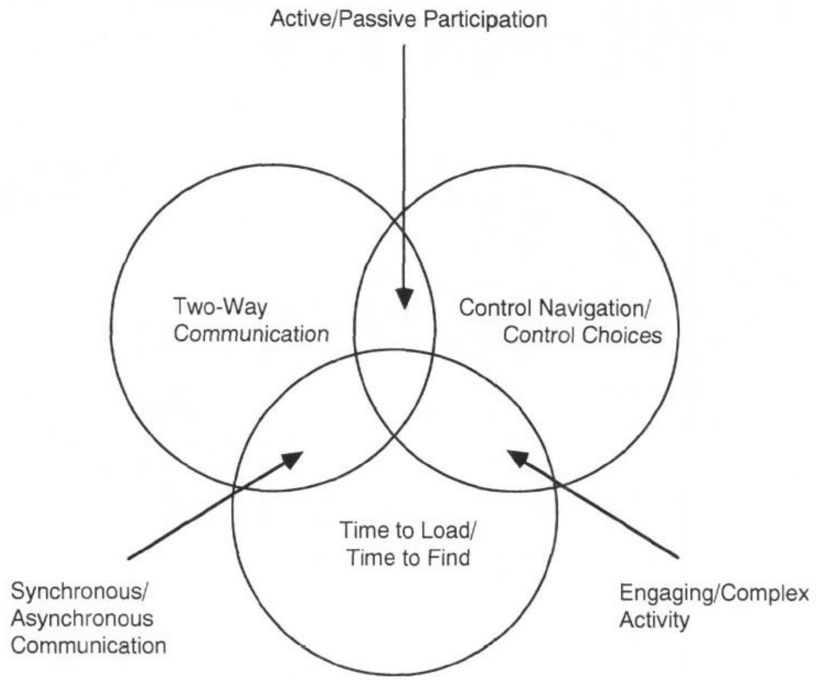

Active/Passive Participation
Two-Way Communication
Control Navigation/ Control Choices
Time to Load/ Time to Find
Synchronous/ Asynchronous Communication
Engaging/Complex Activity

Figure 2.4 Key Dimensions of Interactivity (Adapted from McMillan and Hwang, 2002)

Regarding Figure 2.4, “Active participation” is the intersection of overlapping communication and control, which can be described as the degree to which the user’s active participation and influence in a communication is simultaneous (McMillan and Hwang, 2002). “Synchronous communication” (the intersection of overlapping communication and time) can be regarded as reciprocal communication, which is categorised from two perspectives: 1) users-to-messages in real time; 2) users-to-users in real-time (McMillan and Hwang, 2002). “Engaging activities” (the concept of the overlapping of time and control) refers to the extent to which users’ engagement is simultaneous (McMillan and Hwang, 2002). In their follow-up study, McMillan and Hwang (2002) empirically test the three overlapping research model. Factor analysis reveal two overlapped factors, namely, “engaging” and “real time conversation” and the other one factor – time (no delay) is not overlapped.

2.3.5 Application of Interactivity

In more recent decades, researchers have empirically examined interactivity across different research fields, such as advertising, marketing, communication, information science, and education. Ha and James (1998), for example, examined the interactivity of early business websites and proposed that different types of business website such as manufacturing, goods, and services, provide the diverse dimensional interactivity functions (i.e., playfulness, choice, connectedness, information collection, and reciprocal communication). Through conducting content analysis, the results indicate that reciprocal communication has been selected as the most frequently used interactivity function.

From an Internet marketing perspective, Coyle and Thorson (2001) raise the applicability of the interactivity concepts within a telepresence context. Based on the definition by Steuer (1992), the term “telepresence” can be defined as “the experience of presence in an environment by means of a communication medium” (p.76). In the study by Coyle and Thorson (2001), the result indicated that interactivity and vividness were two key determinants affecting increased involvement of telepresence, and consequently, generating a strong positive attitude towards a website.

Another experimental research by Sicilia, Ruiz, and Munuera (2005) investigates how website processing and the consumers’ achievement of a flow state are influenced by the website interactivity. In this experimental study, Sicilia *et al*. (2005) analyse consumer reactions toward an interactive website compared with a non-interactive website. This consumer psychology research indicates that interactive website leads to more information processing, greater flow state, and higher favourability toward the website. To this end, it is vital for web designers to employ interactive functions into marketing websites.

In a commercial website study, Ko *et al*. (2005) aim to investigate the causal relations among motivations for using the Internet. On the basis of the study, interactivity was categorized into two types: human-human interaction and human-message interaction. The premise of their research is that duration of time is a determinant of interactivity. The result indicated that human-human interaction attributed more to social interaction motivation, whilst human-message interaction pertained more to information motivation. The result indicates significantly positive effects of human-message and human-human interactivity on attitude toward the site.

In an Internet advertising study, Cho and Leckenby (1999) explore the impact of interactivity on advertising effectiveness. In particular, their study focus on an investigation of the relationship between interactivity, its antecedents such as perception and involvement), and the effect of interactivity in banner advertising websites. This Internet advertising study concludes that there are three antecedent variables that successfully predict the level of interactivity: (1) “high level of involvement”, (2) “high perception of message-relatedness between the banner ad and the target ad”, (3) “high perception of message-personalisation”. They also found that higher degree of interactivity led to better advertising effects, such as positive attitude toward the ad, and greater purchasing intention. Importantly, the study suggested a new approach to measure website effectiveness.

Cho and Leckenby’s (1999) findings was also supported by the study of Yoo and Stout (2001). Yoo and Stout (2001) find out that product involvement and levels of interactivity on the Web site can have positive effects on the web users’ interactivity with the site. This finding consists with Cho and Leckenby’s (1999) research outcome that user interactivity is a useful indicator of Web advertising effectiveness.

Sundar, Kalyanaraman, and Brown (2003) conducted a political campaign study and found that less politically interested people to be more influenced by the presence of interactivity in a political candidate’s web site than more politically interest people. This dual-process persuasion model could be used to explain interactivity function. For example, animation and video clips, can generate positive attitudes in terms of increasing user involvement with information (Sundar et al., 2004).For instance, given this, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Interactivity is positively associated with attitude toward corporate travel weblogs.

2.3.6 Developing Scale to Measure Interactivity

Interactivity has become one of the significant concepts in the field of computer-mediated communication, several studies have attempted to develop scales to measure the term (Johnson, Bruner, and Kumar, 2006; McMillan, 2000; McMillan and Hwang, 2002; Liu, 2003). In fact, several measures of interactivity have been conducted in empirical studies, ranging from the one-item scales to the ten-item scale. For instance, some studies developed a unidimensional scale with a different number of items, such as the one-item scale (“relative interactivity”) (Shankar, Smith, and Rangaswamy, 2000), other studies suggested multidimensional scales, such as three dimensional scales of interactivity (McMillan and Hwang, 2002; Liu, 2003). Wu (1999) uses ten-item scales to measure the concept of interactivity. In this instance, the researcher designed a conceptual table for summarising and illustrating extant measurement for the concept of interactivity (see Table 2.2).

In an early study to measure interactivity, McMillan (2000) utilised a unidimensional scale, which has the following seven items:

“This site facilitates two-way communication, when I visit this site I get the sense that I am in a “place” in cyberspace, this site seems to allow site visitors to communicate at times that are most convenient for them, I feel that I have a great deal of control over my visiting experience at this site, visitors to this site need to take an active role in order to fully experience the site, this site seems to be designed primarily to inform rather than persuade, and this site is interactive (p.6)”.

In his study, McMillan (2000) focuses on three core concepts, namely, two-way communications (item1), real-time (item 3), and control (item 4 and 5) through using a unidimensional scale. Respondents were asked to use a six-point Likert scale to indicate their level of agreement with seven statements. Owing to the unidimensional nature, these types of scale cannot have a sufficiently strong conceptual background to define the term of interactivity (Johnson *et al*., 2006). Of this, it is difficult for researchers to identify and determine: which concepts should be measured through which items. For instance, item “This site seems to be designed primarily to inform rather than persuade”. Also, this measurement was not constructed through a formal scale development process, as in most cases, it is not measured directly but through dimensions (Liu, 2003). With the exception of Cronbach’s Alpha (.80), there is no specific scale validity and reliability information given in the study.

On the contrary, some other researchers (Liu, 2003; McMillan and Hwang, 2002; Johnson *et al*., 2006) developed multidimensional scales for measuring interactivity based on several scale-development principles (Churchill, 1979; DeVellis, 1991). For instance, McMillan and Hwang (2002) suggested that three concepts were the most frequently encountered in previous studies. There were (1) direction of communication, (2) user control, and (3) time. In their study, several qualitative methods were employed, such as expert interviews and focus groups interviews, to generate items (McMillan and Hwang, 2002). By these means they suggested that the three concepts were overlapping constructs, such as real-time conversation whereby "direction of communication" and "time" overlap. Even though they reasonably explained the overlapping conceptual model of interactivity they have yet to enjoy wide acceptance.

In another multidimensional study, Liu (2003) builds upon McMillan's (2000) study and generated 36 items for three dimensions of interactivity. In order to develop a valid and reliable scale, several criteria were calculated to evaluate generated items: item-to-total correlation, inter-item correlation, and pairwise correlations between items (Liu, 2003). On the basis of two studies, three-factor constructs, namely, active control (4 items), two-way communication (6 items), and synchronicity (5 items) were identified. A confirmatory factor analysis result indicates that the hypothesised three-factor correlated model had the best model fit indices (Liu, 2003). In terms of reliability, Cronbach's Alphas were ranged from .70 to .86, which exceeded the .70 threshold. The average variances extracted (AVE) for the three factors ranged from .51 to .60, which exceeded the .50 threshold (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

Johnson *et al*. (2006) identify four dimensions of interactivity, namely, responsiveness, nonverbal information, speed of response, and reciprocity. Theoretically, the term responsiveness and reciprocity were associated with the direction of communication or two-way communication (McMillan and Hwang, 2002; Liu, 2003). The meaning of speed of response, real-time information, and synchronicity are interchangeable (McMillan and Hwang, 2002; Liu, 2003).

The term responsiveness is significantly different from reciprocity. According to Johnson *et al*. (2006), responsiveness can be described as "more to interactivity than reciprocity" (p.40). In their study, sixty-nine items were generated based on the literature review and seventeen items were selected. The sample was selected from a panel of IT professionals and doctoral students. Attitude toward the website and user's involvement are set as a standard to measure the criterion validity of the interactivity constructs (Bruner and Kumar, 2000, 2002; Zaichkowsky, 1985). Interestingly, their finding presents a new dimension of interactivity, nonverbal information, which was found strongly influence the perceived interactivity.

Table 2.2 Interactivity Dimensions and Measurement

Authors (Year)	Research Field	Dimensions	Measurement
Ha and James (1998)	Media	1. Playfulness 2. Choice 3. Connectedness 4. Information collection 5. Reciprocal communication **(Interactivity dimensions)**	➢ Playfulness: was measured by the presence of curiosity arousal devices and games ➢ Choice: was measured by the presence of color, speed, language, and other aspects of non-informational alternatives ➢ Connectedness: was measured by different types of hyperlinks: self-product related hyperlinks; company related hyperlinks; third-party related hyperlinks; other information (hyperlinks to the same sites and hyperlinks to other sites) ➢ Information collection: was measured by the presence of monitoring mechanisms ➢ Reciprocal communication: was measured by the presence of response mechanisms on a website
Wu (1999)	Advertising	1. Perceived control 2. Perceived responsiveness 3. Perceived personalization **(Perceived interactivity dimensions)**	➢ **Wu (1999)** measured the three dimensions in terms of ten Likert-type items without grouping. ➢ While I was on the site, I was always aware where I was. ➢ While I was on the site, I always knew where I was going. ➢ While I was on the site, I was always able to go where I thought I was going. ➢ The hyper-linked images and texts tell me exactly what to expect. ➢ The visual layout was like a roadmap during my exploration of the site. ➢ When I clicked on hyper-linked images or texts, I felt good about the instantaneous display of information. ➢ While I was on the site, I could quickly jump from one page to another. ➢ I felt I did not get much useful information simply because it had too much information. ➢ I was delighted to be able to choose which link and when to click. ➢ I was pleased to express my feelings and opinions on the spot through email or feedback form.

Authors (Year)	Research Field	Dimensions	Measurement
Burgoon *et al*. (2002)	Communication	1. Perceived involvement 2. Multidimensional nature of mutuality 3. Interaction ease 4. Supplemented with assessments of the expectedness and desirability of the partner's interaction behavior **(Interactivity dimensions)**	✧ Perceived involvement: was measured with three Likert-format items taken from **Burgoon and Hale's (1987) Relational Communication Scale (RCS;** Cronback α = .75**).** (This scale is composed of the following 8 subscales: immediacy/affection, similarity/depth, receptivity/trust, composure, formality, dominance, equality, task orientation.) ✧ Mutuality: was measured from 4 aspects: - perceptions of partner receptivity (3 items) (taken from RCS; α = .77) - perceived similarity (3 items) (taken from **McCroskey, Hamilton, and Weiner's (1974) homophily scale;** α = .92) - perceived connectedness between interactants was assessed by **Aron, Aron, and Smollan's (1992) pictorial instrument which uses 7 increasingly overlapping circles** - perceived understanding (15 items) (taken from **Cahn and Shulman's (1984) Feelings of Understanding-Misunderstanding Scale, which subtracts a subtotal for misunderstanding from a subtotal for understanding;** α = .86**)** ✧ Interaction ease: 3 items taken from previous investigations measured the ease and naturalness of interaction (α = .77) (Please see the first aspect of mutuality) ✧ The measurement of interaction ease was supplemented with 10 items taken from **Burgoon and Walther (1990)** to assess how expected or atypical and positively or negatively valences the partner's behavior was measured (α = .68 and α = .78, respectively)
McMillan and Hwang (2002)	Advertising	1. Direction of communication 2. User control 3. Time **(Interactivity dimensions)** **Also, McMillan and Hwang (2002) identified another three sub-dimensions of interactivity as:** 1. Real-time communication 2. Engaging 3. No delay **(Perceived interactivity dimensions)**	➢ **McMillan and Hwang (2002)** measured three dimensions of interactivity in terms of 18 Likert- type items **(MPI Scale)**. ➢ Enables two way communication **(Real-time communication)** ➢ Enables concurrent communication **(Real-time communication)** ➢ Non concurrent communication **(Real-time communication)** ➢ Is interactive **(Real-time communication)** ➢ Primarily one-way communication **(Real-time communication)** ➢ Is interpersonal **(Real-time communication)** ➢ Enables conversation **(Real-time communication)** ➢ Loads fast **(No delay)** ➢ Loads slow **(No delay)** ➢ Operates at high speed **(No delay)** ➢ Variety of content **(Engaging)** ➢ Keeps my attention **(Engaging)** ➢ Easy to find my way through the site **(Engaging)** ➢ Unmanageable **(Engaging)**

			➢ Doesn’t keep my attention **(Engaging)** ➢ Passive **(Engaging)** ➢ Immediate answers to questions to questions **(Engaging)** ➢ Lacks content **(Engaging)**

Authors (Year)	**Research Field**	**Dimensions**	**Measurement**
Sohn, Leckenby and Jee (2003)	Advertising	1. Consumers’ expected interactivity toward the web 2. Consumers’ perceived interactivity of actual websites **(Perceived interactivity dimensions)**	➢ Expected interactivity: was measured by adapting the perceived interactivity scale developed by **Wu (1999)** ➢ Perceived interactivity: was measured by the scale originally developed by **Wu (1999)**
Cho and Cheon (2005)	Advertising	1. Consumer-message interactivity 2. Consumer-marketer interactivity 3. Consumer-consumer interactivity **(Interactivity dimensions)**	✧ **Ghose and Dou’s (1998)** 23 ‘forms of interactive functions’ as a base for measuring the dimensions of interactivity. ✧ C-MS: was measured in terms of ‘keyword search, personal choice helper, virtual reality display, dealer locator, multimedia shows, software downloading, games, electronic coupon, sweepstakes/prize, interactive newsletters, choice of speed’ ✧ C-MK: was measured in terms of ‘site survey, on-line order, order status tracking, on-line problem diagnostics, electronic-form/inquires comment/feedback, product survey, new-product proposal, interactive job placement, on-line discussion with sales representatives’ ✧ C-C: was measured in terms of ‘surfer positions, product user group, on-line community, electronic postcards, on-line chat with other consumers’
Sohn and Lee (2005)	Advertising	1. Control 2. Responsiveness 3. Interaction efficacy **(Perceived interactivity dimensions)**	✧ Control: was measured in terms of ‘perceived pace control, feel comfortable to use the web, perceived navigation control, perceived content control, know where I am’ ✧ Responsiveness: was measured in terms of ‘perceived sensitivity of the web, quick responsiveness of the web, expected positive outcomes’ ✧ Interaction efficacy: was measured in terms of ‘feel comfortable to express opinions, real time communication with others’

Authors (Year)	**Research Field**	**Dimensions**	**Measurement**
Lee (2005)	E-commerce (Mobile Commerce)	1. Perceived user control 2. Perceived responsiveness 3. Perceived personalization 4. Perceived connectedness 5. Perceived ubiquitous connectivity 6. Perceived contextual offer **(Perceived interactivity dimensions)**	✧ **Perceived user control**: was measured by two items on a seven-point rating of agreement. It was adapted from **Wu (2000)**: 1) I was in control over the information display format, condition when using this mobile Internet site; 2) I was in control over the content of this mobile Internet site that I want to see. ✧ **Perceived responsiveness**: was measured by agreement with the following two statements adapted from **Wu (2000)**: 1) This mobile Internet site had the ability to respond to my specific questions quickly; 2) This mobile Internet site had the ability to respond to my specific questions relevantly. ✧ **Perceived personalization**: was measured by agreement with the following three statements adapted from **Srinivasan *et al*. (2002)**: 1) This mobile Internet site enables me to order products or service that are tailor-made for me; 2) The advertisements and promotions that this mobile Internet site sends to me are tailored to my situation; 3) This mobile Internet site makes me feel that I am a unique customer. ✧ **Perceived connectedness**: was measured by agreement with the following three statements adapted from **Srinivasan *et al*. (2002)**: 1) Customers share experiences about the product or service with other customers of the mobile Internet site; 2) Customers of this mobile Internet site benefit from the community sponsored by the site; 3) Customers share a common bond with other members of the customer community sponsored by the site. ✧ **Perceived ubiquitous connectivity**: was measured by agreement with the following four statements adapted from **Kim and Kim (2002)**: 1) I can access to this mobile Internet site anywhere for the necessary information or service; 2) I can access to this mobile Internet site anywhere for the necessary information or service; 3) I can use this mobile Internet site ‘anywhere’, ‘anytime’ at the point of need; 4) This mobile Internet site enables me to order products or service anywhere at any time. ✧ **Perceived contextual offer**: was measured by agreement with the following three statements developed for this study based on the conceptual study by **Mort and Drennan (2002), Kenny and Marshall (2000) and Figge (2004)**: 1) This mobile Internet site offers timely packets of information (e.g. restaurant coupon for lunch) to me; 2) This mobile Internet site provides me with location-specific packets of information (e.g. sale information for coat when I enter the department store); 3) This mobile Internet site provides me with optima information or service that is contextually relevant to me based upon where I am and what I am interested.

Authors (Year)	Research Field	Dimensions	Measurement
Chung and Figa (2005)	Library and Information Science (Virtual storytelling)	**Based on Liu (2003)'s three dimensions for measuring the interactivity of web sites: control, communication, and synchronicity.**	➢ Overall control was measured in terms of 'overall control feeling over a system', 'stop/resume control', 'moving the story lines back and forth', 'changing viewpoints', and 'following a specific virtual actor'. Narration style or Presentation control was measured in terms of 'changing a narration style' (gentle or scary). Plot control was measured by changing a plot at a certain point. ➢ Real-time responses was measured in terms of 'animating virtual actors in real-time', 'special effects in real-time', 'processing in users' actions in real-time'. ➢ Monologue was measured by obtaining information from a system ➢ Feedback was measured by inputting a user's feedback to a system ➢ Responsive dialogue was measured in terms of 'questioning and answering' ➢ Mutual discourse was measured in terms of 'questioning and answering during storytelling'
Johnson *et al*. (2006)	Advertising	1. Reciprocity 2. Responsiveness 3. Speed of response 4. Nonverbal information	✧ Reciprocity: 1) Low: participant clicks on any wine attribute listed on front page to find out more about it. Page opens up, revealing all wine information for the brand. Proceed button appears so that participant can proceed to next brand; 2) High: Participant has to click on eight different wine attributes. Each time, only a portion of the brand information is revealed. Proceed button appears only when all attributes have been viewed. ✧ Responsiveness: 1) Low: when a wine attribute such as "age of wine" is clicked, information not directly relevant to the selected attribute (but related to wines) is revealed, such as "light golden colored with citrus and spicy aromas"; 2) High: when a wine attribute such as "types of wine" is clicked, information that is appropriate and relevant is shown, such as "this is a White Zinfandel, a type of varietal wine" ✧ Speed of response: 1) Low: each time a wine attribute is clicked, page takes 60 seconds to appear, while message reading "please wait a moment' flashes. After 60 seconds, the wine information is revealed; 2) High: each time a wine attribute is clicked, page appears immediately, revealing wine information. ✧ Nonverbal information: 1) Low: wine descriptions are in plain text, such as "a perfect lunchtime wine to accompany cold meat and salad"; 2) High: wine descriptions are accompanied by simple graphics, animations, and sounds next to descriptive terms. Next to the words "cold meat", for example, there is a picture of a plate of meat, and next to the word "salad", there is a bowl of salad. Next to the word "fizzy" in a description, there is a small animation of a bubbling glass of wine.

2.3.7 Interactivity in Corporate Travel Weblogs

Anchored in the review of literature, the researcher realises that early studies diversely defined interactivity based on their view points and proposed different dimensions of interactivity. Nevertheless, based on previous research, the following three elements appear with a higher frequency in the literature study of interactivity and are central to the concept: active control, two-way communication, and real-time communication. These three dimensions encompass different definitions and dimensions of earlier studies of interactivity.

Consistent with previous studies, the researcher verified the above three dimensions of interactivity owing to its frequency of being studied and of applications. (See Table 2.3) The researcher designed a conceptual table, integrating the elements that are components of the interactivity concept drawn from earlier empirical findings.

Table 2.3 Interactivity Dimensions and Definitions and with in Media Context

Researchers	Dimensions of Interactivity	Key Dimensions of Interactivity			Definition (Key terms are highlighted in this column)
		Active Control	Two-way Communications	Real Time Communication	
Williams, Rice and Rogers (1988)	1. Control 2. Exchange of roles 3. Mutual discourse	☆	☆	☆	"Interactivity is the degree to which participants in a communication process have control over, and can exchange roles in, their mutual discourse."
Ha & James (1998)	1. Playfulness 2. Choice 3. Connectedness 4. Information collection 5. Reciprocal communication		☆		"Interactivity should be defined in terms of the extent to which the communicator and the audience respond to, or are willing to facilitate, each other's communication needs"
Rice (1984)	1. Exchange of roles 2. Real time 3. control	☆	☆	☆	"Interactivity is defined as "the capability of a computer-enabled communication system that allows exchange of roles between sender and receiver in real or delayed time so that communicators can have more control over the pace, structure and content of the communication."
Fortin (1997)	1. Active control 2. Two- communication 3. Real time	☆	☆	☆	"Interactivity is defined as "the degree to which a communication system can allow one or more end users to communicate alternatively as senders or receivers with one or many other users or communication devices, wither in real time (as in video teleconferencing) or on a store-and-forward basis (as with electronic mail), or to seek and gain access to information on an on-demand basis where the content, timing and sequence of the communication is under control of the end user, as opposed to a broadcast basis"
Jensen (1998)	1. Control	☆			"Interactivity may be defined as: a measure of a media's potential ability to let the user exert an influence on the content and/or form of the mediated communication."

Table 2.3 Interactivity Dimensions and Definitions and with in Communication Context

Researchers	Dimensions of Interactivity	Key Dimensions of Interactivity			Definition (Key terms are highlighted in this column)
		Active Control	Two-way Communications	Real Time	
Rogers (1986)	1. Feedback		☆		"The capability of new communication systems (usually containing a computer as one component) to 'talk back' to the user, almost like an individual participating in a conversation."
Rafaeli (1988)	1. Feedback 2. Responsiveness		☆		"It is an expression of the extent that in a given series of communication exchanges, any third (or later) transmission (or message) is related to the degree to which previous exchanges referred to even earlier transmissions
Heeter (1989)	1. Complexity of choice 2. Effort users must exert 3. Responsiveness to the user 4. Monitoring information 5. Ease of adding information 6. Facilitation of interpersonal communication	☆	☆		"Interactivity is a multi-dimensional concept that includes complexity of choice available, effect users must exert, responsiveness to the user, monitoring information use ease of adding information, and facilitation of interpersonal communication."
Burgoon *et al*. (2002)	1. Degree of involvement 2. Interaction ease 3. Mutuality	☆	☆		"By 'interactivity' is meant, in the media realm, some form of interdependent message exchange (based on Rafaeli, 1988). Structural properties of media that enable interdependent interaction examined in this work: mediation, proximity, modality, and context richness."
Heeter (2000)	1. Actions followed by reactions		☆		"Interactivity not defined. An interaction is an episode or series of episodes of physical actions and reactions of an embodied human with the world, including the environment and objects and beings in the world; conceptualisation of interactivity is based on this. Focus only on 'physical interactivity' (actions and reactions that can be observed), as opposed to perceived interactivity."
Neuman (1991)	Control over the communication process	☆	☆		"The quality of electronically mediated communication characterised by increased control over the communication process by both the sender and the receiver, either can be a microprocessor."
Steur (1992)	1. Speed of response 2. Range 3. Mapping	☆		☆	"Interactivity is the extent to which users can participate in modifying the form and content of a mediated environment in real time."
Newhagen and Rafaeli (1996)	Feedback		☆		"The extent to which communication reflects back on itself, needs on and responds to the past."

Table 2.3 Interactivity Dimensions and Definitions and with in Computing Context

Researchers	Dimensions of Interactivity	Key Dimensions of Interactivity			Definition (Key terms are highlighted in this column)
		Active Control	Two-way Communications	Real Time	
Hoffman and Novak (1996)	1. Feedback		☆		Use Rafaeli’s (1988) definition: “Interactivity is defined as “the capability of a computer-enabled communication system that allows exchange of roles between sender and receiver in real or delayed time so that communicators can have more control over the pace, structure and content of the communication.”

Table 2.3 Interactivity Dimensions and Definitions and with in Marketing Context

Researchers	Dimensions of Interactivity	Key Dimensions of Interactivity			Definition (Key terms are highlighted in this column)
		Active Control	Two-way Communications	Real Time	
Blattberg and Deighton (1999)	1. Direct communication		☆		“The facility for individuals and organisations to communicate directly with one another without regard to distance or time.”
Deighton (1996)	1. Communication 2. Responsiveness		☆		“The term ‘interactive’ points to two features of communication: the ability to address an individual, and the ability to gather and remember the response of that individual. Those two features make possible a third: the ability to address the individual once more in a way that takes into account his or her unique response.”
Deighton (1997)	1. Addressability 2. Responsiveness	☆			“Addressability and responsiveness make a medium interactive. ‘Addressable’ means the communication is directly addressable to individuals (not broadcast to all who can receive it); responsiveness means it is alert to the receiver’s response (it is no longer indifferent to its effect on the receiver).”
Deighton and Kornfeld (2009)	1. Thought tracing 2. Activity tracing 3. Property exchanges 4. Social exchanges 5. Cultural exchanges	☆	☆		None
Alb *et al.* (1997)	1. User-machine interaction 2. User-user interaction		☆		“Interactivity is conceptualised as a continuous construct capturing the quality of two-way communication between parties.”

Table 2.3 Interactivity Dimensions and Definitions and with in Information System Context

Researchers	Dimensions of Interactivity	Key Dimensions of Interactivity			Definition (Key terms are highlighted in this column)
		Active Control	Two-way Communications	Real Time	
Zack (1993)	1. Channel bandwidth 2. Degree of personalisation or social presence 3. Structural organisation of interaction (e.g., continuous feedback)	☆	☆		Use Rogers's (1986) definition: "The capability of new communication systems (usually containing a computer as one component) to 'talk back' to the user, almost like an individual participating in a conversation."
Bezjian-Avery et al. (1998)	1. User control 2. Dialogue	☆	☆		"In interactivity systems, a customer controls the content of the interaction requesting or giving information… The hallmark of these new media is their interactivity – the consumer and the manufacturer enter into dialogue in a way not previous possible."
Burgoon *et al*. (2000)	1. Interaction involvement 2. Mutuality 3. Individuation	☆	☆		None. Structural properties that can help distinguish FtF (face-to-face) from HCI (Human-computer interaction) and CMC (computer-mediated communication): participation, mediation, contingency, media and information richness, geographic propinquity, synchronicity, identification, parallelism, anthromorphism. Operationalised as "interaction involvement and mutuality."

Table 2.3 Interactivity Dimensions and Definitions and with in E-Commerce Context

Researchers	Dimensions of Interactivity	Key Dimensions of Interactivity			Definition (Key terms are highlighted in this column)
		Active Control	Two-way Communications	Real Time	
Dholakia *et al*. (2000)	1. User control 2. Responsiveness 3. Real time interactions 4. Connectedness 5. Personalisation/customisation 6. Playfulness	☆	☆	☆	None

Table 2.3 Interactivity Dimensions and Definitions and with in Advertising Context

Researchers	Dimensions of Interactivity	Key Dimensions of Interactivity			Definition (Key terms are highlighted in this column)
		Active Control	Two-way Communications	Real Time	
Coyle and Thorson (2001)	1. Range 2. Mapping 3. Speed	☆		☆	Use Steuer's (1992) definition: "the extent to which users can participate in modifying the form and content of a mediated environment in real time."
Lombard and Snyder-Dutch (2001)	1. User control	☆			"We define interactivity as a characteristic of a medium in which the user can influence the form and/or content of the mediated presentation or experience."
Cho and Leckenby (1997)	1. Interchange between individuals and advertiser		☆		"The degree to which a person actively engages in advertising processing by interacting with advertising messages and advertisers"
Liu and Shrum (2002)	1. Two-way communication 2. Active control 3. Synchronicity	☆	☆	☆	"The degree to which two or more communication parties can act on each other, on the communication medium, and on the messages and the degree to which such influences are synchronised."
McMillan (2002)	1. Monologue 2. Feedback 3. Responsive dialogue 4. Mutual discourse		☆		"Identifies four types of interactivity based on intersection of user control and direction of communication: monologue, feedback, responsive dialogue, and mutual discourse."
McMillan and Hwang (2002)	1. Direction of communication 2. User control 3. Time	☆	☆	☆	|Web-based interactivity involves communication among individuals, the ability those individuals have to control information and to participate in active communication, and time – time to load the message, time to find information, time to communicate with others, and the loss of time as one gets caught in the flow of computer-mediated communication."
Johnson, Bruner & Kumar (2006)	1. Reciprocity 2. Responsiveness 3. Speed of response 4. Nonverbal information		☆	☆	"Interactivity is the extent to which an actor involved in a communication episode perspectives the communication to be reciprocal, responsive, speedy, and characterised by the use of nonverbal information."
Liu (2003)	1. Active control 2. Two-way communication 3. Synchronicity	☆	☆	☆	"A communication that offers individuals active control and allows them to communicate both reciprocally and synchronicity."

2.3.7.1 Active Control

One aspect that is frequently mentioned with regard to interactivity is control (Ariely, 2000). The control concept refers to "the extent to which an individual can choose the time, content, and sequence of a communication" (Dholakia *et al*., 2000). Control as a "voluntary and instrumental action" directly influences the controllers' experience (Liu and Shrum, 2002).

Active control is defined as the degree to which active users can voluntarily choose, add, and modify content in a website (Liu, 2003). In a computer-mediated environment, users can search and select information, customises and personalises content, and modify a website's design elements, such as colours.

Similarly, according to Liu and Shrum (2002, p.54), active control is termed as "voluntary and instrumental action that directly influences the controllers' experience". It is clear that the definition by Liu and Shrum (2002) stressed the concept of "voluntary" in defining active control, since different definitions are attributed to the different research context, such as computer-mediated communication research and traditional mediated communication study. For an example of the latter, television users sometimes are presented with programmes that do not interest them. If they so choose, they may change the channel or even switch off their television set to avoid those programmes.

Although traditional media are capable to facilitate certain levels of controllability (e.g., switching channels), it is considerably restricted in comparison with the Internet. On the Internet platform, users can voluntarily select the content and information that they prefer. In this respect, they are involved or engaged into selecting from various levels of action, such as surfing or searching for information, typing content, clicking picture and video clips, and sharing information with others.

Since interest in and the study of control is gaining in popularity in communication and media studies (Ariely, 2000; Dholakia et al., 2000; Liu and Shrum, 2002; McMillan, 2000; Liu, 2003), the control concept should raise the possibility of switching from communicators (weblog owners) to audiences (active weblog visitors) during the interactive event. For instance, in the context of weblog, webloggers actively use weblogs to satisfy their communication needs. Importantly, they have full control over the content and form which are designed to facilitate interaction with other webloggers. Control over the communication through weblogs is entirely in the hands of the weblog users. Previous studies have found that higher level of a user's control might make consumers more engaged and involved, which would lead to a positive evaluation of the site (Fortin and Dholakia, 2005). In turn, the positive feeling may reinforce the user's perception of the company. McMillan (2000) also suggests, participants will view the communication as more interactive if they feel that they gain more control over the communication experience. Therefore, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H1a: Active control is positively associated with attitude toward corporate travel weblogs.

2.3.7.2 Two-Way Communication

The term reciprocity is widely encountered in studies of interactivity, although a variety of terms are introduced to refer to essentially the same concept: terms such as dialogue (Evans and Wurster, 1999), iterative (Bejian-Avery *et al*., 1998), talking back (Rogers, 1986), two-way communications (Liu and Shrum, 2002), actions and reactions (Heeter, 2000) are examples of this. The term itself refers to reciprocal communication between companies and users, users to users (Liu and Shrum, 2002).

Reciprocity criteria are important in the context of internet research as there is little to compare its effectiveness with that of traditional media. Referring to the traditional media, it is largely based on a one-way view of communication (Pavlou and Stewart, 2007). In this instance, messages are delivered through a medium which allows only a limited form of feedback from the target audiences. As a result, many forms of traditional media are being replaced by the use of the interactive internet media. In contrast with traditional media, digitalized media, such as weblogs, better enable interaction, offering potential for one-to-one or many-to-many communication (Chaffey *et al*., 2009). In brief, interactivity refers to sites of two-way communication.

Two-way communication is regarded as the most fundamental factor in the study of interactivity dimension (Ha and James, 1998; Heeter, 1988). For instance, Liu (2003) defined two-way communication as that “which captures the bi-directional flow of information” (p.208). On the basis of the former interactivity research, researchers examined two-way communication through the interpretation of other relevant concepts such as “responsiveness” and “feedback” (Ha and Jame, 1998; Morris and Ogan, 1996).

The trait of two-way communication is adequately reflected on the Internet. First, the Internet enables an occurrence of reciprocal (mutual) communication between the company and its users. For instance, companies can use two-way communication to monitor consumers’ feedback and take actions or make future strategies, in order to maximum benefit. Owing to the two-way communication function, the birth of the Internet has a tremendous impact on traditional marketing communication, as more immediate responses could be generated from online users. By using various media tools, users are given more opportunities to response to the companies.

The nature of the two-way communication is also demonstrated fully in online business. On the travel weblogs, users can conduct two-way communication transactions without using any other tools. Also, through the online transactions, two-way communication can be used to foster mutually beneficial relationships between companies and users.

It is worth noting that the term reciprocity is fully reflected in the context of weblogs. Reciprocity acts as a spatial dimension, since there has to be a connection between the interacting parties (weblog owners and active weblog visitors) that supports the actions and reactions between them. For instance, weblog owners create interactivity via text, audio, and conversations, which leaves a comment space for active weblog visitors to react. With the aid of the weblog platform, active weblog visitors are enabled to post their comments or hold a discussion with other webloggers related to the given topic. Under these circumstances, two-way communication is formed, as webloggers are able to react to the feedback in turn.

It is clear that the interactive feature offers potential for one-to-many (one weblog owner-to-many active weblog visitors), one-to-one communication (one weblog owner-to-one active weblog visitor) or many-to-many communications (many weblog owners-to-many active weblog visitors). Therefore, it facilitates two-way, conversational communication among interacting parties. Importantly, it may make consumers think of the sites as more accessible, which may be beneficial for companies to build and sustain their relationships with customers (Yoon *et al*., 2008). Given this, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H1b: Two-way communication is positively associated with attitude toward corporate travel weblogs.

2.3.7.3 Real-Time Communication

In the social and organizational science literature, the most useful basis for interactivity is grounded in responsiveness (Rafaeli and Sudweeks, 1997; Sohn and Lee, 2005; Ha and James, 1998). Real time information refers to "the degree to which users' contributions to a communication event and the responses they receive from the communication are simultaneous (Liu and Shrum, 2002)." The speed of message and response is called real time information.

Real-time communication is interchangeably replaced by different terms such as "synchronicity" (Liu and Shrum, 2002) and "time" (McMillan and Hwang, 2002). Liu and Shrum (2002), for example, identified two types of information processing, which pertain to time. They are synchronicity and asynchronicity. For instance, users can immediately access information or deliver information at the same time (synchronicity), they can also store and retrieve specific information whenever they want (asynchronicity).

Speed of information is important in travel weblogs. Weblogs provide a platform for making communications much more synchronized. For instance, webloggers can easily and quickly acquire the information needed and respond to it. During the interactive process, not only can weblog owners' actions appear to be instantaneous, but also responsive to the actions of active weblog visitors. For corporate weblogs, it is suggested that an improvement in their ability to respond to webloggers' actions and requests in a timely manner, would be beneficial. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1c: Real-time information (communication) is positively associated with attitude toward travel weblogs.

To sum up, the concept of interactivity has received considerable scholarly attention across different academic disciplines. Yet despite this level of attention, the concept remains relatively elusive. No consensus has been reached owing to its multifaceted nature. Besides, the emergence and growth of weblogs sends a new signal for scholars in the field. Consequently, more empirical research is called for to investigate the concept of interactivity from a weblogging perspective. This paper serves to indicate the multiple dimensions associated with interactivity and that these dimensions can be observed within weblogging activities. Each dimension has a set of distinctive characteristics and it is these that require further empirical investigation.

2.4 Uses and Gratifications Theory

2.4.1 Origin of the Uses and Gratification Theory

UGT theory has been developed and widely applied in the field of media and communication studies. In the late 1950s, this theory was published by Katz (1959). It is defined as a psychological communication perspective that focuses on individual use and choice by asserting that different people can use the same mass medium for very different purposes (Katz *et al*., 1974; Severin and Tankard, 1997). In brief, the main purpose of UGT theory is to illustrate why people use the media and that motivate them to engage in certain media-use behaviours for gratifications (Rubin, 1994).

In comparison with traditional media studies, UGT researches mainly focus on audiences rather than communicators (Windahl, 1981).Windahl’s (1981) study serves to link an earlier UGT approach to more recent research (Ruggiero, 2000, p.8). Interestingly, there is recognition that the user motivation remains stable even though within the new media context (Ko *et al*., 2005). For example, media researchers have verified the importance of some particular motivation factors, such as social interaction, information, and enjoyment (Lin, 1999; Ko *et al*., 2005).

Researchers of traditional media effects mainly focus on the direct effects of the message on the audience (Rubin, 1994). In this instance, audience is viewed as passive and their thoughts, attitudes, and behaviours are directly impacted by the media (Rubin, 2002). However, Klapper (1960) criticised and question the validity of effect that traditional media have. Klapper (1960) mentioned that other elements mediate the relationship between media messages and effects, as traditional mass communication research only focused on determining whether some particular media effect occurs. In other words, Klapper's (1960) work emphasise the significance of analysing usage consequence rather than simply labelling the usage.

In view of traditional media effects, the criticisms were called forth by uses and gratifications theorists. In that case, media audiences are considered as active communicators, rather than passive recipients of messages (Rubin, 2002). In comparison with traditional media studies, UGT researches mainly focus on audiences rather than communicators (Windahl, 1981). In other words, this theory is more focused on how people use the media (Rubin, 2002).That is, the basic principle of UGT approach and previous media theories are quite distinct from each other.

According to Katz *et al*. (1974), the UGT theory is predicted on three assumptions. First, this theory assumes that media users are purposive and goal-directed in their communication behaviours. Secondly, the theory assumes that all media users are active communicators. Inside the communication process, they can actively select particular media or media content in terms of their preference. Furthermore, those media users are aware of their needs and select appropriate media to satisfy their needs.

2.4.2 New Media and Uses and Gratifications Research

Since the early 1990s, uses and gratification studies start to look beyond traditional media to the Internet. New media technologies have seen a rebirth of interest in the uses and gratification theory (Ruggiero, 2000). Nowadays, most media users are interested not only in using and making media but in how and why it works for them. In this instance, the UGT theory is being adopted to explain new media phenomenon. Regarding the weblog phenomenon, the UGT approach has been widely studied to analyse the user motivation. However, some media theorists and practitioners questioned whether UGT of new media has equal weight as traditional media on fulfilling user needs (Williams *et al.*, 1985). The study by Ruggiero (2000) indicates that capabilities of new media technologies enable more specialisation of content. In terms of the applicability of established communication theories to the new media, the UGT approach wins more prestige and is capable of including both mass and interpersonal communication (Newhagen and Rafaeli, 1996; Morris and Ogan, 1996; December, 1996).

2.4.3 Internet and Uses and Gratifications Research

UGT developed as the prevalent theoretical approach during the incipient stage of new media (Ruggiero, 2000). Interestingly, the traditional model of UGT is still applicable and feasible even though within an online context, e.g., Internet research (Kuehn, 1994; Morris and Ogan, 1996; December, 1996).

Newhagen and Rafaeli (1996), assert that the application by researchers of UGT as an effective framework, enabling an understanding of Internet user behaviour, is reasonable in view of the high level of activity of users on the Internet. This view is reinforced by Ruggiero (2000) who agreed with the belief of researchers that the Internet has increased the validity of UGT. The same source, Ruggiero (2000), states that, compared to other traditional media users, Internet users should be more active in ways such as the selection of and searching for information.

Uses and gratifications research offers two different aspects: First, there is finding motivational factors (December, 1999; Ebersonle, 2000; Eighmey, 1997; Kuehn, 1994; Rafaeli, 1986). Secondly, is the establishing of the relationship between user motivation and other psychological characteristics, social context, and attitude (Chen and Wells, 1999; Ko, Cho, and Roberts, 2005; Korgaonkar and Wolin, 1999; Luo, 2002; Papacharissi and Rubin, 2000). Early UGT studies saw researchers attempting to suggest user motivations for different types of websites.

Rafaeli (1986), in his research into university computer bulletin boards, studied what motivated users to use the bulletin boards and revealed three needs: recreation, entertainment, and diversion. Garramone, Harris, and Anderson (1986) in the course of political research offered five types of gratifications in the political electronic bulletin board system. These they identified as, surveillance, personal, identity, diversion, and technological access to legislators.

Eighmey (1997) researching commercial websites, identified entertainment value, personal relevance, and information involvement as significant factors that encourage the surfing of commercial websites.

More recent researchers, unlike their predecessors who focused on motivational factors and dimensions, broadened their examination to investigate the relationship between motivational factors and other variables including attitude toward the website, social context, and marketing concepts, - purchasing intention, productivity, and revisit rate.

In his business website study, Lin (1999), made a comparison between information and shopping websites. His research indicates that with regard to information websites, surveillance motivation provided the strongest reason for visiting them, whereas entertainment and surveillance motivations are stronger predictors for visiting shopping websites. This indicates that, for information websites, greater effort needs to be invested in, for example, developing more content-oriented design. However, shopping websites need to address not only surveillance motivation but also entertainment functions in the pursuit of the customer satisfaction.

The seven specific motivational factors for using general Internet websites that are suggested by Korgaonkar and Wolin (1999) are social escapism motivation, transaction-based security, information motivation, interactive control motivation, socialisation motivation, privacy concerns, and economic motivation. They further investigated the relationships between the seven with three usage contexts: (1) time spent on the web, (2) time spent on the web for business and personal purposes, and (3) purchase from a web business.

2.4.4 Motives in Travel Weblogs

The uses and gratifications approach has been employed to investigate Internet usages. However, few studies specifically examine motivations for using weblogs on the basis of extant studies. Kaye (2005), for example, suggests 28 reasons for accessing weblogs. Specifically Kaye (2005) categories 28 reasons into six factors: information seeking, media check, convenience, personal fulfilment, political surveillance, social surveillance, and expression affiliation. Nevertheless, the motivational items derived from previous researches still can be applied into weblog research context and provide a clear explanation of why users access weblogs.

On the basis of previous literature on uses and gratifications, the following three motivations were selected as major motivations in travel weblogs: information, social interaction, and enjoyment. These three were frequently measured as key motivations in website research, marketing, communications, as well as advertising and travel motivation studies.

With regard to the concept of motivation, researchers presented different names. Surveillance was provided by Parker and Plank (2000), interpersonal utility (Ferguson and Perse, 2000), companionship (Greenberg, 1974; Papacharissi and Rubin, 2000; Rubin and Rubin, 1992), diversion (Blumler, 1979), and friends (Perse and Dunn, 1998). However, notwithstanding their different names, these motivations closely resemble one another and can share the same concepts with the three motives selected in this study. For instance, there is little distinction between surveillance motivation and information motivation; the same can be said of diversion and entertainment (enjoyment) motivations; interpersonal utility motivation, companionship and friends are related to the social interaction motivation. On this basis, the researcher presents the following three as the major motivations for using general corporate travel weblogs.

As referred in the preceding section, previous studies have found that there is a significantly positive relationship between motivation and attitude with the help of UGT. Therefore, the researcher attempts to examine whether it is also applicable to corporate weblog. Given this, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: corporate weblog user motives are positively associated with attitude toward travel weblogs.

2.4.4.1 Social Interaction

Social interaction on the websites can be defined as the extent to which audiences can feel companionship, social identity, and interpersonal communication with other audience members while they access a website (Papacharissi and Rubin, 2000; Stafford, 2005; Stafford and Stafford, 2004). This motivational factor has been measured by using several of the following different terms: “Companionship” (Lin, 2001), “Social factor” (Stafford and Stafford, 2001), “Social companionship” (Farfaglia *et al*., 2006) “Interpersonal utility” (Muhtaseb and Frey, 2008), and “Socialising” (Ishii, 2008).

To emphasise the importance of social interaction, Korgaonkar and Wolini (1999) propose, “a similar sharing of experience and knowledge with friends about different websites provides a strong reason for using the Web” (p.57). To this end, it is recommended that Web developers create social communication tools that will facilitate online information sharing among users and increase the potential possibility of purchasing.

The significance of socialisation was realised and advocated by Stafford and his colleagues (Stafford and Stafford, 2001; Stafford *et al*., 2004; Stafford, 2005). It is viewed as “a new Internet-specific, media gratification” (Stafford and Stafford, 2001, p.28). Employing the Internet gratification model, the research finding indicated three factors (Internet process gratification model, Internet content gratification model, and Internet social gratification model) that have good model fit indices (e.g., GFI = .97, RMSR = .11, AGFI = .95, NFI = .96, CFI = .97). And the internal consistency as measured by Cronbach’s coefficient alpha was excellent: process dimensions (.82), content dimensions (.85), and social dimensions (.80).

The recent arrival and development of more socially formulated websites, such as Virtual communities (Farfaglia *et al*., 2006; Ishii, 2008; Pentina, Prybutok, and Zhang, 2008), personal homepage (Papacharissi, 2002), and weblogs, have produced a broader and more general motive for using websites, that of social interaction (Chung and Kim, 2008; Huang, Shen, Lin, and Chang, 2007; Johnson, Kaye, Bichard, and Wong, 2007; Nardischiano, Gumbrecht, and Swartz, 2004).

These types of Internet community are acquiring steadily increasing numbers of users. For example, Chung and Kim (2008) reported that more than eight million people, which amount to almost seven percent of Web users, have created weblogs. Pentina *et al*. (2008) also mentioned that "they expand the power of technology to connect individuals by providing unprecedented opportunities of social interaction and relationships development among people with shared interests irrespective of geography and time" (p.114). Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2a: Social interaction is positively associated with attitude toward corporate travel weblogs.

2.4.4.2 Information of Corporate Travel Weblogs

In the use of travel weblogs an important element of the enjoyment is derived from accessing the large amount of information that they make available. Chen and Wells (1999) assert that, on websites, the information factor can be defined as the extent to which a website offers knowledgeable and helpful information (Chen and Wells, 1999). Both entertainment and information have emerged, in the majority of Web motivation studies, as being the most widely studied dimensions (Chen and Wells, 1999; Ducoffe, 1996; Farquhar and Meeds, 2007; Ko *et al*., 2005; Korgaonkar and Wolini, 1999; Lin, 2001; Luo, 2002; Muhtaseb and Frey, 2008; Stafford and Stafford, 2001). In Papacharissi and Rubin's (2000) Internet Motivation study, the results indicated that information seeking (M = 3.52, SD = .83) and entertainment (M = 3.50, SD = .095) had the highest mean scores compared to other motives (Convenience, pastime, and Interpersonal utility). As mentioned previously, two studies by Chen and Wells (1999) found that informativeness is one of the useful predictors of attitude toward the website. Given this, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2b: Information of corporate travel weblogs is positively associated with attitude toward corporate travel weblogs.

2.4.4.3 Enjoyment

From a motivation perspective, people make an effort to use information technology owing to their intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Davis *et al*., 1992). The enjoyment motivation can be defined as the extent to which the websites provide the user with fun, exciting, and enjoyable content (Eighmey, 1997; Eighmey and McCord, 1998; Luo, 2002).

It has been shown in previous Web studies that entertainment is a common motive for visiting Internet websites (Chen and Wells, 1999; Ducoffe, 1995; Farquhar and Meeds, 2007; Ko *et al*., 2005; Lin, 2001; Luo, 2002; Muhtaseb and Frey, 2008; Raney *et al*., 2003).Turning to automotive websites, Raney *et al*. (2003) considered the four levels of entertainment content on such websites. Their findings suggested that the highly entertaining website, which included a suspense movie, engendered a positive attitude when compared with websites having lower levels of entertainment content (p.50).

Similarly, Luo (2002) examined how informativeness, entertainment, and irritation influenced attitudes toward websites, web usage, and satisfaction with websites. The three factors explained 68.45 percent of the total variance of attitude toward websites (Luo, 2002). Construct validity, convergent validity, and discriminant validity were verified through Confirmatory Factor Analysis, (CFA), with good indications of several indices (GFI = .916; AGFI = .903; RMSEA = .069, and CFI = .949). Cronbach's Alpha scores were .91 (entertainment), .89 (informativeness), and .88 (irritation), all three above the recommended cut-off point (.70) for internal consistency (Nunnally, 1978). It was shown by the results that entertainment motivation was positively associated with attitude toward websites (path loading = .68, $p<.01$). Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2c: Enjoyment is positively associated with attitude toward corporate travel weblogs.

2.5 Attitude toward the Website

2.5.1 Origin of Attitude toward the Website

According to Petty and Wegener (1998), the term "attitude" is defined as "a person's overall evaluation of persons, objects, and issues" (p.223). It is an individual views (positive or negative; favourable or unfavourable) toward an object, idea, or other entity (Ajzen, 2001). The majority of 'attitude' studies reside in the field of consumer behaviour (Ajzen, 2008). Foxall *et al*. (1998) stress, it is vital for marketers to understand and measure consumer attitude to develop appropriate marketing strategies.

Attitude has long been identified as a cause of intention. For instance, there is a crucial link between how consumers feel about a website (i.e., attitude) and how they act in relation to the website through behaviour such as buying products and talking about the website (Chang *et al*., 2008). In other words, a user's overall attitude toward using the website can be regarded as an antecedent to the intention to adopt it (Hsu and Lu, 2004; Wu and Chen, 2005; Yu *et al*., 2005). The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) developed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975, 1980) has been widely accepted as a tool to help describe the linkage between attitude and behaviour.

TRA is a widely studied model in social psychology to explain an individual's behaviour (Hsu and Lu, 2007). Hsu and Lu (2007, p.1644) explain, "a person's behaviour is predicted by intentions, and intentions are jointly determined by the person's attitude and subjective norm concerning the behaviour". According to Ajzen (2008), the TRA describes attitude as a sequence of linked cognitive constructs: belief, attitude, behaviour intentions, and actual behaviour (Ajzen, 2008). As one type of the social psychological model, TRA indicates an attitude-behaviour consistency. According to Foxall, Goldsmith and Brown (2002), the relationship between behaviour intention and actual behaviour is explained as follows:

"It is assumed that under the right conditions then intentions will approximate behaviour itself. Behavioural intentions are portrayed as a function of two other factors: (1) the respondent's attitude toward behaving in a prescribed manner (2) his or her subjective norm, i.e., the respondent's beliefs about other people's evaluations of his or her acting in this way, weighted by his or her motivation to comply with what they think (p.104)."

Some researchers have provided evidence of positive correlations between (1) attitude and behaviour intention and (2) behaviour intention and actual behaviour (Armitage and Conner, 2001; Randall and Wolff, 1994; Sheeran and Orbell, 1998). Inside the TRA theory regarding attitude, behaviour intention, and behaviour, it is assumed that understanding attitude toward the website is a critical factor for predicting a user's potential behaviour.

In recent years, TRA has been used to explain individuals' use of Information System (IT). Some website researchers attempted to develop an attitude toward the website scale to predict actual behaviour or as a tool to evaluate a website (Chen and Wells, 1999; Chen, Clifford and Wells, 2002). Trace its origin, attitude toward a website is derived from attitude toward advertising. According to Lutz (1985), Attitude toward Advertising (A_{AD}) is defined as "a predisposition to respond in a favourable or unfavourable manner to a particular advertising stimulus during a particular exposure occasion" (p.46). Previous studies of advertising have also indicated that attitude toward advertising (A_{AD}) at its best to predict the advertising effectiveness, such as brand attitude and purchasing intentions (Haley and Baldinger, 1991; Shimp, 1981).

In an early Web advertising study, Ducoffe (1996) applies the concept of attitude toward advertising, and measured attitudes toward Web advertising by the following single item: "How would you describe your overall attitude toward advertising on the World Wide Web?"

In a similar study by Cho and Leckenby (1999), attitude toward advertising was named "attitude toward the target ad," which was measured by the following items: "I like this ad, this ad is unpleasant, this ad is annoying, this ad is informative, this ad is boring, this ad is good, this ad is entertaining, and I would enjoy seeing this banner ad again" (p.12). The results indicated the positive relationships between 'levels of involvement', 'degrees of interactivity' and attitude toward the advertisement. That is, the higher levels of user involvement and extent of interactivity, more favourable attitudes on advertising are generated. In sum, extant studies on 'attitude toward advertising (A_{AD})' have been fruitful for its remarkable contribution to developing a scale to measure attitude toward the website.

2.5.2 Scale Development of Attitude toward the Website

Research into the measurement scale on 'attitude toward the website' is scant. Of this, Chen and Wells (1999) developed a new scale that measured attitude toward the website. According to Chen and Wells (1999, p.46), attitude toward the Site (A_{ST}) is defined as "web surfers' predisposition to respond favourably or unfavourably to web content in natural exposure situation". Founded on the previous Attitude toward Advertising (A_{AD}) research, Chen and Wells (1999, p.28) reported a new scale (6 items) to measure consumers' attitudes towards a website (general favourability toward the website). In the first study, Chen and Wells (1999) presented the scale development for Attitude toward the Site (A_{ST}). In their follow-up study, Chen *et al.* (2002) applied the scale to different websites and populations (e.g., student population) in order to test the validity and reliability of the scale. The Chen and Wells scale was developed primarily from the input of experienced web users.

Apart from this, other researchers also apply A_{ST} scale to measure web effectiveness within the Internet, advertising and branding filed (Burn, 2000; McMillan and Hwang, 2002; Bruner and Kumar, 2000; Luo, 2002; Stevenson *et al*., 2000; McMillan, Hwang, and Lee, 2003). Burn (2000), for example, re-applies items of scales that are associated with the measurement of other popular constructs. This study is commonly employed to measure such constructs as 'attitude-toward-the-brand' as well as 'attitude-toward-the-ad'. The scale by Bruner and Kumar (2000) is also similar to Chen and Wells scale in that is framed through Likert-type statements. Also, another study by Stevenson *et al.* (2000) suggests that A_{ST} can be used to along with the advertising hierarchy of effects model to appraise online advertisement effectiveness. The research finding indicates that A_{ST} may influence the effects of advertising hierarchy and attitude toward the ad from individual websites (Stevenson *et al*., 2000).

Based on the previous research on the development of A_{ST} scale, Chen and Wells' (1999) work is deemed as a pioneer for understanding the effectiveness of websites and is therefore central to the current study. Therefore, it is important to understand the two studies by Chen and Wells at length.

In order to develop a reliable and valid measurement of scales on Attitude toward the Site (A_{ST}), Chen and Wells (1999) presented a six-item scale with the following questions:

1. This website makes it easy for me to build a relationship with this company.
2. I would like to visit this website again in the future.
3. I’m satisfied with the service provided by this website.
4. I feel comfortable in surfing this website.
5. I feel surfing this website is a good way for me to spend my time.
6. Compared with other websites, I would rate this one as one of my best.

Inside the questionnaire, Questions 1-5 were measured by 5-point Likert scales anchored with 1 (Definitely disagree) and 5 (Definitely agree). Question 6 was also measured by a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (one of the Worst) to 5 (One of the Best, Definitely agree). The result indicates that the six items represent a single latent dimension. For example, Bivariate correlations among the six items were strong and positive, ranging from .55 to .73. Factor Analysis also showed that all six items load as one factor and explained 73 percent of the matrix variance in the data. The Cronbach’s Alpha score was .92, which is above a recommended cut-off point (.70) for internal consistency (Nunnally, 1978).

In their study, Chen and Wells (1999) computed an A_{ST} Score (averaged scores on the six items and then multiplied by 20 to convert the average to scores, ranging from 20 to 100) among 120 websites chosen to represent the corporate and institutional website population. Chen and Wells (1999) suggested three primary perceptual dimensions (entertainment, informativeness, and organisation) that certify A_{ST}. Through a principal component analysis with Varimax rotation, the three perceptual factors explained 54 percent of the matrix variance: entertainment (α = .92), informativeness (α = .94), and organisation (α = .84). Also, a regression analysis was conducted to investigate the relationship among those three factors’ A_{ST} Score. The results indicated that informativeness (β = .68) was the highest predictor of A_{ST} Score, Entertainment (β = .23) was next, and Organisation (β = .23) was lower (R^2 = 63).

2.5.3 Application of Attitude toward the Website

Based on the preceding discussion, attitude toward the website has been regarded as a useful indicator to predict the effectiveness of websites. Given this, several studies have adopted it as the measurement of website effectiveness (McMillan and Hwang, 2002; McMillan, Hwang, and Lee, 2003; Ko *et al*., 2005; Luo, 2002; Goldsmith and Lafferty, 2002). Through uses and gratification approach, Luo (2002) examined the effects of information, entertainment, and irritation on various online consumer behaviours. Luo (2002) employed the A_{ST} scale by Chen and Wells (1999) to measure attitude toward the website. The study indicated three influential factors (information, entertainment, and irritation) on consumers' attitude toward the website, and intended website usage and website satisfaction. These 3 dimensions explained 91.53 percent of the variance in the data.

An online advertising study by Ko *et al.* (2005) also applied the A_{ST} scale. The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship among interactivity constructs, namely human-message interaction and human-human interaction, online user motives, and Web effective indicators. Their study indicated that high levels of interactivity functions and user motives are positively associated with attitudes toward the websites, which consequently lead to positive attitudes toward the brand and to purchase intentions.

Similarly, a study by McMillan and Hwang (2002) used the A_{ST} scale to investigate the relationship of the influence between interactivity, involvement of the website topic, and attitude toward the website. For instance, the study aims to identify specific predictors, interactivity and involvement, of A_{ST}. According to McMillan and Hwang (2002, p.3), "While other factors may also predict A_{ST}, these two factors (interactivity and involvement) offer an ideal starting point for understanding consumer attitude toward Websites".

In addition to the A_{ST} scale, other researchers have suggested different measures of attitude toward websites (Wu, 1999; Bruner and Kumar, 2000; McMillan, 2000; Farfaglia *et al*., 2006). Wu (1999), for example, suggested a different approach to measure attitude toward the website. According to Wu (1999, p.7-15), attitude toward the website was defined as "the categorisation of a Web site along an evaluative dimension based on, or generated from three classes of information: cognitive information, affective information, and / or behavioural information". While cognitive information was measured by three items, such as “I think the site is trustworthy” (p.15); affective information was measured by seven items, such as “I think the site is interesting” (p.15); and behavioural information was measured by five items, such as “I would intend to purchase it from the site” and “I would revisit it when I want to find an appropriate greeting card next time” (p.15).

The research contexts are two American Greetings Card Websites wherein Wu (1999) measured both interactivity and attitude toward the website. The study indicated a positive relationship between attitude toward the website and interactivity, statistics showed that the Pearson correlation coefficients were .64 and .73 respectively. Importantly, the two constructs contributed to the development of websites adverting and marketing strategies.

Other researchers employed different methods to measure attitude toward the website. McMillan (2000), for example measured attitude toward the website with five semantic differential items (measured on a seven-point scale): bad/good, unpleasant/ pleasant, irritating/ not irritating, boring/interesting, and dislike/like. The study showed that the overall reliability score for the five items was .92. The results indicated a positive and strong correlation between involvement and attitude toward the website ($r = .49$, $p < .01$).

Bruner and Kumar (2000) measured attitude toward the website using the following three items with seven-point scales, ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”, “I like the Web site, I think it is a good Web site, and I think it is a nice Web site”. The results showed that there was a positive and significant relationship between a consumer‘s Web experience ($B = .23$, $p<.01$), interestingness of the website ($B = .34$, $p<.01$) and attitude toward the Web site (A_{WS}).

By means of the TRA, attitude toward the website can be a useful indicator to measure the online especially the potential online behaviours. To this end, it is vital for today’s travel marketers and researchers to fully understand users’ attitude toward the travel weblogs. With regard to the development of conceptual and theoretical frameworks for describing and predicting attitude toward the website, little effort or progress has been made. Through the proposed study, the researcher is seeking to develop a conceptual model of attitude toward the travel weblogs. Li and Zhang (2000) mentioned that there are several potential factors that may affect attitude toward the website, such as external environments (e.g., online transactions, trustworthiness of online, and competitors), demographics (e.g., age, gender, level of education, income, occupation, and time online), personal characteristics (e.g., knowledge, skill, and experience on the Internet), motivations, and website quality (e.g., interactivity, design). Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H3: Attitude toward corporate travel weblogs is positively associated with intention to revisit.

H4: Attitude toward corporate travel weblogs fully mediated the relationship between antecedents (user motives and interactivity) and intention to revisit.

From among several possible antecedents, this study focuses on users' motivations (based on uses and gratification approach) and interactivity as the most significant predictors of attitude toward the travel weblogs, which has been recently focused on website research in different field of study (Bruner and Kumar, 2006; Johnson, Bruner, and Kumar, 2006; Ko et al., 2005; Schlosser, 2006).

2.6 Word-of-Mouth (WOM) Communication

2.6.1 Conceptual Foundations of WOM

WOM Communication has received scholarly attention in the research area of interpersonal influence, consumer behaviour, diffusion of innovation and opinion leadership (Rogers, 1995; Godin, 2001; Sun *et al.*, 2006; Whitman, 2006; Trusov *et al.*, 2009). To trace the origin of WOM, this term was simply described as an interpersonal influence. And the power of interpersonal influence through WOM platform has been well documented in the consumer literature (Arndt, 1967; King and Summers, 1970; Herr *et al.*, 1991; Barbara and Stephen, 1998; Rice, 2001; Litvin *et al.*, 2008). One of the most widely accepted notions in consumer behaviour studies is that WOM can be used to shape consumers' attitudes and behaviours (Brown and Reingen, 1987; Trusov *et al.*, 2009).

Marketing researchers have found that personal sources play an influential role in affecting selection of product and services. For example, in the early 1990s, Barbara and Stephen (1998, p.43) indicates the importance of interpersonal influence. They said, "*Today, 80 percent of all buying decisions are influenced by someone's direct recommendation.*" Similarly, Rice (2001, p.65) signifies the significance of WOM. He claims that "*80 percent of brand decisions are influenced by someone other than the marketer of the brand*" and "*65 percent of people seek advice from friends or family*." In recent times, interpersonal influence is ranked as the most information source during the process of consumers' purchase decision- making (Litvin *et al*., 2008).

Previous studies on defining WOM dates to the 1960s (Dichter, 1966; Arndt, 1967; Richins, 1983; Bones, 1995), and over time WOM definitions have evolved (Carl, 2006). Traditional WOM was originally defined as "*an oral, person-to-person communication between a perceived non-commercial communicator and a receiver concerning a brand, a product or a service offered for sale*." (Arndt, 1967, p.188). As one of the first attempts to formally define WOM, traditional WOM is presented as an oral form of interpersonal non-commercial communication among acquaintances.

In 1990s, Helm and Schlei (1998, p.42) define WOM as "*verbal communications (either positive or negative) between groups such as the product provider, independent experts, family and friends, and the actual or personal consumer.*" It is a kind of interpersonal communications in which none of the participants are marketing sources (Bones, 1995). In their service marketing research, Mangold *et al*. (1999) summarise the reasons behind the WOM communications: 1) consumers require more detailed information about products and services; 2) comments about products and services arise during casual conversations.

By 2000s, more scientific definitions were put forward to account for the term of WOM. It is simply defined as "*product talk between people*." (Marsden, 2007). According to Helm (2000, p.158), WOM is defined as "*informal communication, both positive and negative, between individuals about characteristics of a supplier and/ or his products, and services*." Rosen *et al*. (2002, p.266), for example, define WOM as "*any oral communication about products with friends, family, and colleagues in the context of consumer behaviour*."

To sum up, during the 1990s and 2000s, most of the definitions and concepts in WOM theory consist with Arndt's definition from 1969. In this instance, WOM is termed as "*oral, person-to-person communication between a receiver and a communicator whom the receiver perceives as non-commercial, concerning a brand, a product or a service*" (Nyilasy, 2006, p.164).

2.6.2 Characteristics of WOM

In recent years, the term WOM has been increasing in popularity within academic fields (Ozcan, 2004, p.23). Since the 1970s, many scholars have found that WOM has an impact on "consumer attitudes" (Bickart and Schindler, 2001, p.31; Trusov *et al.*, 2009), "consumer risk taking" (Woodside and Delozier, 1976, p.12; Hogan *et al.*, 2004; Cheung *et al.*, 2009), "short-term and long-term product judgements" (Bones, 1995, p.214), "purchase decisions and choice behaviour" (Lau and Ng, 2001, p.163; Litvin *et al.*, 2008) and "consumer complaining behaviour" (Blodgett et al., 1995, p.32; Blodgett and Anderson, 2000; Bloemer *et al.*, 2008).

Importantly, the term WOM has been regarded as "a dominant and an important force in the marketplace" and "ultimate test of the customer relationship" (Wangenheim, 2005; Brown et al., 2005). It is clear that today's marketers have to commit to active, proven practices for getting a word-of-mouth marketing plan to work in terms of its significant impact.

2.6.2.1 Positive Aspects of WOM

In the early 1950s, Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) found that WOM had considerably greater impact than advertising and personal selling. In their study, WOM was found as the most important source of influence in the purchase of household goods and food products. By 1980s, Haywood (1989) claims that WOM has more power in generating consumers' awareness toward tangible products or intangible services in the purchasing process. An early study by Reichheld and Sasser (1990) also found that recommendations from friends and acquaintances have twice the impact than paid advertising in the consumers' purchasing decisions process.

The issue of measurement of WOM effects has received considerable attention. And measurement of WOM influence has to date relied on attitudinal measures from

WOM receivers (Wangenheim and Bayon, 2004). In other words, the practice of WOM measurement depends on the assumption that the receiver of WOM will perceive and evaluate the message in the same manner as the provider (Christiansen and Tax, 2000, p.188). According to Anderson (1998, p.6; 2010), the term WOM is measured as "relating pleasant, vivid, or novel experiences; recommendations to others; and even conspicuous display". Consumers often rely on WOM to reduce the levels of perceived risk and uncertainty which are associated with service purchase decisions (Mangold et al., 1999). Bansal and Voyer (2000) support the assertion that the WOM process offers a solution to the problem of intangibility, as some services may not be readily understandable to the potential consumer.

As Litvin *et al*. (2008) explain, because personal communication source generally is seen as being more reliable than non-personal information, WOM can be perceived as a powerful force in influencing purchasing decisions. In particular, this occurs when customers perceive high risk (Litvin *et al*., 2008). Consumers will be more likely to disseminate information to their friends and acquaintances if they find a better deal with new providers, as they believe this information is valuable to improve service experience (Wangenheim, 2005).

Positive WOM communication helps companies to attract more potential customers, which has been perceived as part of the relationship-marketing concept. (Berry 1983; Glynn and Lehtinen 1995; Gronroos 1990; Smith *et al*., 2005; Brown *et al*., 2005; Macintosh, 2007; Casalo *et al*., 2008). For example, Smith *et al*. (2005) and Casalo *et al*. (2008) all indicate that customers who make positive recommendations to other customers are more likely to become loyal customers themselves; this suggests the benefits that may be derived from WOM with regard to customer retention and customer acquisition.

Customer loyalty plays an important role as a measurement in WOM, as Lymperopoulos (2008) point out, loyal customers are a prerequisite for positive WOM. In addition, positive WOM communication can help companies to attract more potential customers, and this has been perceived as part of the relationship marketing concept (Berry, 1983; Gronroos, 1990; Glynn and Lehtinen, 1995; Litvin *et al*., 2008). Therefore, building long-term relationships with customers is an important strategy for improving the profitability of service firms (Kim et al., 2001, p.273).

There is widespread evidence of the relationship between satisfaction and the desire to recommend (Yi, 1990; Cram, 1994; Palmer, 1998; Ennew *et al*., 2000; Hosany and Witham, 2010). It is proposed that when consumers are satisfied, they tend to generate more positive comments and they are more likely to make a purchase recommendation. Similarly, Wirtz and Chew (2002) claimed that positive comments from satisfied customers can often increase purchases whereas negative comments from unsatisfied customers can decrease purchases. Furthermore, those customers who provide other consumers with positive WOM, about a service or service provider, are more likely to become loyal customers themselves, thus implying that WOM may have benefits in terms of retention as well as acquisition (Ennew *et al*., 2000).

Cram (1994) and Palmer (1998) found similar results, emphasising the force of positive word of mouth communication. Cram (1994) states that business can be controlled indirectly by using positive word of mouth promotions, in order to get customers involved in it emotively. "For purchases, which are perceived as being highly risky, customers are likely to use more credible sources of information (E.g. Word of mouth recommendation) and engage in a prolonged search through information sources." (Palmer, 1998, p318)

WOM is viewed as being more credible than marketer-driven communications (Mangold et al., 1999, p73-89) and has a potentially strong influence on consumer decision making (Buda and Zhang, 2000, p 229-242; Godes and Mayzlin, 2009; Cheung *et al*., 2009).

Banerjee and Fudenbery (2004) introduced a simple model of relational word-of-mouth learning. Their results revealed that agents often use information about the experiences of other agents to guide their own decisions. They often choose not to perform studies, but instead rely on whatever information they have obtained via causal WOM (Ellison and Fudenbery, 1995). Similarly, a study by Hong et al. (2005) illustrates that a mutual fund manager is more likely to buy or sell a particular stock in any quarter if other managers in the same city are buying or selling that same stock.

Positive WOM is believed to have educational influence facilitating the “movement” process into the moderate range (Bansal and Voyer, 2000, p.176). Also, WOM is identified by diffusion researchers as the primary driver in the diffusion of innovations (Brown et al., 2005, p.125). Another study of 27 luxury hotels in Seoul, South Korea indicates that greater guest confidence and communication in higher relationship quality results in greater guest commitment as well as more repeat purchase and positive word of mouth (Kim et al., 2001). The degree of customer satisfaction is thought to have great impact on consumer retentions through positive or negative word of mouth.

2.6.2.2 Negative Aspects of WOM

The preceding section examined the effects of WOM communication from positive perspectives. Equally, however, when consumers are highly dissatisfied, they tend to spread negative word of mouth comments about the products or services (Anderson, 1998, p.5-17; Mahajan, Muller, and Kerin, 1984, p.1389-1404; East *et al.*, 2007), which will influence potential customers’ decisions to purchase.

In early 1980s, Richins (1983, p.68) has emphasised the effects of unfavourable WOM as a response to dissatisfaction, measuring WOM communication as “the act of telling at least one friend or acquaintance about the dissatisfaction.” “Dissatisfaction has been widely identified as an antecedent to complaining behaviour but in instances where consumers feel unwilling or unable to complain, perhaps because of reluctance to challenge professional judgement” (Singh, 1990, P.57). Another early study conducted by the White House Office of Consumer Affairs (Walker, 1995) found that at least 90 per cent of unsatisfied customers do not intend to re-visit an unsatisfactory company. “Each of these unsatisfied customers is expected to express their disappointment to a minimum of nine other individuals, and around 13 per cent will communicate their dissatisfaction with a company to more than 20 individuals.” (Walker, 1995, p.5)

One of the significant findings is that negative WOM is more influential than positive WOM (Wangenheim, 2005, p.68) as Richins (1983, p.4) measures the effects of unfavourable WOM as “the act of telling at least one friend, acquaintance or family member about the dissatisfaction”.

It is stated that WOM communication is a powerful tool for and against marketing a brand (Lam and Mizeski, 2005). In early times, Katz and Lazersfeld (1995) and Day (1971) emphasise the effectiveness of WOM communication on the success of the brands and it is suggested that firms' managers should study the relationship between theories and practices. It has been recognised recently that negative WOM communication significantly reduces the perceived credibility of advertising as well as brand attitudes and purchase intentions (Smith and Vogt, 1995; Van Hoye and Lievens, 2007; Cheung *et al*., 2009). Ozcan and Ramaswamy (2004, p.15) argue, "The impact of WOM on purchase intentions and brand attitudes is such that both positive and negative word of mouth has a bigger impact on consumers who are unfamiliar with the product".

In 1990s, Dichter (1966) claims, once dissatisfaction occurs, a desire to prevent others from experiencing a similar fate prompts one to engage in negative WOM communication. Health (1996) explains that, when confronted with extreme information, people prefer to pass along news that is congruent with emotional valence. Thus, people are willing to pass along bad news even when it is 'exaggeratedly bad'. A similar viewpoint was put forward by Richins (1983, p.68-78) who states, "The more severe the problem, the higher the probability that the customer engaged in negative word of mouth". As Hart (1990, p.148-156) explains, consumers with bad experiences will tell more people than those with good experiences.

Cheng et al. (1996, p.98) clarified negative WOM into two categories based on the intention of consumers. First, it may be a form of retaliatory action against sellers; second, it might simply be a communication mechanism to alert others to a consumer risk.

Product involvement is often the motivation for the spread of negative WOM about recent experiences with brands or services (Wangenheim, 2005, p.70). Ozcan and Ramaswamy (2004, p.15) propose that the increasing complexity and technicality of products makes the involvement of WOM less effective. Much of the detail is not suited to being relayed in simple conversation. This increases pressure on those whose task it is to spread the information. In consequence, Ozcan and Ramaswamy claim that product designs with increased levels of technical specification require WOM sources with better informed and educated social ties.

A pilot study by Richins (1983, p.69) noted that increasing frequency of reported complaints, particularly in manufacturing industries, indicated that companies had underestimated both consumer dissatisfaction and their vulnerability to negative word-of-mouth.

When consumers are significantly dissatisfied, they will tend to spread negative comments about the products or services involved (Anderson, 1998, p.5-17; Mahajan, Muller, and Kerin, 1984, p.1389-1404; Black and Kelley, 2009), whereas, if the complaint is minor, consumers would rather choose not to voice their dissatisfaction. Instead, they will confine their complaints to within their friends and families (Richins, 1983), which affects consumers' future purchase intentions.

2.6.3 WOM within Online context

2.6.3.1 Virtual Community Concept

The recent development of virtual communities has had a significant effect on the Internet-based world (Bergquist and Liungberg, 2001; Halland Graham, 2004). Lindlof and Schatzer (1998, p.170) define a community as "founded intentionally by people who share a set of similar interests, often revolving around certain texts or tropes imported from non-CMC venues."

"Virtual communities are a means of creating a differential advantage, as they allow customers to take control and seek individual information at their own-time from who desired, which is more important and valuable to the customer than price incentives." (Lovelock et al., 2000).

Andreator (2007) describes the importance of virtual communities. He states that this kind of online community takes advantage over real communities in terms of communicating and exchanging information.

The Internet, as a new form of media communication tool, has brought people from different countries closer than ever before. The growing use of the Internet is expanding the availability and importance of WOM in the marketplace (Brown et al., 2005, p.124). According to Lindlof and Schatzer (1998, p.170-189), Virtual Community is measured as “a group of people who share characteristics and interact in essence or effect only”, and an important characteristic of a community is the interaction among its members (Rheingold, 2006).

The rapid development of the Internet has led to its becoming a primary source of information, and much of this information is provided by neutral third-party online platforms that have established themselves as trustworthy information sources (Viswanathan et al., 2007, p.89). According to McQuail (2000,), the Internet is “a new medium for interpersonal communication, interactive play, information search and collective participation”, and e-word of mouth communication is viewed as “any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet” (Stauss, 2000, p.243). Park and Lee (2009) further suggest that eWOM effect is greater for negative eWOM than for positive eWOM.

In addition, it is important to build online ‘trust’ if a business wants to succeed in the marketplace. According to Ha (2004), it is indicated that such web purchase-related factors as ‘security, privacy, brand name, word of mouth, good online experience, and quality of information’ are important components in building trust. Moreover, Grace and O’Cass (2005) indicate that WOM has a significant impact on brand reuse intentions.

2.6.3.2 Features of e-WOM

The WOM industry has experienced massive growth since 2004, which is evident in the field of online and social networking media (WOMMA, 2007). WOM is a particularly outstanding characteristic on the Internet (Trusov *et al.*, 2009). According to Rust and Lemon (2001, p.85), the Internet has transformed the service revolution into the information service revolution. Wherein, information has become the most valuable exchange between the business and consumers. For instance, the Internet provides consumers plentiful locations for sharing comments, preferences, or experiences with others.

Importantly, the development of the Internet has led to the appearance of new forms of word-of-mouth communication (Granitz and Ward 1996, p.163). According to Schmallegger and Carson (2008), online reviews and recommendations have been accepted as a new digital form of word of mouth from both academics and practitioner. As Reichheld and Schefter (2000, p.105) comment, “Nowadays, word of mouse spreads faster than word of mouth.” Different from the traditional WOM, the influence of which is typically limited to a local social network (Biyalogorsky *et al*., 2001; Shi, 2003), whereas, the impact of eWOM greatly exceeds the local community owing to the wide converge of the Internet (Chen and Xie, 2008). For instance, any consumer is enabled to access online reviews about a certain topic. In addition, the virtual environment leads to the emergence of different types of relationship, as customers need to acquire more control from the Internet (Gurton, 2001). In such cases, the relationship will enable customers to obtain valuable knowledge while allowing businesses to meet, more effectively and efficiently, customer needs and added value (Peppers and Rogers 1999; McDonald 2000).

Since the Internet has fundamentally transformed the way travel information is distributed (Buhalis and Law, 2008), eWOM is particularly important for experience travel products and services within Tourism Industry (Zhang et al., 2010). Word of mouth has been deemed as one of the most significant information sources for travel planning owing to its perceived independence of the source of the message (Lewis and Chambers (2000), for example, stress the importance of eWOM. They said, eWOM is good for guiding consumers’ decision-making when they encounter high-risk tourism products and services. Due to the intensively competitive business environment, eWOM will provide travel companies important competitive edge, in their incipient stage (Litvin *et al*., 2008).

An experimental study by Vermeulen and Seegers (2009) examining the impact of eWOM on travellers’ attitude. This study finds out that positive eWOM can enhance the awareness of hotels and further improve the travellers’ attitudes toward those hotels. Owing to the effectiveness of WOM, as mentioned before, consumers may pick out eWOM as an informational input in their purchasing decision process. It seems that eWOM plays a very significant role in customers’ decision making when the occasions are important, or infrequent, or involve some risk. In addition, consumers with information motives often rely on posted consumer reviews. When information is the motive, customers' attention may be easily drawn towards negative comments (Mizerski, 1982, p.301; Weinberger and Dillon, 1980, p.528).

2.6.3.3 Correlations between e-Community and e-WOM

With the help of the Internet, individuals are easily able to make personal thoughts, judgements available to the global community of Internet users. Word of mouth communication, one of the oldest mechanisms, is being considered as an increasingly important feature of the Internet. With weblogs becoming more popular for tourists to use, it can be seen that this new form of communication by WOM becomes more effective.

"One characteristic of e-WOM behaviour on Web-based opinion platforms is that consumers become part of a virtual community through their articulations. Affiliation with a virtual community can represent a social benefit to a consumer for reasons of identification and social integration" (Thurau et al., 2004, p.38)

Kanamori and Kimura (2003) point out that a virtual community helps online companies to interact with their customers in an effective way. They also identify e-word of mouth communication as providing a virtual community platform in which customers can exchange and share information about products or services.

Kopp and Suter (2001) discussed the case of 'fan sites' developed by people who have positive impressions and opinions with regard to a product or service. As a result, they point out that those satisfied people are able to become involved with the online consumer to consumer community and to exchange, with others, positive information (attitudes or suggestions) concerning the companies or brands.

Ward and Reingen(1990) and Bone(1995) identify e-WOM communication as allowing consumers to have both informational and normative influences on fellow consumers' purchase decisions.

Many researchers emphasize the importance of word of mouth communication in its impact on building brand trust. (Dolinsky, 1994; Fournier, 1998; Iglesias et al., 2001; Martin, 1996; Parasuraman et al., 1988; Reichheld and Schefter, 2000; Tractinsky et al., 1999; Ward and Lee, 2000) This kind of brand trust is defined by Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001, p.81) as, “the willingness of the average consumer to rely on the ability of the brand to perform its stated function”. They assert that e-trust, which comes from e-WOM communication, will reduce the uncertainty in the virtual environment in which consumers feel vulnerable due to insufficient knowledge of a brand.

Buchanan and Gillies (1990, p.523) suggest that experience exerts a major influence on both brand trust and customer satisfaction; “the more satisfied the customer, the more durable is the relationship.” In the model of “trusting behaviour”, Mitchell et al. (1998) view that experience plays a significant role in trust by making it possible to compare the realities of the firm with expectations.

Customers usually prefer a positive experience rather than a message. Based on many researchers’ investigation, (Dholakia et al., 2000; Kenny and Marshall, 2000; McWilliam, 2000; Reichheld and Schefter, 2000; Shankar et al., 2000) suggest that familiarity often leads to a good online experience. Balabanis and Vassileiou(1999) find that a home-shopping experience often has a positive impact on shoppers’ brand trust and buying intentions.

In addition, from the profitability perspective Reichheld and Sasser (1990) clearly demonstrate the importance of word of mouth communication to companies’ profits. They explain that WOM will make profits for the company since there is no cost incurred in the communication activity.

2.7 Opinion Leadership

2.7.1 Concept of Leadership

The concept of opinion leadership has its roots in the voting behaviour study conducted by Lazarsfeld, Berelso n and Gaudet (1948), in which they put forward a two-step flow of communication theory that ideas often flow from radio and print media to opinion leaders and from them to the general public. In other words, opinion leaders are depicted as direct information receivers of impersonal mass-media communications. In the early 1950s, Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) expanded this concept and emphasized personal influence in the consumption process, and in particular the role of opinion leaders through their communications.

Central to the study of interpersonal WOM communications has been the concept of opinion leadership. Most previous studies on interpersonal WOM communications are strongly linked to the concept of opinion leadership, which proposes that some individuals have influential effects on others' behaviour in a given topic area (Summers, 1970). In other words, opinion leadership is the degree to which an individual informally influences other individuals' attitudes or behaviour in a desired manner with relative manner (Mowen, 1990).

It has been suggested that opinion leaders exert a "disproportionate amount of influence on the decisions of other consumers" (Flynn *et al.*, 1994). Thus, the opinion leader group has the potential to be very important to marketers in disseminating product and company messages.

2.7.2 The Changing Environment for Interpersonal Communication

Traditionally, there is a close proximity between opinion leaders and opinion receivers within the opinion leadership theories which contributes to the occurrence of conversations (Chan and Misra, 1990). Along with the growth of the Internet, a closer 'electronic proximity' has been created, in which people with similar attitudes, backgrounds, and experiences are coming together in community sites to explore their common interests (Hoffman and Novak, 1996, 2009). In other words, the Internet has greater impact on social interaction and the presentation of the self online (Mann and Stewart, 2000) that gave online communication a different complexion from traditional personal communication and mass communication. As the Internet has been widely used for information sharing and exchanging, opinion leader can be seen as a virtual substitute of interpersonal communication and personal information search (Jones, 1997).

2.7.2.1 Strong-Tie and Weak-Tie

According to Buttle (1998), the frequency and intensity of WOM communications rest with types of social networks. In any social network, the interaction between consumers and consumers are associated with them through varying levels of tie strength, ranging from strong to weak (Lam and Mizerski, 2005).

Tie strength plays a significant role in the flow of information exchange. In the early 1980s, a network analysis experiment was conducted by Brown and Reingen (1987) to investigate WOM referral behaviour in both macro scope (e.g. flows of communication across groups) and micro scope (e.g. flows of communication within small groups). The research finds that WOM recommendation sources are characterized according to the relationship closeness between the decision maker and 'tie strength' (recommendation sources) (Brown and Reingen, 1987).

According to Brown and Reingen (1987), the tie strength of relationship is deemed as strong if the source is someone who knows the decision maker personally. While tie strength is defined as weak if the source is merely an acquaintance or one who does not know the decision maker at all. Brown and Reingen (1987) further explain, strong ties were also perceived as more influential than weak ties, and they were found to be more likely to be utilized as sources of information for related goods.

Another service research by Bansal and Voyer (2000) examining the relationship between influence (interpersonal and non-interpersonal) of WOM and purchase decision. Their research indicated that interpersonal influence belongs to the tie strength between individuals. Importantly, the greater the tie strength, the more WOM is required (Bansal and Voyer, 2000).

Duhan *et al*. (1997) conclude, the primary advantage of strong-tie recommendation sources is that they can be used to assess the decision maker and product alternatives, in order to customize decision makers' preferences. While, weak-tie recommendation sources are perceived to be more numerous and varied and are not restricted by decision makers. Therefore, there is a greater likelihood of finding more and better product and service information from weak-tie recommendation sources (Duhan *et al*. 1997).

2.8 Corporate Weblog

2.8.1 Emergence of the Weblog Environment

A primary component in the social media landscape is the weblog and weblogs are used for a wide variety of purposes. Glance et al. (2005) state that there has been a phenomenal growth of the Weblogosphere that is invaluable for marketing academics and practitioners. Weblogs have been regarded as one of the most important new communication tools to impact on businesses. According to Blood (2002), a Weblog is a web page that serves as a publicly accessible personal journal and can convey personal, public, political and commercial messages. Weblogs are frequently updated and contain mainly pictures, text, links, audio and video (Carmichael and Helwig, 2006a). As the fourth communication tool after E-mail, BBS and ICQ, the weblogosphere is the latest potential challenge to the dominance of the mass media communications (Jackson, 2006, p.292) in terms of its zero cost, zero technology, zero authorization, zero time difference and zero editor nature (Zi, 2006).

A recent survey by BBC (BBC Online, 2006) shows that there are about 1.3 million posts and 100,000 new weblogs appearing on the internet each day. According to the statistics by Technorati Research (2006), the weblogosphere is over 70 million weblogs worldwide in which around 120,000 new weblogs are created each day and1.5 million posts per day (see Figure 2.5). It is evident that the dynamic nature of weblogosphere provides a unique resource for facilitating information-flow in online social media and “weblogs have established themselves as a key part of online culture” (Rainie, 2005, p.1).

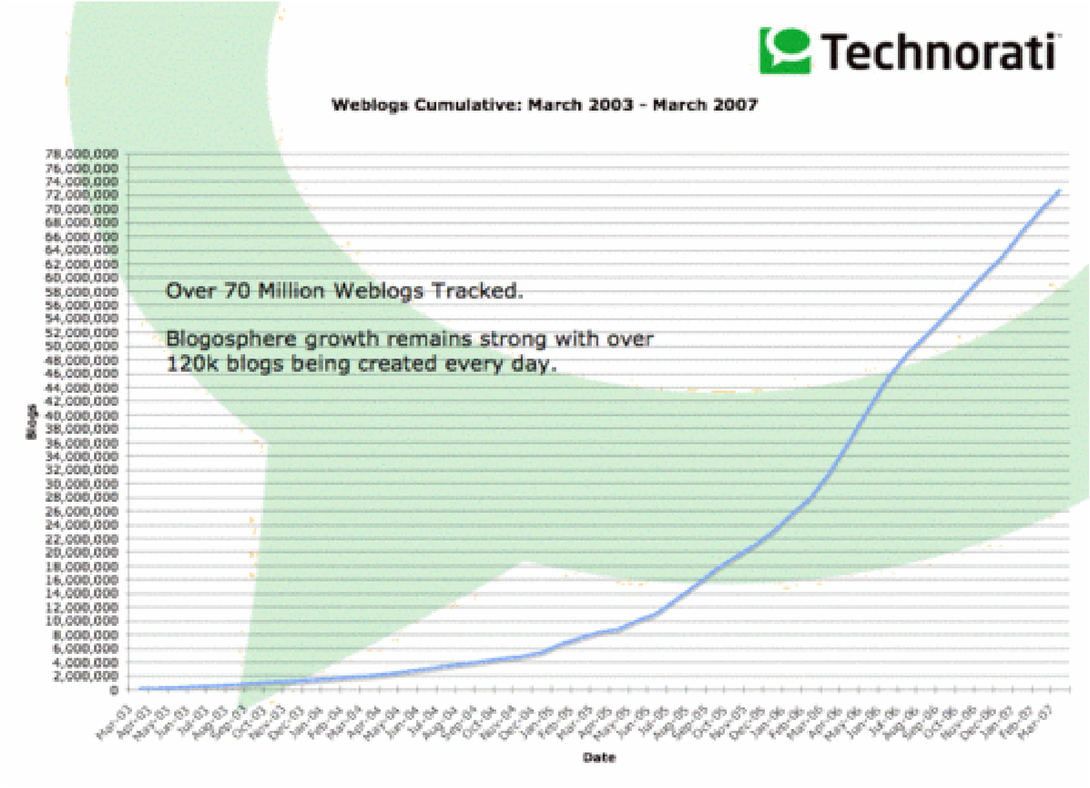


Figure 2.5: Cumulative Number of Weblogs (Adapted from Technorati, 2007)

According to Cox *et al*. (2008), the popularity of weblogs is attributed to their personal, informal and convenient nature. Of particular relevance to corporations, many users rely on weblogs when making purchase decisions because they consider the weblogger to be a product or category expert. As Lee *et al*. (2006) state, the popularity of weblogs presents both opportunities and challenges for businesses. For enterprises, weblogs help to improve communication efficiency and communication effect. With the computer-mediated society, corporations begin to listen to the 'voice' of their communities and participate in their 'conversations' (Raghavan, 2006, p.285). For instance, IBM, Microsoft, and Coca Cola successfully establish closer social relationships with their audiences through corporate weblogging strategies (Zhang and Han, 2007, p.35).

According to Trimi and Galanxhi-Janaqi (2008, p.121), corporate weblogging guides companies to the achievement of their certain business objectives. Lears (2003) makes a distinction between personal weblogs and corporate weblogs by stressing their forms rather than contents. Compared with corporate websites, weblogs support more open communication (Gillmor, 2004) and offer more opportunities for corporations to effectively interact with their employees, government, supplier, dealer and related objects (Zhang and Han, 2007; Richmond, 2005; Kim *et al*., 2008).

Despite the popularity of the weblogosphere, corporate weblogs are a relatively new global phenomenon and academic research on business weblogs remains limited (Lee and Trimi, 2008). In short, both theoretical validation and empirical evidence on the studies of corporate weblogs are rather sparse. A study by Lee *et al*. (2006), for instance, is the first empirical research on examining emerging business weblogging phenomena by investigating the implementation of corporate weblogging strategies from the Fortune 500 companies. As Lee *et al*. (2008) explain, there is little published research available to provide assistance and to guide companies to implement successfully their corporate weblogging strategies. This is due to the short history of using weblogs and the incipient, unique culture.

2.8.2 Different Voices on Weblogs

2.8.2.1 Formal Definitions

The term weblog has been provided with definitions from different interested parties such as practitioners, technology companies, academics, and the media field. The most explicit definitions of weblogging come from the companies who build tools to support it. "Weblogs… contain daily musings about news, dating, marriage, divorce, children, politics in the Middle East..or millions of other things or nothing at all" (OED 2003).

"To weblog is to be part of a community of smart, tech-savvy people who want to be on the forefront of a new literary undertaking" (OED 2003). "A frequently updated web site consisting of personal observations, excerpts from other sources, etc., typically run by a single person, and usually with hyperlinks to other sites; an online journal or diary" (OED 2003).

2.8.2.2 Researchers' Definitions

Many researchers suggest that interactive media fundamentally change the practice of marketing communication. The Internet has been opening up the potential for new forms of conversation and relationships between consumers and producers

(Bezjinan-Avery, Calder, & Iacobucci, 1998). Welogs, defined as “frequently modified web pages in which dated entries are listed in reverse chronological sequence”(Herring, Scheidt, Bonus, & Wright, 2004, p.1), are one of the recent online communication forms the marketers have begun to explore as a communication tool.

Basically, weblogs are a personalized form of media that enhance interpersonal communication (Herring et al., 2004). Businessmen have started to exploit these unique characteristics of weblogs to create good impressions among consumers. In addition, weblogs, which are conversational and highly interactive, offer a unique channel for developing relationships among people or organizations (Keller & Miller, 2006).

The majority of researchers rely on formal definition of the type that is provided by the orthodox dictionaries. For example, weblogs are “frequently updated web pages with a series of archived posts, typically in reverse-chronological order” (Nardi, *et al*. 2004, p.1) and “modified web pages in which dated entries are listed in reverse chronological sequence” (Herring, *et al*. 2004, p.1). Particularly, Herring (2004, p.1) argue, weblogs are the latest genre of Internet communication.

Increasing attention is being paid to corporate weblogs. According to Wright (2006), corporate weblogging is a communication tool, a marketing technique, a listening device, and a way to interact directly with customers one-to-one on a global scale. A company can learn a lot by reading weblogs to determine what customers and non-customers alike are saying about the business. Also, a company can benefit by using weblogs to spread the word about its products or services to its customers and to gain immediate feedback from those same customers. Wright (2006, p.4-6) further suggests, “an open and honest public weblog, written by an authoritative voice from within your company, allow companies to create a different type of experience with their customers.”

Weblog readers tend to trust and remain loyal to the weblogs they read, regardless of fashion. Wood et al. (2006, p. 313) agreed to the point by Teten and Allen. (2005), ‘Setting up a simple weblog requires a minimum of effort or involvement from the IT

Department, and can be done for a modest cost.’ Also, Foremski (2005) supplements, ‘Once set up, weblogs can be very effective in promoting products and services, which can help to reduce advertising and marketing costs.’

Importantly, ‘the biggest strength of weblogs is in establishing dialogue with readers’ (Gardneer, 2005, p.20). Wood et al. (2006, p. 313) support the views of McMillan (2004): ‘The technology allows businesses to expand their audience without having to rely on traditional, and often inefficient, means of communicating with their customers’. Wood et al. (2006, p. 313) further point out, an effective organizational weblog helps the organization to participate in business enhancing conversations to build relationships with both current and future customers, partners, and employees.

Weblogs help an organization to better understand the needs and wants of their customers, obtain immediate feedback on products and services and, in effect, have customized and personalized market research (Wood et al., 2006). In addition, weblogs provide organizations with an opportunity to respond to criticism from the media and others who might be posting negative comments on other weblogs (Ziegler, 2005).

Wright (2006, p.5) summarizes three main functions of corporate weblogs:

- Provide Information: Telling your customers what you’re doing and finding out what they are thinking.
- Build Relationships: Building a solid base of positive experiences with your customers that changes them from plain-old consumers to evangelists for your company and products.
- Knowledge management: Having the vast stores of knowledge within your company available to the right people at the right time.

2.8.2.3 Practitioner Definitions

When defining weblogs, practitioners often refer to the social aspects and benefits of weblogs. They talk about the conversational qualities of weblogging and the ability to share with others. They talk about community and how weblogging helps them to engage with a community of people (Cox *et al.*, 2008).

2.8.2.4 Characteristics of Weblogs

Weblogs have features that distinguish them from other forms of computer-mediated communication. These features include: 1) easy-to-use content management system; 2) archive oriented structure; 3) latest information first order; 4) links to other weblogs; 5) easy to provide feedback for each weblog post (Huffaker & Calvert 2005; Herring et al., 2004).

The flexible nature of weblogs allows people to use weblogs for a variety of purposes. People can keep personal diaries (Bortree, 2005; Huffaker & Calvert, 2005), interact with other webloggers (Herring, Kouper, Paolillo, & Sheidt, 2005), build new virtual communities (Blanchard, 2004), and disseminate their messages to mass audience (Lawson-Borders & Kirk, 2005). In brief, these types of online media such as weblogs and Internet forums act a lot different than the media of early mass communication research. Besides all, on the basis of previous social media studies, the researcher builds a conceptual foundation (see Table 2.4) to identify the distinguishing and the shared nature of two asynchronous computer mediated communication tools, namely weblogs and (discussion) forums.

	Weblogs	**Forums**
Communication Support		
- Interaction	Interaction is based upon a personal journal model, there is no formal distinction within the system between communication made by users (Ellis and Cohen, 2009)	Interaction is based upon a post and reply process (Ellis and Cohen, 2009).
- Types of media supported	As the weblog is based on open source, web-based software, the journal postings are web pages, any media type that can be displayed on the web can be included (Brownstein and Klein, 2006)	Types of media supported are largely limited to written text, although files containing video, audio, and graphic media can be attached to postings (Ellis and Cohen, 2009).
- Openness of the environment	Essentially open, available to all with web access (Kim, 2008)	Typically a closed system, available only to registered members (Ellis and Cohen, 2009).
Process Structure		
- Locus of control	Each weblog is owned by the individual author (Martindale and Wiley, 2005)	Instructor (Ellis and Cohen, 2009)

Information Process		
- Artifact development tools	Simple tool set for developing web pages(Ellis and Cohen, 2009)	None native, beyond basic html tags (Ellis and Cohen, 2009).
- Artifact development nature	Electronic journal containing authors' thoughts and comments from readers (Ellis and Cohen, 2009).	Textual, lacking system-provided structure (Ellis and Cohen, 2009).

Table 2.4 Weblogs and Forums Comparison (Adapted from Ellis and Cohen, 2009)

Previous literature on weblogs has suggested that corporate weblogs have good potential to be a marketing communication tool (Smudde, 2005). Weblog authors can reach anonymous people in an intimate and personalized way, because weblogs have a mixed nature of mass communication and interpersonal communication. Similarly, Marken (2005, p.31) argues “weblogs provide a fast, effective, and economic means of carrying out two-way communications with the firm’s many audiences”. More essentially, as an important information sharing resource, weblog has provided a new way of sharing tour experiences with an international audience (Sharda and Ponnada, 2007),

It is evident that weblogging presents many advantages to business organizations. According to McMillian (2004), the technology facilitates businesses to expand their audience without having to rely on traditional, and often inefficient, means of communicating with their customers.

The particularly economical nature of promoting a company’s interests through its weblog attracts much comment. It requires a minimum of effort or involvement from the IT Department to set up a simple weblog with a modest cost (Teten and Allen, 2005). Once the weblog has been set up, it can be very effective in promoting products and services, which can help to reduce advertising and marketing costs (Foremski, 2005).

Sessum (2005) further suggests that, “an effective organizational weblog can help organizations to participate in business enhancing conversations to build relationships for both current and future customers, partners, and employees.”

Corporate weblogs can be defined with two elements identified by Sifry (2004): Corporate weblogs are 1) endorsed explicitly or implicitly by that company, and 2) posted by a person (or a group of people) who are affiliated with the company.

Some researchers have suggested that corporate weblogs provide a chance to communicate with their consumers in a humanized voice. Keller & Miller (2006) found that people who read a company’s weblog are more likely to perceive the organization’s “conversational human voice” than people who read the company’s traditional web site. Hill (2005), after interviewing 15 business webloggers, suggests that small businesses are able to use weblogs effectively for a wide range of purposes, from viral marketing to search engine optimization. In his research, interviewees said that weblogs can play a role in increasing the visibility and credibility of a business.

There are many different ways to categorize weblogs, such as media type, (photoblog, linklog), or genre, (political weblog, fashion weblog). According to Zerfaß (2006), the corporate weblog can be categorized into eight types which are based on intended objective and functional area (see figure 2.6). In view of the above typology of corporate weblogs by Zerfass, (2006), it is clear that different commercial weblogs have different characteristics.

1) Knowledge Weblogs; 2) Service Weblogs; 3) Campaigning Weblogs; 4) Issues Weblogs; 5) Product/Brand Weblogs; 6) Collaboration/ project Weblogs; 7) Customer Relationship Weblogs; 7) Crisis Weblogs

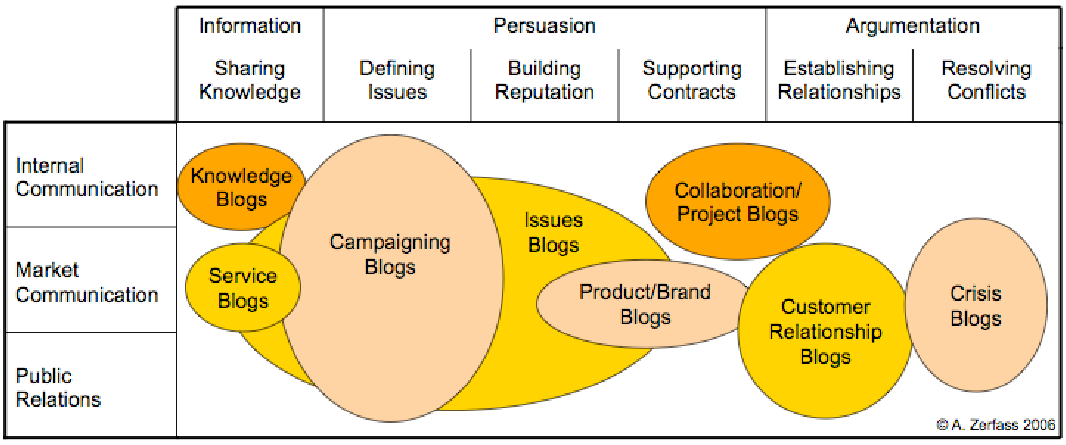

Information
Persuasion
Argumentation
Sharing Knowledge
Defining Issues
Building Reputation
Supporting Contracts
Establishing Relationships
Resolving Conflicts
Internal Communication
Market Communication
Public Relations
Knowledge Blogs
Campaigning Blogs
Issues Blogs
Collaboration/ Project Blogs
Service Blogs
Product/Brand Blogs
Customer Relationship Blogs
Crisis Blogs
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Figure 2.6: Types of corporate weblogs, by business objective and functional area

(Adapted from Zerfass, 2006)

2.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher focused on understanding the roles and objectives of marketing communications within interactive circumstances, which correspond to the role of travel weblogs in both relational and interactional communications. To this end, the definitions and previous dimensional studies of interactivity, the definitions and evolution of uses and gratification theory, and attitude toward websites were included. The chapter also discussed the function of word of mouth communication and characteristics of social media with regard to weblogs. On the basis of the literature review, the research presented three dimensions of interactivity and three constructs of user motives in travel weblogs. The next chapter will discuss how the above propositions were articulated within the research design. It will describe the design of the questionnaire used in the research and outline how that design links to wider literature.

CHAPTER THREE – RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research paradigm, methodology, methods, and techniques of data analysis adopted for the current study. The research design starts with a restatement of the research objectives, followed by a justification of the choice of the pragmatic research paradigm. Wherein, the quantitative (i.e., online survey) and qualitative methodology (i.e., semi-structured interviews) are discussed. The chapter then explains the justification for the research methodology and method based on literature. The discussion of methodology focuses on the selection of an appropriate target population, sampling techniques, development of questions, and conduct of data collection for each research method. Then, analysis techniques for the quantitative and qualitative studies are explained. In addition, ethical considerations are also stated.

3.2 Research Aim and Objectives

The primary aim of this thesis is to determine how three principal dimensions of interactivity, namely, active control, two-way communications and real-time communication, affect users' attitudes and usage intentions. The aim of this study is reflected in three aspects. To fulfil the central aim, this study serves to accomplish three major objectives:

1) To critically appraise the significance of the dimensions of interactivity considered to be key features of corporate travel weblogs.
2) To measure the importance of key user motives in the use of corporate travel weblogs.
3) To investigate the impact of proposed motives and interactivity on attitude toward corporate travel weblogs and the influence of attitude on intention to revisit corporate travel weblogs.

3.3 Research design

3.3.1 Philosophical Foundations for the Present Study

The selection of a research design is guided by various philosophical underpinnings. In order to achieve an optimal research result, researchers draw on considerable different paradigmatic positions reflecting their philosophical worldviews (Slife and

Williams, 1995; Guba, 1990; Phillips and Burbules, 2000; Guba and Lincoln, 2005). Specifically, each paradigm is attributed to a number of underlying philosophical assumptions, which helps researchers to address the ways they understand and inquire into social phenomena (Babbie, 2004). On the basis of extant studies, Creswell (2003) identifies three common approaches, namely, quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods approach. In order to understand these three approaches, a consideration of three framework elements is called for. They are philosophical assumption about knowledge claim constitution, strategies of inquiry, and research methods (Creswell, 2003).

3.3.1.1 Knowledge Claims

According to Creswell (2003, p.6), knowledge claim means "researchers make claims about what is knowledge (ontology), how we know it (epistemology), what values go into it (axiology), how we write about it (rhetoric) and the process for studying it (methodology)". In other words, it is the claim about how and what we will learn during our inquiring procedure in a philosophical manner. Creswell (2003, p.6) further identifies and categories knowledge claims into four groups (see Table 3.1).

Postpositivism ♦ Determination ♦ Reductionism ♦ Empirical observation and measurement ♦ Theory verification	**Constructivism** ♦ Understanding multiple participant meanings ♦ Social and historical construction ♦ Theory generation
Advocacy/Participatory ♦ Political empowerment issue-oriented ♦ Collaborative change-oriented	**Pragmatism** ♦ Consequences of actions ♦ Problem-centered ♦ Pluralistic ♦ Real-world practice oriented

Table 3.1 Alternative Knowledge Claim Positions (Adapted from Creswell, 2003, p.6)

Postpositivism reveals a deterministic philosophy wherein effects or outcomes are determined by causes. It is also termed as 'reductionism' that test selected variables through examining hypothesis and research questions (Creswell, 2003).

Constructivism assumption mainly relies on the participants' views and perceptions towards the research context being studied (Lincoln and Guba, 2000; Neuman, 2004). In this instance, individual researcher develops his or her subjective meaning (varied and multiple meanings) of engaged experiences, leads the researchers to look for the complexity of views (Creswell, 2003).

Advocacy/ Participatory knowledge claims is recursive or dialectical, which is focused on bring about change in practice. It is regarded as a practical and collaborative claim wherein an inquiry completed 'with' others rather than 'on' others (Kemmis and Wilkinson, 1998).

Pragmatic knowledge claim focuses on the 'what' and 'how' to research based upon its intended consequences. Researchers with pragmatic assumption are 'free' to select the research methods, techniques, and procedures to collect and analyse data rather than subscribing to only one way (Creswell, 2003).

3.3.1.2 Strategies of Inquiry

In addition to the knowledge claims, it is also important to include strategies of inquiry in social research design, as strategies of inquiry contribute to the overall research approach (Mertens, 1998). Creswell (2003, p.13) lists three alternative strategies of inquiry in the social sciences research (see Table 3.2).

Quantitative	Qualitative	Mixed Methods
▪ Experimental designs ▪ Non-experimental designs, such as surveys	▪ Narratives ▪ Phenomenology ▪ Ethnography ▪ Grounded theory ▪ Case studies	▪ Sequential ▪ Concurrent ▪ Transformative

Table 3.2 Alternative Strategies of Inquiry (Adapted from Creswell, 2003, p.13)

3.3.1.3 Research Methods

Except from the knowledge claims and strategies of inquiry, research method is the third philosophical assumption. According to Creswell (2003), it is useful to give overall consideration to the possibilities of data collection. Table 3.3 demonstrates the distinction among quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods procedures.

Quantitative	Qualitative	Mixed Methods
▪ Predetermined ▪ Instrument based questions ▪ Performance, attitude, observation and census data ▪ Statistical analysis	▪ Emerging methods ▪ Open-ended questions ▪ Interview, observation, document and audiovisual data ▪ Text and image analysis	▪ Both predetermined and emerging methods ▪ Both open- and closed -ended questions ▪ Multiple forms of data drawing on all possibilities ▪ Statistical and text analysis

Table 3.3 Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methods Procedures (Adapted from Creswell, 2003, p.17)

In establishing methodological basis for the present study, a pragmatic assumption is proposed to emphasise the research problems and then use pluralistic approaches to derive the knowledge about the problems (Creswell, 2009). According to Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998, p.3-11), this type of research paradigm is associated with mixed research methods engaging both qualitative and quantitative assumptions into the research.

The current research focuses on exploring the dimensions and characteristics of interactivity and user motives that is to be accomplished within a corporate weblogging context. More precisely, the research examines the effectiveness of the different interactional dimensions and user motives through empirical research and measurement. As discussed in the previous chapter, there is a lack of published research testifying and operating the dimensions of interactivity within a corporate weblogging environment.

Also, very few empirical studies focus on examining the effect of user motives on attitudinal and behavioural perspective toward weblogging phenomena. It is therefore necessary to conduct quantitative methods (e.g. survey) to reveal information and knowledge about corporate weblogging activities and to investigate the conceptualisation of multidimensional interactivity within Tourism industry. In other words, the quantitative method assists the author in gaining rich insights towards the significance of interactivity and user motives concepts to the travel or tourism weblogs.

Furthermore, qualitative methods including semi-structured, face-to-face interview is also indispensible in order to test and verify the effectiveness of each of the key dimensions of interactivity and constructs of user motives within travel weblogging context. Importantly, the qualitative method intends to develop attitudinal survey, which helps to generate valid information and provide a basis for analysing and discussing the results from the previous quantitative research.

On the basis of the two different yet interlinked research methods, it is reasonable contented that the current study is firmly embedded in a pragmatic paradigm. The adoption of the pragmatic approach is also supported by a numerous proponents who use mixed methods in different ways (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998; Brannen, 2004; Bryman, 2004; Ivankova *et al.*, 2006; Creswell, 2009). Brannen (2004, p.314), for example, asserts that qualitative and quantitative data ought to be treated as being complementary in nature so as to develop an understanding from one research method to another, and to confirm research findings from different sources of data. Ivankova (2006, p.3) indicates, the rationale behind using mixed-research methods is grounded in the assumption that neither quantitative nor qualitative methods are sufficient by themselves to fully detail the research situation. Therefore, integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods helps researchers to develop a robust analysis (Green and Caracelli, 1997; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998).

3.3.2 Mixed-Methods Sequential Explanatory Design

Researchers benefit from being familiar with numerous classifications of mixed-method designs reported in the literature (Morgan, 1998; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003; Hanson *et* al., 2005). Based on previous literature studies, Creswell *et al.* (2003) identifies six overwhelming classifications of research design including three concurrent designs and three sequential designs. Among these different types of designs, the mixed-method sequential explanatory design (See Figure 3.1) is highly accepted among researchers and implies collecting and analysing first quantitative and then qualitative data in two sequential phases within one study (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998; Nataliya *et al.*, 2006).

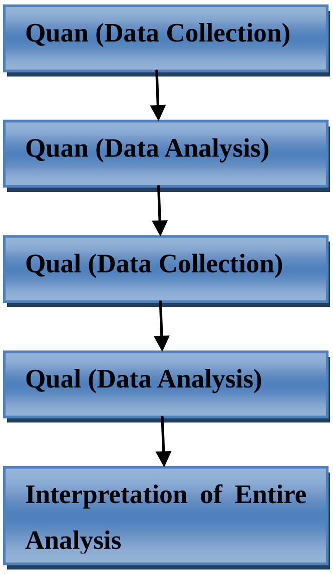


Figure 3.1 Sequential Explanatory Design (adapted from Creswell *et al*., 2003)

The sequential explanatory design is a mixed method design of interest in the present study. In short, it is designed in two phases: stage one aims to investigate the behaviour of webloggers; while stage two uses an attitudinal survey to drill into the data generated in stage one. Therefore, the quantitative phase of study provides a general understanding of the research problem (e.g. weblogging phenomena), while the qualitative phase helps to refine and explain those statistical results by exploring participants' view in more depth (e.g. travellers' attitudes toward the interactive events within a corporate weblogging context (Rossman and Wilson, 1985; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998; Creswell, 2003). The sequential design is considered to be relatively easy to implement as it involves comprehensible procedures implemented in separate stages and assists the researcher to demonstrate the research findings in an easier way (Creswell, 2003).

Importantly, the use of multiple research methods within the same study and assuming the same conditions is likely to result in greater reliability and validity in contrast to a single methodology approach (Denzin, 1989). Given this focus, the researcher selects four Chinese corporate travel weblogs as the research context. They are JiangYan ChunQiu International Travel Agency weblog (http://zalts.blog.163.com/), Tuniu Travel weblog (http://blog.tuniu.com/), Shenzhen KangHui International Travel Agency weblog (http://kanghui888.blog.bokee.net/), and Meijing Travel Weblog. (http://www.mjjq.com/blog/). Within these corporate travel weblogs, weblog users can share their travel experience through posting photos, videos, texts. Importantly, with the help of Web 2.0, interactive communications become more intensive.

In this study, the researcher did not choose other corporate sites to compare and contrast. There are three reasons for this: first, owing to the limited time and resources, the researcher can only select those companies to be studied; secondly, by using purposive sampling technique, the researcher collects his data through an association or relationship with participants; thirdly, Chinese corporate travel weblog is determined as a research context for this study. In other words, the researcher does not attempt to research weblog itself or compare and contrast different weblogs.

Apart from this, these four companies are all travel companies. There has no big difference among them. Those companies are more representative and have a high prestige in China. The reason to select them is to help the researcher to make better understanding of the research context.

3.4 Phase One – Quantitative Survey

3.4.1 Justification of Survey Methodology

The preliminary planning phase of the research design establishes a sound foundation of the research process. This subsection centres primarily on the justification of main issues associated with the quantitative survey methodology.

As one of the quantitative data collection methods, surveys are used to identify characteristics, attitudes or opinions of a representative sample of individuals (Creswell, 2003). And the purpose of the use of survey is to help the researcher to collect quantitative data for statistic analysis (Kumar *et al.*, 2002). Partly because of a remarkable growth of the online populations and the development in computer-mediated communication, there is a considerable increase in the use of online surveys (Wright, 2004, 2005). Analysis of past research on the use of the Internet-based surveys suggests a significant advantage over traditional survey techniques in terms of response rates and costs (Sheehan and McMillian, 1999; LIieva *et* al., 2002; Andrews *et al.*, 2003; Burns and Bush, 2003; Umbach, 2004; Aaker *et al.*, 2005; Konstan *et al.*, 2005; McDaniel and Gates, 2008). Therefore, this research will use a self-administered online survey in this stage in the light of the advantage of speedy distribution and response cycles (Slaughter *et al*., 1995; Taylor, 2000; Yun and Trumbo, 2000; Andrews *et al*., 2003).

Web-based survey instruments are also advocated by others to be the most suitable method utilised in the Tourism industry or relevant studies within the Tourism context. For example, Schonland and Williams (1996), is one of the first researchers to conduct web-based survey technique to assess the Internet usage for travel services due to its flexibility and ease of use (Veal, 1998). Other scholars find higher response rates in web-based survey than in postal surveys (Brennan and Hoek, 1992; McLemore and Mitchell, 2000; Lu *et al*., 2002; Hwang and Fesenmaier, 2004; Cole, 2005) in the area of tourism. An interesting finding shows the heavy reliance on this online method to evaluate tourism website effectiveness (Tierney, 2000). This approach enables current market information to be generated quickly (Tierney, 2000).

Following the quantitative research approach, this stage intends to identify and determine the dimensions of interactivity and constructs of user motives within corporate travel weblogging settings. Of this, it is reasonable to review the major approaches and findings of empirical research studies, in order to compile and evaluate the evidence for operationalising the interactivity and user motives concept within a corporate travel weblogging context.

The justification is conducted through a rigorous examination of peer-reviewed literature on survey instruments for the research. In order to select articles for inclusion, a set of selection criteria is established. First, only academic papers are chosen for justifying, as practitioner papers do not serve the same purpose. For example, the practitioner literature might not be analysed in the past and therefore could result in potentially serious errors (Athanasopoulou, 2009).

Secondly, the chosen academic papers are conducted in a scientific manner, in which examinations or analysis should be described in enough detail to enable the researcher to replicate the study and test the results. Thirdly, all papers selected reside in the field of computer-mediated communication (CMC), media, marketing, information systems, consumer behaviour, e-commerce, and advertising. Research disciplines such as online learning are not included. In the future, the studies on distance learning in relation to interactivity may be scrutinized.

Ultimately, a total of 43 studies (from 1997 to 2009) are selected for examination. Considering the extensive information included in each study, it is decided that the best way to compare studies is through the creation of a comparative table. Given this, the researcher separates the key elements of the studies into five categories (Table 3.4): 1) Author(s)/year; 2) Research field; 3) Methodology/sample; 4) Interactivity dimensions; 5) Research findings.

Table 3.4 interactivity concepts and dimensions: a review of the previous studies (to be continued)

Author(s)/Year	Research Field	Methodology/Sample	Interactivity Dimensions	Research Findings
Rafaeli and Sudweeks (1997)	Computer-mediated communication (CMC)	Quantitative content analysis; random, proportionately stratified probability sample of 4,322 messages drawn from three networks of group CMC: Internet's Usenet, Bitnet Listservs, and CompuServe SIGs (special interest groups)	▪ Not mentioned	There is a certain relationship between interactivity and captivating/engaging communication parameters as well as discrimination between varying levels of interactivity.
Ha and James (1998)	Media	Quantitative content analysis; random, systematic sample of 110 business websites listed in the archives of the *Web Digest for Marketers*	• Playfulness • Choice • Connectedness • Information collection • Reciprocal communication	There is a discrepancy between the capabilities of the web and the actual implementation of interactive features online. In detail, reciprocal communication is found to be the most prevalent dimension, while the popularity of choice is the next; the interactivity in business sites was quite low.

Table 3.4 interactivity concepts and dimensions: a review of the previous studies (to be continued)

Author(s)/Year	Research Field	Methodology/Sample	Interactivity Dimensions	Research Findings
Ghose and Dou (1998)	Advertising	Quantitative content analysis, random samples of 101 participants from North America, Europe, and Asia.	▪ Not mentioned	The greater the degree of interactivity, the more likely it is for the IPS (Internet Presence Sites) to be popularised. Customer support is the key element.
McMillan (1999)	Media	-E-mail surveys, random sample of 834 websites drawn from Yahoo Directory of health-related topics (15,000 health-related sites);Sample size=834; 395 responses (47.5% response rate); -Quantitative content analysis	McMillan (1999) quotes the six dimensions of interactivity by Heeter (1989): • Complexity of choice • Effort users exert • Responsiveness • Monitoring of information use • Ease of adding information • Facilitation of interpersonal communication	Three dimensions: complexity of choice, responsiveness, and interpersonal communication are popularised and coincide with extant literature on the concept of interactivity; monitoring of information use and ease of adding information are suggested for the future studies; there is little evidence of ‘effort user exert’ dimension in this study.

Table 3.4 interactivity concepts and dimensions: a review of the previous studies (to be continued)

Author(s)/Year	Research Field	Methodology/Sample	Interactivity Dimensions	Research Findings
McMillan (2000)	Advertising	Online survey, random sample of 178 participants drawn from two primary populations: 80 university students and 98 athletes included.	• Two-way communication • Receiver control • A sense of place • Time flexibility • Activity • Information exchange to a website	This study aims to test relationships between functional characteristics of websites and perceived interactivity. Of this, strong, positive correlations are found: - Participants' involvement with the subject of the website and interactivity scales; - Participants' involvement with the subject of the website and attitude toward the site; - Attitudes toward the website and both age and years of computer use. The actual functions found at the website are not a predictor of perceived interactivity. Instead, individual perceptions are an important indicator of interactivity.

Table 3.4 interactivity concepts and dimensions: a review of the previous studies (to be continued)

Author(s)/Year	Research Field	Methodology/Sample	Interactivity Dimensions	Research Findings
Kenney et al. (2000)	Media	Quantitative content analysis, random sample of 100 online newspapers (92% online editions of print newspapers and 8% purely web-based)	• Complexity of choice • Efforts users must exert • Responsiveness to the user • Facilitation of interpersonal communication • Ease of adding information • Monitor system use	An important contribution of this study is the creation of 18 measures for the six dimensions of interactivity.
Massey (2000)	Media	Quantitative content analysis, purposive sample	• Choice complexity • Immediacy • Ease of adding information to system • Facilitate interpersonal communication • Potential for responsiveness	Market-based variables predict only certain facets of an online newspaper's interactivity.

Table 3.4 interactivity concepts and dimensions: a review of the previous studies (to be continued)

Author(s)/Year	Research Field	Methodology/Sample	Interactivity Dimensions	Research Findings
Downes and McMillan (2000)	Media	Structured interview, judgmental sample of 10 key informants (elites in the area)	Message-based dimensions • Two-way communication • Timing of communication • Communication environment Participant-based dimensions • Control • Responsiveness • Perceived goals	The interactivity is a multidimensional construct and each of those dimensions seems to be represented by a continuum.
Coyle and Thorson (2001)	Advertising	Experiment, convenience sample of 68 participants drawn from a large Mid-western university (USA) and the city in which this university is located.	Using two of Steuer's (1992) interactivity sub-dimensions: • Mapping • Range	Increased levels of interactivity lead to more positive attitudes toward websites, stronger feelings of telepresence, and greater attitude-behaviour consistency.
Hwang and McMillan (2002)	Advertising	Web-based survey, convenience sample of 65 individuals	Sub-dimensions of perceived interactivity: • Real-time conversation • Engaging • No delay	The control sub-dimension of perceived interactivity has the strongest correlation with attitude toward the website.

Table 3.4 interactivity concepts and dimensions: a review of the previous studies (to be continued)

Author(s)/Year	Research Field	Methodology/Sample	Interactivity Dimensions	Research Findings
McMillan (2002)	Media	Quantitative content analysis, random sample of 108 health-related websites drawn from the Yahoo directory of health-related websites.	▪ Perception-based interactivity ▪ Feature-based interactivity	The perception-based interactivity is a better predictor of attitude toward the website and perceived relevance of the subject of the site than is the feature-based model.
McMillan and Hwang (2002)	Advertising	Online survey, random sample of 126 participants from various backgrounds in two rounds of data collection: 1st round: 61participants, 2nd round: 65 participants.	Perceived interactivity dimensions: • Real-time conversation • No delay • Engaging	This study develops scales to operationalise the perception-based approach to interactivity. Measures of perceived interactivity (MPI) items enables researchers to examine relationships among perceptions of interactivity and other key new media variables, such as attitude toward the website, involvement with the site topic, and site characteristics.

Table 3.4 interactivity concepts and dimensions: a review of the previous studies (to be continued)

Author(s)/Year	Research Field	Methodology/Sample	Interactivity Dimensions	Research Findings
Sohn *et al*. (2003)	Advertising	Quasi-experiment via e- mail, random sample of 69 undergraduate students (male=28, female =39) drawn from a class at a southwestern university, USA.	• Expected interactivity (toward the website) • Perceived interactivity (perceived interactivity)	The actors' expected interactivity toward the web plays a key role in making the two interacting entities – consumer and medium. In other words, research findings confirm the importance of expected interactivity in understanding the relationship between the consumer and the medium.
Teo et al. (2003)	Computing	Experiment, random sample of 54 subjects from three separate groups (each group has 18 members).	▪ Not mentioned	Increased level of interactivity on a website has positive effects on users' perceived satisfaction, effectiveness, efficiency, value, and overall attitude towards a website.
Liu (2003)	Advertising	Two online surveys: 1st study-random sample of 42 undergraduate business students, while 2nd study-random sample of 87 undergraduate business students.	• Active control • Two-way communication • Synchronicity	Interactivity comprises three correlated but distinct dimensions: active control, two-way communication, and synchronicity. The multidimensional scale shows a high level of validity and reliability and consistent ratings among both experienced and inexperienced Internet users.

Table 3.4 interactivity concepts and dimensions: a review of the previous studies (to be continued)

Author(s)/Year	Research Field	Methodology/Sample	Interactivity Dimensions	Research Findings
Gustavsen (2003)	Marketing Communications	Content analysis, random sample of 16 websites.	Using Dholakia *et al.*'s (2000) six dimensions of interactivity • User control • Personalisation • Responsiveness • Connectedness • Real time interaction • Playfulness	User control is the most common interactive feature of the corporate website with 13 occurrences, followed by responsiveness with 12, personalisation with 7, playfulness and real time interaction with 4 each, and finally connectedness with 1.
Fiore and Jin (2003)	Marketing	Experiment, random sample of 103 participants	▪ Not mentioned	Enhancing the interactivity of a website is seen as a means of giving the site a competitive edge. Image interactivity has a positive influence on approach responses towards an online retailer.

Table 3.4 interactivity concepts and dimensions: a review of the previous studies (to be continued)

Author(s)/Year	Research Field	Methodology/Sample	Interactivity Dimensions	Research Findings
Chung and Zhao (2004)	Computer-mediated communication (CMC)	Experiment, random sample of 180 undergraduate and graduate students from a large southern state university, USA.	▪ Not mentioned	Clicking behaviour is highly correlated with perceived interactivity, which in turn affects memory for site content and attitude towards the site.
Aussavadeegool (2004)	Advertising	Online survey, random sample of 324 master degree students (evening program) in two schools from Bangkok university, 168 responses (51.85% response rate)	▪ Not mentioned	Different types of ads do not provide a significantly different level of perceived interactivity, while there is a significant effect of perceived interactivity on the attitude-toward-the ad on attitude-toward-the brand, attitude-toward-the brand on attitude-toward the ad, and attitude-toward-the ad on purchase intention.

Table 3.4 interactivity concepts and dimensions: a review of the previous studies (to be continued)

Author(s)/Year	Research Field	Methodology/Sample	Interactivity Dimensions	Research Findings
Chen and Yen (2004)	Information System	Online surveys, random sample of 149 companies drawn from Fortune 500 Company websites.	Using Ha and James's (1998) dimensions of interactivity: • Playfulness • Choice • Connectedness • Information collection • Reciprocal communication	The reciprocal communication dimension is the most influential to predict website quality, connectedness followed as the second most influential predictor. The third is the playfulness. The remaining 2 dimensions are not significant.
Fortin and Dholakia (2005)	Advertising	Experiment, convenience sample of 360 web users; 39% response rate.	▪ Not mentioned	Results indicate moderate effect s of interactivity and vividness on social presence and indirectly, involvement that in turn have strong effects on traditional advertising effectiveness measures.
Chen et al. (2005)	Advertising	Experiment, random sample of 100 students (48 male and 52 female) in undergraduate marketing courses in a major state university (USA). Participants are assigned randomly to three treatment conditions (degree of interactivity –low/medium/high)	▪ Not mentioned	Individuals develop greater trust in the vendor and better understanding of its products through greater interactivity. Trust and product evaluation carry interactivity's influence onto not only online purchase intention, but also offline purchase intention at a brand-specific business level.

Table 3.4 interactivity concepts and dimensions: a review of the previous studies (to be continued)

Author(s)/Year	Research Field	Methodology/Sample	Interactivity Dimensions	Research Findings
Wu (2005)	Advertising	Web experiment, convenience sample of 157 undergraduate students from a large southwestern university in the United States.	• Perceived control • Perceived responsiveness • Perceived personalisation	The effect of actual interactivity on attitude toward the site is mediated by perceived interactivity.
Sohn and Lee (2005)	Advertising	Online survey, cluster sample of 2320 participants; 108 responses (4.7% response rate) There seems no reason for such low response rate	• Control • Responsiveness • Interaction efficacy	Interactivity dimensions are differently influenced by social & psychological indicators; interactivity is an outcome from the intersection of functional and perceptual aspects.
Jensen (2005)	Media	In-depth interviews with 8 employees from two different organisations: a large Nordic bank and a medium-sized web development company in Denmark.	• Structure • Media • Agent	The interview provides grounded descriptions and illustrations of how three theoretically conceived aspects of interactivity are experienced and enacted in practice.

Table 3.4 interactivity concepts and dimensions: a review of the previous studies (to be continued)

Author(s)/Year	Research Field	Methodology/Sample	Interactivity Dimensions	Research Findings
Cho and Cheon (2005)	Advertising	Quantitative content analysis, random sample of 200 corporate business websites drawn from leading U.S., U.K., Japanese, and South Korean national advertisers' websites.	• Consumer-message interactivity • Consumer -marketer interactivity • Consumer-consumer interactivity	Western websites tend to emphasise consumer-message and consumer-marketer interactivity, whereas Eastern websites highlight consumer-consumer interactivity; How to measure interactivity on the Internet: marketer-controlled interactivity (through content analysis), consumers' perceived interactivity (through user surveys), and consumers' behavioural interactivity (through computer log

				file analysis).
Sicilia et al (2005)	Advertising	Web experiment, convenience sample of 233 students at a Spanish university.	▪ Not mentioned	The interactive website leads to more information processing, higher favourability toward the product and the website, and greater flow state intensity.

Table 3.4 interactivity concepts and dimensions: a review of the previous studies (to be continued)

Author(s)/Year	Research Field	Methodology/Sample	Interactivity Dimensions	Research Findings
Panteli et al. (2005)	Information System	Case study: methodological triangulation with use of documentation, semi-structured and structured interviews, two stages design: 1st interviews with four participants who involve in developing, implementing and maintaining the system, plus documentation; 2nd in-depth, structured and semi-structured interviews with 14 participants across different departments and levels (28.6% respondents are remote users of Farmaintranet; 71.4% respondents are in Head Office).	▪ Not mentioned	The intranet connectivity to other communication media contributes to intranet interactivity when both organisational connectivity and technological connectivity are in place.
Fortunati et al. (2005)	Media	Quantitative content analysis, random sample of 13 online news sites drawn from four countries: Bulgaria, Estonia, Ireland, and Italy.	▪ Not mentioned	In interactivity in online newspapers, display and self-exhibition are important issues to be considered.

Table 3.4 interactivity concepts and dimensions: a review of the previous studies (to be continued)

Author(s)/Year	Research Field	Methodology/Sample	Interactivity Dimensions	Research Findings
Lee (2005)	Mobile Commerce	Survey, random sample of 384 participants (252 under (graduate) students and 132 business workers) in Seoul, South Korea.	• Perceived user control • Perceived responsiveness • Perceived personalisation • Perceived connectedness • Perceived ubiquitous connectivity • Perceived contextual offer	Perceived ubiquitous connectivity and perceived contextual offer improves the model fit. The perceptions of user control, responsiveness, connectedness, ubiquitous connectivity, and contextual offer have a significant effect on transaction intentions in Mobile Commerce.
Swain (2005)	Advertising	Online survey, both a purposive and convenience sample of 185 participants.	▪ Not mentioned	Interactivity is proved to be the outcomes of interactive marketing communication: both as a basis of for determining marketing communication investment and agency compensation.
Johnson *et al*. (2006)	Advertising	Experiment, random sample of 180 undergraduate students.	• Reciprocity • Responsiveness • Speed of response • Nonverbal information	Responsiveness, speed of response, and nonverbal information are found to be significantly related to perceived interactivity.

Table 3.4 interactivity concepts and dimensions: a review of the previous studies (to be continued)

Author(s)/Year	Research Field	Methodology/Sample	Interactivity Dimensions	Research Findings
Thorson and Rodgers (2006)	Advertising	Experiment, random sample of 69 undergraduate students (52% female, 48% male) from a major Midwestern university, USA.	▪ Not mentioned	Interactivity in the form of a weblog significantly influences attitude toward the website, but not attitudes toward the candidate or voting intention.
Johnson *et al*. (2006)	Advertising	Experiment, random sample of 180 undergraduate students.	• Reciprocity • Responsiveness • Speed of response • Nonverbal information	Responsiveness, speed of response, and nonverbal information are found to be significantly related to perceived interactivity.
Lustria (2007)	Information Science and Technology	Web experiment, convenience sample of 441 undergraduates from a large southeastern university, USA	▪ Not mentioned	The interactivity can significantly affect comprehension as well as attitudes towards health websites.
Liu (2007)	Consumer Behaviour	2 studies: 1st study-online survey, random sample of 198 undergraduate business students; 2nd study-mail survey, random sample of 973 participants in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States (362 responses)	▪ Not mentioned	Develops a scale (IRSCALE) to measure the construct, in order to understand consumers' online interaction preferences.

Table 3.4 interactivity concepts and dimensions: a review of the previous studies (to be continued)

Author(s)/Year	Research Field	Methodology/Sample	Interactivity Dimensions	Research Findings
Rahman (2008)	Media	Quantitative content analysis, random sample of 28 online news sites of Bangladesh (23 online editions of print newspapers and 5 purely web-based).	• Complexity of choice • Efforts users must exert • Responsiveness to the users • Facilitation of interpersonal communication • Ease of adding information • Monitoring system use • Immediacy	Online newspapers of Bangladesh provide limited level of interactivity.
Song and Zinkhan (2008)	Marketing	Two experiments; 1st experiment: random sample of 336 participants; 2nd experiments: 121 undergraduate students.	• Number of clicks • Response time • Message type • Interaction effect • WOM communication • Repeat purchase behaviour	1st Experiment: message type is the strongest predictor of interactivity perceptions. 2nd Experiment: as the level of message personalisation increase, interactivity perceptions and site effectiveness are enhanced.

Table 3.4 interactivity concepts and dimensions: a review of the previous studies (to be continued)

Author(s)/Year	Research Field	Methodology/Sample	Interactivity Dimensions	Research Findings
Yoon *et al*. (2008)	Marketing	Online survey, random sample of 586 adults (312 who complete the web-based e-retailer version and 274 who complete the click-and-mortar retailer version, 571 responses.	• Perceived control • Perceived two-way communication • Perceived synchronicity	Two marketing tactics (direct mail/ e-mail and tangible rewards) and two dimensions of perceived interactivity (synchronicity and two-way communication) are as significant antecedents for the relationship-building process of online retail brands.
Kweon *et al*. (2008)	Media	Online survey, random sample of 587 participants.	Technical/Media dimensions • Hypertext • Interface Content or message dimensions • Personal communication • Community work • News or information Perception of media characteristics • HCI • CMC	The dimension of the media side's interactivity affects the content's side's interactivity. The content side's interactivity affects the user's perception of portal media.

Table 3.4 interactivity concepts and dimensions: a review of the previous studies (to be continued)

Author(s)/Year	Research Field	Methodology/Sample	Interactivity Dimensions	Research Findings
Macias and McMillan (2008)	Communication	Focus group interviews with 31 participants.	▪ Not mentioned	Data collected helps to develop a model of seniors' online health interactions. Three primary themes that emerged to form the key elements of the model: the health situation, health information, and the medical field.
Leiner and Quiring (2008)	Computer-mediated communication (CMC)	Preliminary study: in-depth interviews with 10 participants in different sectors and positions; online survey with 159 participants; Main study: online survey, random sample of 1021 participants.	• Not mentioned	The results generally validate the existing constructs, which are largely based on technical characteristics.
Zhao and Dholakia (2009)	Service Marketing	Adopting Kano *et al.* (1984) methodology:1st study-online survey, convenience sample of 200 undergraduate students from business classes in two New England universities (177 responses, 88.5% response rate); 2nd study- random sample of 225 participants (190 responses, 76% response rate).	• Customer feedback and comments • Customer-to-customer communication • Key word search • Navigation • Online ordering system • Order status tracking • Personalisation • Virtual reality display	This study makes a contribution to the understanding of the complexity of cyberworld by focusing on interactivity at the attribute level; several relations are found between interactive website attributes and customer satisfaction.

In regard to the comparable table (Table 3.4), web-based surveys, experiments and content analysis account for the vast majority of methods employed in the articles. First, previous research on the concept of interactivity are frequently assumed the form of online surveys. Accordingly, 16 studies demonstrate how this method is designed and conducted. For example, many scholars are using online surveys to examine the correlations between interactivity with a website and attitudes toward that site. Empirical results indicate a strong linkage between the perceived interactivity and the attitudes on the certain website (McMillan, 2000; Hwang and McMillan, 2002; Aussavadeegool, 2004; Kweon *et al*., 2008; Yoon, 2008; Zhao and Dholakia, 2009).

Interestingly, another study by Lee (2005) signifies the positive effect of the perceived interactivity on transaction intentions in Mobile Commerce (MC). It is evident that Lee's (2005) research might provide a strong driving force for the researcher's research. As no attempt is made to extend interactivity dimensions to a corporate weblogging context, the current study might have a great potential for development.

In addition, other studies develop a measure of interactivity in their quantitative researches. McMillan and Hwang (2002), Liu (2003), for example, develop scales to operationalise the perception-based approach to interactivity on the basis of multidimensional conceptualisation of the construct. Liu (2007) further develops a scale (IRSCALE) to measure the construct, in order to understand participants' online interaction preferences. From the researcher's point of view, it is highly recommended to replicate and adapt these measurement techniques in conducting research within the weblogging context. In other words, these scales of measurement provide a directive function and referential value for the researcher to design and conduct his ongoing research.

Secondly, the table demonstrates the trends of using the World Wide Web as a vehicle for conducting experiments. Also, it is indicated that many of the experiment studies are conducted in the field of advertising. Among 13 experimental studies, Coyle and Thorson's (2001) paper provides more convincing empirical evidence. In their research, Coyle and Thorson (2001) create four websites with sixteen versions of each. The samples of 68 participants are then asked to view the given websites and to find out the level of interactive impacts on those participants. The finding indicates a positive correlation between increased levels of interactivity and visitors' attitude and behaviour regarding certain websites. Importantly, this empirical research approach is very helpful in understanding the role of telepresence and assisting marketers, advertisers to develop more efficient websites.

The experiment by Chung and Zhao (2004) utilise measures of both functional and perceptual interactivity. Clicking behaviour is found to be highly connected with perceived interactivity, which in turn affects attitude towards the site (Chung and Zhao, 2004). A similar issue is raised in the quasi-experiment of Sohn *et al*. (2003). In this study, the authors aim to examine the interaction between consumers and product-related websites. And the research findings confirm the importance of expected interactivity in understanding the relationship between the consumer and the medium. Although this quantitative research instrument is advocated by experimentalists, it is still unclear which dimension of interactivity is operating. For example, there is a rather narrow range of interactivity in which the depth and complexity of interaction are largely unexplored (Tremayne, 2005).

Thirdly, 11 studies are identified that applied content analysis to provide a useful instrument for managing large volumes of texts (Silverman, 2006). As a research instrument, content analysis is used in a variety of ways and within a number of contexts. Since the early 1940s researchers start to express their concerns about the methodology in the field of psychology, sociology, communication, organisational theory, and political science (Weare and Lin, 2000). Recently content analysis is extensively used for examining the characteristics of various types of websites (Cober *et al*., 2004).

Corresponding to empirical researches on interactivity via websites using content analysis, studies by Ha and James (1998) and Ghose and Dou (1998) make pioneering contributions to the operationalization of interactivity concepts. More precisely, Ha and James (1998) analyse the content by assessing dimensions of business website interactivity and coincide with the previous literature and communication theories to the interactivity concept. Ha and James (1998, p.457) also propose five dimensions of interactivity, in which each dimension corresponds to particular website structures. As such, Ghose and Dou (1998) analyse 23 interactive functions from 101 websites under three dimensions. The levels of interactivity are found directly related to a website's attractiveness (Ghose and Dou, 1998).

Similarly, McMillan (1999) uses the research method to study interactivity on health-related websites by examining six dimensions, which coincides with extant literature on the concept of interactivity. Recently, Cho and Cheon (2005) conduct a quantitative content analysis to examine the concept of interactivity on four different countries' national advertisers' websites. The research indicates, Western websites emphasises consumer-message and consumer-marketer interactivity, while Eastern websites highlight consumer-consumer interactivity. Based on the current literature, the researcher finds out that there are two main applications of content analysis: quantitative approach and qualitative approach. More precisely, the quantitative content analysis is often conducted in the field of communication studies and media research, whereas the qualitative content analysis is often used in education research.

In addition, another interesting phenomenon also occurs in the empirical research. It is found that survey sample sizes vary in terms of the context of the study, the size of the population analysed and the method of data collection. As much as 29 of these involved random samples whereas 8 studies involve some type of convenience sample. In the same vein, the comparable table (Table 3.4) also finds, 18 reviewed studies involve (university) student samples. It may be that the student samples reflect a general tendency towards the usage of the Internet within an information overloaded society. However, these findings might be limited in their generalisation. Also, there is no justification for selecting the sample of students in those studies.

To sum up, this subsection rigorously examines the peer-reviewed literature on survey instruments across different research fields. On the basis of the comparable table, it can be seen that a much larger number of articles use a single methodology. For example, only two of studies are conducted through a two-stage design involving in-depth interviews and online surveys. In this instance, a mixed method design, namely, sequential explanatory design is called for, in order to coincide with the research gaps. Also, there is only one study that collects data using case studies and three use in-depth interviews. Since the major part of empirical studies is quantitative, more qualitative studies are needed to get more detailed insights into the research, in order to fulfil the research requirement.

3.4.2 Questionnaire Design and Administration

The preceding part justifies the use of the quantitative survey methodology for the research. A detailed exposition is given in this subsection and the next, to address three further areas of the research design: questionnaire design and administration, sampling plan, and data analysis strategies. For the purpose of collecting accurate and complete information, the questionnaire is formalised during the course of the research phase. On the basis of literature studies, seven steps of design and administration are synthesised and adapted as follows (Churchill, 1995; Frazer and Lawley, 2000).

3.4.2.1 Specifying the Information Needed

The first step in questionnaire design is to identify and determine the information requirements to fulfil the research objectives. The information about ethical issues is considered before participation in the survey. At the beginning of the survey instrument, this thesis addresses the ethical issues with a brief introduction to the researcher and to state the rationale of the research (a covering letter). A pre-question is then designed to extract those who have not used travel weblogs in China. Only people who have used travel weblogs in China are qualified to participate in the survey research.

Afterward, the survey instrument is launched in China for collecting data. In these questionnaires, the questions are principally based and adapted from a numerous items found by prominent scholars in the field of computer-mediated communication (CMC), media, marketing, information system, consumer behaviour, e-commerce, and advertising. The questionnaires are then translated into the respondents' first language, the Chinese language for the presentation purposes of the research. For example, the respondents might prefer every item to be listed in the Chinese language only. Therefore, misunderstanding could be avoided and the respondents might comprehend better if all items are in their mother tongue.

To address the research questions, three sections of statements are incorporated in this study. Wherein, close-ended questions are employed to measure key variables. More precisely, information collected is divided into three dimensions: attitudinal, behavioural, and socio-demographics.

3.4.2.1.1 Section One – Attitudinal Dimensions

This section of the questionnaire is designed to identify the respondents' preference of weblog attributes in understanding and predicting their travel behaviours. Importantly, the section consists of attitudinal statements designed to capture the dimensions of interactivity and constructs of user motives. As interactivity is multidimensional, each dimension are transcribed and measured by different indicators (detailed questions). Respondents are asked to indicate their degree of agreement to each statement measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". According to Babbie (1992, p.65), Likert scale is often used in measuring respondents' attitudes and importantly helps to "improving levels of measurement in social research" through the standardised response categories. This scale of measurement therefore affords a higher degree of precision and reliability of data, and permits detailed and accurate comparisons between sets of data (Sarantakos, 2005). Also, the five-point Likert type scale is often used in tourism research to measure the motivational aspects of tourists (Petrick et al., 2001; Kim et al., 2003; McCleary et al., 2005; Lee et al., 2006). Applying the five-point Likert scale to this research can help the researcher to evaluate if the travel weblogging services that are currently being utilised are actually effective (interactive). In other words, this section aims to reveal and assess the travellers' perceptions of weblogging services within the interactive context.

3.4.2.1.2 Section Two –Behavioural Dimensions

This section is tailored to collect general information about travellers' weblogging behaviours. The questionnaire consists of the respondents' past weblogging experiences and their tourism-related activities. In detail, the section aims to assess travellers' behaviours as webloggers (for example, frequency of using weblogs, types of weblogging activities, and number of years of using the weblogs), travellers' participation in travel companies' interactive events (for example, the past and current participation in a particular virtual community meeting and promotion events, interacting experience (behaviour) with other webloggers, the past and current behaviours in interacting with tourists).

The same as the section one, all the behaviours are measured by multiple items. The questionnaire in this section comprises the adapted interactivity dimensions. Within the modified interactivity dimensions, the response items are made up of a five-point Likert scale. Respondents are asked their past and current weblogging experiences with travel-related products and services. By applying the five-point Likert scale to this research, scaled questions are concentrated into three categories including the two lowest and the two highest possible scores, respectively. The application of the Likert scale helps the researcher to explain or give strength to conclude on the research questions (McKercher, 2002).

3.4.2.1.3 Section Three –Socio-Demographics Dimensions

The respondents' socio-demographics characteristics are measured in this section. It includes two variables that are reported frequently by the literature relating to the respondents' age group and education level. Inside the section, each question are developed using questionnaire to present the socio-demographics of Chinese travel webloggers. Respondents are asked to tick the cell which best describes their situations.

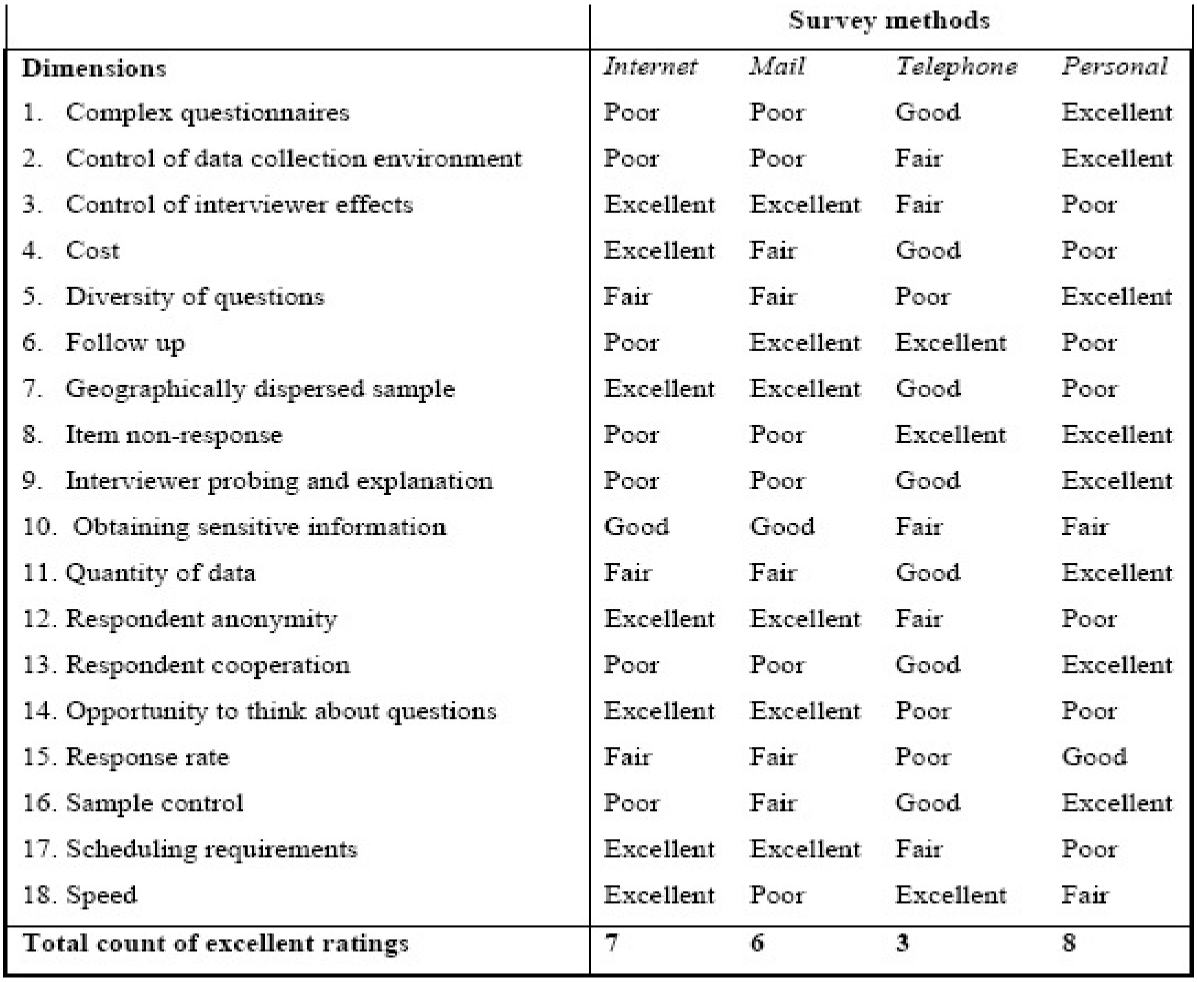
3.4.2.2 Specifying the Survey Method

The next step in questionnaire design is to specify how the data would be collected, which is the survey method. The decision to select the online survey method in this research is based on an assessment of the advantages and limitations of Internet surveys as well as research objectives (see Table 3.5). According to Assael (1993), there are four key advantages associated with the design and submission of the web-based survey:

- There are no time restrictions for the respondents
- Using a web-based survey approach helps researchers to gain a large amount of information with a small amount of difficulty
- Using a web-based survey approach helps to lower the chance of respondent bias, due to the lack of interaction with an interviewer or other survey respondents
- In comparison with other survey methods, a web-based surveys provides an inexpensive method of data collection

Therefore, this research phase selects a web-based survey as the primary survey data collection method, because it has a good overall rating when comparing with other survey methods. Of this, the survey is conducted via self-administered questionnaires on a website. Also, three sections of questionnaires are designed to be short-answer, via click-button responses. The purpose of using click-button responses is to encourage the respondents to input and submit their responses in an efficient means.

Table 3.5: A comparison of survey methods



	Survey methods			
Dimensions	*Internet*	*Mail*	*Telephone*	*Personal*
1. Complex questionnaires	Poor	Poor	Good	Excellent
2. Control of data collection environment	Poor	Poor	Fair	Excellent
3. Control of interviewer effects	Excellent	Excellent	Fair	Poor
4. Cost	Excellent	Fair	Good	Poor
5. Diversity of questions	Fair	Fair	Poor	Excellent
6. Follow up	Poor	Excellent	Excellent	Poor
7. Geographically dispersed sample	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Poor
8. Item non-response	Poor	Poor	Excellent	Excellent
9. Interviewer probing and explanation	Poor	Poor	Good	Excellent
10. Obtaining sensitive information	Good	Good	Fair	Fair
11. Quantity of data	Fair	Fair	Good	Excellent
12. Respondent anonymity	Excellent	Excellent	Fair	Poor
13. Respondent cooperation	Poor	Poor	Good	Excellent
14. Opportunity to think about questions	Excellent	Excellent	Poor	Poor
15. Response rate	Fair	Fair	Poor	Good
16. Sample control	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
17. Scheduling requirements	Excellent	Excellent	Fair	Poor
18. Speed	Excellent	Poor	Excellent	Fair
Total count of excellent ratings	**7**	**6**	**3**	**8**

Source: Synthesised for this research from Churchill (1995); Frazer and Lawley (2000).

3.4.2.3 Selecting the Format of Responses

According to Davis and Cosenza (1993), the design of the questions is related to the format of response for measurement. Of this, three types measurement scales used in designing the questions. The purpose is to assess the objective and subjective characteristics of respondents in terms of nominal, ordinal, and interval scales (Aaker *et al.*, 2005).

In detail, nominal scales are used for identification purposes because they have no numeric value (Dawes, 2008). In other words, this type of scales allocates a number to an object and permits the counting of the number of objects in a category without referring about order and distance (Malhotra, 1999). On the other hand, ordinal scales assign responses to categories as such that score in a higher category possess more of a characteristic of interest than scores in a lower category (Malhotra, 1999). For example, ordinal scales are used to rank travel webloggers' personal information, such as gender, age group, education level. Ordinal scales, also termed as ranking scales, allow the calculation of the median, quartile, percentile and correlation (Bagozzi, 1996a).

Further, interval scales are used to measure the subjective characteristics of respondents. According to Bagozzi (1996a), this type of scale is accepted as the most frequently used measurement technique in marketing research. In this scale, numbers are assigned to indicate differences in the degree of a characteristic or statement along a continuum (Bagozzi, 1996a). In this research phase, the five Likert scales are treated as interval scales in nature. This stage aims to investigate the respondents' attitudes and behaviours in relation to the interactive events. The interval scales are used owing to its strength in arranging the objects in a particular order. These scales are used to measure the distance between the differences in response ratings (Burns and Bush, 2002; Churchill and Iacobucci, 2004).

Based on the scaling procedure used for the questions, closed-ended questions are employed due to the large scale survey approach (Gendall and Hoek, 1990). Accordingly, five-point Likert type scales, with all points labelled, are used for collecting of most of the data. For this research stage, labelled Likert scales are appropriate to measure responses. Several reasons are listed as follows:

- This types of scales is widely used in marketing research and is extensively tested in both marketing and social science (Garland, 1991);
- It increases higher possibility of response accurately reflect respondents' opinions (Burn and Bush, 2002; Zikmund, 2000);
- It helps researchers to achieve higher reliability coefficients with fewer items than the scales developed using other methods (Hayes, 1998);

- It helps researchers to increase the spread of variance of responses, which in turn provide stronger measures of association (Aaker *et al*., 2005; Wong, 1999)

3.4.2.4 Assessing Reliability and Validity of the Questionnaire

For the purpose of evaluating how well each question, or group questions, researchers are advised to use the concepts of reliability and validity (Oppenheim, 1997). Hence, the questionnaire should be valid and reliable. This subsection aims to assess the validity and reliability of the questionnaire used for this study. Each of the basic types of validity and reliability is discussed and summarised in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6 Assessment of validity and reliability of the questionnaire

Types of validity and reliability	**Definition**	**Strategies of assessment**
Validity	The accuracy of measurement, that is, a valid scale measures what it is designed for (Davis and Cosenza, 1993)	▪ Approaches taken to scale development
Content validity	The degree to which the content of an indicator reflects the intended concept (Neuman, 2000; Burns and Bush, 2000)	▪ Literature review ▪ Field experts' feedback ▪ Pretesting of questionnaire ▪ Confirmatory factor analysis
Construct validity	The degree to which a construct achieves empirical and theoretical meaning (Parasuraman, 1991; Zikmund, 2000; Steenkamp and Van Trijp, 1991)	▪ Literature review ▪ Pretesting of questionnaire ▪ Data analysis
Reliability	A measure is reliable to the extent that independent but comparable measures of the same trait or construct agree (Churchill, 1995)	▪ Multiple indicators in the questionnaire ▪ Pretesting of questionnaire

Source: Adapted from Lawley (1998)

According to Veal (1997, p.35), validity is defined as 'the extent to which the information collected by the researcher truly reflects the phenomena being studied'. This concept is also termed as the accuracy of measurement (Davis and Cosenza, 1993; Churchill, 1995). In brief, a research measure can be considered valid if it demonstrates what the researcher intends to measure (Burns, 2000; Zikmund, 2003). In other words, validity indicates whether the question, item or score measures what it is supposed to measure (Oppenheim, 1997). With regard to the technical term, two types of measurement validity are relevant to this study.

- *Content validity*

Content validity is the degree to which the content of an indicator reflects the intended concept (Neuman, 2000; Burns and Bush, 2000). In this research phase, the research content is validated through identifying and determining the dimensions of interactivity which are defined and used previously in the literature (Churchill and Iacobucci, 2004). In particular, the dimensions of interactivity and constructs of user motives are identified from computer-mediated communication (CMC), media, marketing, information system, consumer behaviour, e-commerce, and advertising literature. Therefore, opinions and suggestions from field experts are needed to provide relevant standard guide for this research. Given this, four marketing professors are asked to review a list of measurement scale in a questionnaire and to suggest any amendments to the items before it is sent for pretesting. The questionnaire is then developed, pretested on a small sample. Afterwards, the questionnaire is modified and finalised to reflect the feedback received.

- *Construct validity*

By contrast, construct validity occurs when the theoretical implications which drive the concepts are in accordance with the empirical evidence (Davis and Cosenza, 1993; Parasuraman, 1991). Zikmund (2000) explains, construct validity demonstrates the extent to which the constructs hypothetically related to one another to measure a concept founded on the research theories. In order to provide higher validity in this research phase, multiple items are used for measuring all the constructs. Also, for the purpose of this research, factor analysis is employed to measure the dimensions of interactivity and to determine which items are appropriate for each dimension.

Reliability, on the other hand, refers to the consistency and stability of a measuring instrument, and is closely related to objectivity, which is the extent to which research findings can be replicated with similar results (Davis and Cosenza, 1993; Yin, 2003; Jennings, 2001). In short, a reliable measuring instrument is one that provides consist results and relatively free from random error (Zikmund, 2000). For this research, reliability is achieved by:

- Clearly conceptualising the dimensions of interactivity
- Assuring precise and consistent measurements of the dimensions of interactivity
- Employing multiple indicators of the dimensions of interactivity
- Pretesting and replicating the measurements

To sum up, validity is concerned with the accuracy of measurement, while reliability is concerned with its stability and consistency (Sekaran, 2000). A more detailed description of assessing validity and reliability can be found in chapter 5 and 6 where the data are statistically analysed.

3.4.2.5 Preparing Draft Questionnaire

3.4.2.5.1 Styles of Draft Questionnaire

This subsection considers the draft questionnaire in accordance with the research objectives, respondents' characteristics, the approximate length of the questionnaire, and the communication style. With respect to the measurement issue, principles of good question design are advocated to minimise errors of measurement (Davis and Cosenza, 1993; Salant and Dilman, 1994; Sekaran, 2000). In this instance, the content, structure, and wording of each question are considered in the construction of the questionnaire (Herche and Engelland, 1996; Fox *et al*., 2003). First, in relation to question content, double-barrelled and sensitive questions are avoided (De Vaus, 2002). Instead, only applicable and legitimate questions are employed to collect the data. Given this, Dillman (1978, p.80) indicates five distinct types of question content: behaviour, beliefs, knowledge, attitudes and attributes. It is therefore important to be clear about the precise type of information required for a number of reasons (De Vaus, 2002).

Secondly, as regards question structure in the questionnaire, all types of structured questions are conducted including scale, multiple choices questions. The scale questions are close-ended with specific ordered choices that are less demanding for the respondents (Salant and Dillman, 1994). While in the multiple-choice questions, all important alternatives are listed, in order to overcome order bias of the questionnaire.

Thirdly, in regard to the wording of questions, it is important that respondents interpret questions in the manner where the researcher intends (Fox *et al.*, 2003, p.169). In other words, the research has to certify that words have only one meaning, words have no leading or biased words or phrases, and all questions are stated in a positive manner (Herche and Engelland, 1996). According to Dillman (2000), the orders in which questions are asked affect the response and the overall data collection activity. Therefore, questions in this research phase are ordered from the most interesting and topic-related at the beginning to those most likely to be objectionable at the end, and questions on the same subject are put together (Bourque and Fielder, 1995; Salant and Dillman, 1994). Further, within subject areas, questions of similar structure are grouped together. For example, attitude questions are placed in the attitudinal section, while factual questions are resided in the behavioural section.

Questions related to respondents' demographic information put near the end (Socio-demographics). In fact, many well-designed surveys start with 'socio-demographics' (such as gender or educational level), as it might be applicable and easily understandable. However, there is a debate on the ordering questions in the questionnaire. Many of those surveys receive poor or lower response rates due to the lack of unities between the understanding of respondents and the research objectives (Babbie, 1990; Dillman, 2000). Therefore, the researcher decides not to start his questionnaire with socio-demographic questions.

3.4.2.5.2 Derivation of Draft Questionnaire

In the preceding chapter, a conceptual framework was identified and defined. The items for this framework were adopted and modified from previous research instruments (Mackensie *et al.*, 1986; Wu, 1999; Chen and Wells, 1999; McMillan and Hwang, 2002; Liu, 2003; Kwon, 2003; Teo *et al.*, 2003; Cyr *et al.*, 2007). Liu (2002) offers criteria for researchers to validate the revised scale items in their studies: 1) whether there is any discrepancy between items and the construct to be measured; 2) whether there is any set of items that could not fully explain the construct to be measured, and 3) whether there is any ambiguous wording. In the current research, there were minor changes to several items.

This study first examines and measures the dimensions of interactivity. As discussed previously (See Chapter 2), the literature study concludes that there are three distinct dimensions of interactivity: active control, two-way communication, and real-time communication. Also, the designed conceptual table (by the researcher himself) tested and verified the popularity of those three dimensions (Newhagen, 1995; Rafaeli and Sudweeks, 1997; Ha and James, 1998; Wu, 1999; McMillan and Hwang, 2002; Liu, 2003). It has been shown previously (See Chapter 2) that the works by Liu (2003) and Wu (1999) appear to be more reliable and valid. Given this, the researcher modified items from Liu's (2003), McMillan and Hwang's (2002), and Wu's (1999) interactivity research in this study (see Table 3.7).

Table 3.7 Derivation of Draft Questionnaire

Active Control	
Original Items (Liu, 2003; Wu, 1999)	**Modified Items (5 items)**
I felt that I had a lot of control over my visiting experiences at this website (Liu, 2003)	I was in control over my visiting experience.
I was delighted to be able to choose which link and when to click (Wu, 1999)	I was delighted to be able to choose which link and when to click.
While surfing the website, my action decided the kind of experiences I got (Liu, 2003)	While surfing travel weblogs, my action decided the kind of experiences I got.
While I was on the site, I could quickly jump from one page to another (Wu, 1999).	While I was on the travel weblogs, I could quickly jump from one page to another.
While I was on the websites, I could freely choose what I want see (Liu, 2003)	While I was on the travel weblogs, I could freely choose what I want see.

Two-way Communication	
Original Items (Liu, 2003; McMillan and Hwang, 2002)	**Modified Items (7 items)**
This website facilitates two-way communication between the visitors and the site (Liu, 2003)	Travel weblogs facilitate two-way communications between owners and active weblog users.
This website enables concurrent communication (McMillan and Hwang, 2002)	Travel weblogs would provide opportunities for me to communicate with other travel weblog users concurrently.
The websites make me feel like it wants to listen to its visitors (Liu, 2003)	Travel weblogs make me feel like it wants to listen to its visitors.
This website enables conversation (McMillan and Hwang, 2002)	Travel weblogs enable conversation.
The website does encourage visitors to talk back (Liu, 2003)	Travel weblogs encourage visitors to offer feedback.
The website is effective in gathering visitors' feedback (Liu, 2003)	Travel weblogs are effective in gathering visitors' feedback.
The websites give visitors the opportunity to talk back (Liu, 2003)	Travel weblogs give me the opportunity to talk back.

Real-time Communication	
Original Items (Luo, 2002; Liu, 2003)	**Modified Items (6 items)**
I think the information obtained from the web is useful (Luo, 2002)	The information provided from travel weblogs is relevant.
Getting information from sport website is very fast (Liu, 2003)	The information I can get from travel weblogs is very fast.
I was able to obtain information I want without any delay (Liu, 2003)	I was able to obtain the information I want without any delay.
When I click on links, I felt I was getting instantaneous information (Liu, 2003)	When I clicked on the links, I can obtain instantaneous information that published by other webloggers.
The website was very quick in responding to my requests (Liu, 2003)	Travel weblogs answered my questions immediately.
The website processed my input very quickly (Liu, 2003)	I felt that travel weblogs processed my input very quickly.

Secondly, three key user motives were identified through the review of literature: 1) social interaction, 2) Information of travel weblogs, 3) enjoyment. To measure the three user motives associated with travel weblogs, the researcher adopted and modified items from previous studies (Wu, 1999; McMillan and Hwang, 2002; Ko *et al*., 2002; Kwon, 2003; Luo, 2002; Liu, 2003; Teo *et al*., 2003; Cyr *et al*., 2007).

Social Interaction	
Original Items (Kwon *et al*., 2003; Ko *et al*., 2002)	**Modified Items (4 items)**
I use the Internet because I can share experience with others (Kwon *et al*., 2003)	Travel weblogs engage weblog publishers and readers communicate with each other.
I can express myself freely on the sport website (Ko *et al*., 2002)	I can express myself freely on the travel weblog.
I use the Internet because I can share experience with others (Kwon *et al*., 2003)	On the travel weblog, I am interested in other webloggers' opinions.
I use the Internet because I can make friend via the Internet (Kwon *et al*., 2003)	I felt that I was part of the community when I visit travel weblogs.

Information of Travel Weblogs	
Original Items (Teo *et al*., 2003)	**Modified Items (3 items)**
The information published on websites is generally satisfactory (Teo *et al*., 2003)	The information published by other travel webloggers is generally satisfactory.
Feedback and rating systems are very useful to help decision-making (Teo *et al*., 2003)	A feedback and rating system is considered useful to webloggers to help make travel decisions.
The hyperlinked images and texts on websites are helpful to meet users' expectations (Teo *et al*., 2003)	The hyperlinked images and texts from travel weblogs are helpful to fulfil webloggers' expectations.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Enjoyment</th></tr>
<tr><th>Original Items (Cyr <i>et al</i>., 2007)</th><th>Modified Items (2 items)</th></tr>
<tr><td>I found my visit to this website interesting (Cyr <i>et al</i>., 2007).</td><td>I felt interesting when I was reading the hot issues on travel weblogs.</td></tr>
<tr><td>I found my visit to this website enjoyable (Cyr <i>et al</i>., 2007)</td><td>I felt that the process of participating in travel weblogs is enjoyable.</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Attitude toward Travel Weblogs</th></tr>
<tr><th>Original Items (Chen and Wells, 1999)</th><th>Modified Items (3 items)</th></tr>
<tr><td>This website makes it easy for me to build a relationship with this company.</td><td>Travel weblogs make it easy for me to build a relationship with travel companies.</td></tr>
<tr><td>I am satisfied with the service provided by this website.</td><td>I feel satisfied with the service provided by the travel weblogs.</td></tr>
<tr><td>I feel comfortable in surfing this website.</td><td>I feel comfortable in surfing travel weblogs.</td></tr>
</table>

In this study, Chen and Wells's (1999) attitude toward the website measure is included, as this measurement has been employed to measure effectiveness of website (McMillan and Hwang, 2002; Luo, 2002; McMillan *et al*., 2003; Ko *et al*., 2005).

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Intention to Revisit Travel Weblogs</th></tr>
<tr><th>Original Items (Mackensie <i>et al</i>., 1986)</th><th>Modified Items (3 items)</th></tr>
<tr><td>I am likely to visit sport websites in the future.</td><td>I am likely to visit travel weblogs in the future.</td></tr>
<tr><td>I will probably visit sport websites in the future.</td><td>I am probably to visit travel weblogs in the future.</td></tr>
<tr><td>I will possibly visit sport websites in the future.</td><td>I am possibly to visit travel weblogs in the future.</td></tr>
</table>

From its origin, intention to revisit was measured by using a three-item scale developed to measure purchase intention (Mackensie *et al*., 1986). This scale of measurement was also adopted and applied in some website studies to measure users' purchase intention in websites (Bruner and Kumar, 2000; Bruner *et al*., 2002; Ko *et al*., 2005). All items used in the current study were derived from those three existing measures, and three new items were developed with minor modification.

Besides, according to Chinese culture, a bilingual question in the survey questionnaire is more preferable and popular. Merely Chinese edition questionnaire is normally easily ignored or avoided (Chen and Tan, 1993, p.128). Therefore, a bilingual style questionnaire seems more formal and rigorous.

3.4.2.6 Pretesting, Revising, and Placing the Questionnaire Online

Once a questionnaire is developed, each question and the questionnaire as a whole must be evaluated rigorously before final administration (De Vaus, 2002). A pilot study is therefore conducted to test whether the designed questionnaire fulfils the research aim and objectives. The aim of the pretesting is to elicit valuable comments from respondents, disclose ambiguous wording or errors before administering the final version of the survey (Remenyi *et al*., 1998; Burns and Bush, 2003; Zikmund, 2000). In order to determine the survey instrument to be used, question sequence and layout, terminology, and voluntary participation of the research are tested and indicated.

De Vaus (2002, p.114-116) further indicates the steps in full pilot testing or pretesting:

1) Question development: in this testing stage, the main purpose is to establish how to phrase and develop each question, to evaluate how respondents interpret the meaning of the questions and to check whether there is sufficient response alternatives;
2) Questionnaire development: the purpose of testing at this stage is to facilitate the further evaluation of individual items and the questionnaire as a whole. In this regard, considerable efforts are put into the development of the questionnaire. Feedback from the pretesting is incorporated to make improvements to the instrument (questionnaire);
3) Polishing pilot test: this final testing stage is to revise questions and to ensure the clarity and understandability of the questionnaire between the researcher and respondents.

The pretesting activity is considered particularly significant for electronic surveys through estimating the amount of oversampling required (Sheehan and Hoy, 1999) and the identification of question problems (McCoy and Marks, 2001). According to Dillman (2000), responding to an electronic questionnaire is not the same as responding paper questionnaire. For example, questionnaire logic and computer logic could be the factors to consider during the questionnaire administration process (Dillman, 2000).

Also, implementing the pilot study requires the draft questionnaire to a small representative sample of respondents (Wilson, 2003; Lukas *et al*., 2004). In this regards, the questionnaire is tested electronically to a sample of four academics and five PhD students familiar with online survey methods. In this testing stage, participants are informed of the purpose of the research and guided to move through the survey. This pretesting helps the researcher to elicit valuable comments from them. The time taken to complete the survey is between 10 and 12 minutes.

Within in this study, the positive feedback from this pretesting indicates that no amendments are necessary. Therefore, the survey is ready to administer online. The web-based questionnaire takes advantages over other mode in terms of rapid deployment, faster transmission and receipt of information, dramatically reduced costs, and speedy data acquisition (Lukas *et al*., 2004; Best and Krueger, 2004). Also, a web-based survey is appropriate for a wide audience. Wherein, all the visitors to certain sites have an equal chance to enter the survey (Ilieva *et al*., 2002).

Following pretesting and revising, the questionnaire is then placed on a dedicated travel weblog for respondents to access and complete (Hair *et al*., 2003). This web-based survey method is also advocated by Assael (1993) who states, the researcher is allowed to gain a larger amount of information with a small amount of difficulty. Also, the web-based survey approach lowers the possibility of respondent bias, due to the lack of interaction with an interviewer or other survey respondents (Assael, 1993). Therefore, online surveys have a potential advantage in the ability to acquire large sample size at a very low cost and in a short time (Tierney, 2000, p.214). In order to direct respondents to the website, an email is sent to the members of the selected travel companies. In addition, the researcher has personal relationship and using his personal contacts to access membership database. In China, most of the websites won't able to provide researchers an email list of their members.

The researcher has access to the association's membership database to collect demographic data and email address. Number of questionnaires have been sent out, received number of responses. The email includes information on the purpose of the research and also includes a link to the unique website location where the surveys could be assessed. In addition, one of the web-based survey service namely "SurveyMonkey" (http://www.surveymonkey.com) is selected for this research. This survey service takes advantage over conventional survey mode and allows any form of surveys to be created in an effective way. For instance, the service enables the researcher to design different types of surveys: multiple choice responses, Likert Scales etc. Also, this format of survey service can be shared through a variety of online media. The data generated by this survey will mainly be quantitative, with multiple choice Likert scale questions. This will allow simple statistical analysis to be performed and give a general idea of the various issues involved.

3.4.2.7 Questionnaire Administration

Once a questionnaire is pretested, revised, and placed online, the next stage is to pay attentions on its administration. Accordingly, attentions and considerations are paid to the method of online questionnaire administration, in order to achieve a high response rate. As De Vaus (2002, p.127) states, one of the most common criteria by which method is judged is the response rate it achieves. Therefore, more active enrolment is needed to encourage respondents to complete the online survey (Coomber, 1997). Three actions are normally employed to encourage responses: minimise social costs, provide rewards to respondents and establish trust that the rewards will be delivered (Churchill, 1995; Frazer and Lawley, 2000). First, to minimise respondent costs, the questionnaire is designed to appear quick and easy to answer. The time taken to complete the pretesting survey is between 10 and 12 minutes. All sensitive questions are kept to a minimum. Secondly, the researcher initially determines to provide some forms of reward such as monetary incentive. The respondents’ benefits are informed and emphasised.

However, this idea might cause more bias (Pandi, 2002). Thirdly, to build up trust with respondents, a covering letter addressing the identity of the researcher, explaining the nature and importance of the survey, performing and maintaining the confidentiality of the online survey. In addition, it is important to consider the translation of the questionnaire, since the sample consists of Chinese travel webloggers that will find more convenient to answer the questionnaire written in the Chinese language. The questionnaire and covering letter will be translated by an authorized translator and will be then checked by native speakers of both languages.

3.4.3 Sampling Plan

Having given initial consideration to the questionnaire design and administration, this subsection is intended to discuss main issues for the sampling selection. According to Hussey and Hussey (1997), the sample should be unbiased and large enough to meet the research need. Hence, the aim of sampling is to draw valid conclusions about the universe (population) without the cost or trouble of investigating all the units of that population (Simon, 2003, p.126). That is, a good sample selection should ensure that every number of the population has a chance of being selected.

The first step of the sampling plan is to define the population to be sampled. Practically, methods of sampling a population to gain data that is representative of target population are always a consideration in the research (Fox *et al*, 2003). According to Burns and Bush (2003, p.102), target population is termed as “the total group to be studied, the grand total of what is being measured”. In this research, the population consists of all individuals using travel weblogging services in China at the time the survey is conducted. Female and male with different age and educational level are included. The online survey is intended to last about one month, from the middle of October 2009 to the middle of November 2009.

The second step is to create a sample frame. Ideally, a sampling frame would have been a comprehensive database of all travel webloggers (the owners of travel weblogs; active travel weblog visitors: browsing, responding, and sharing experiences) in the study area. However, the idea proves to be impractical, as direct access to these databases by the researcher is restricted by the travel webloggers per se. Therefore, it is impossible to create an accurate sampling frame for the research.

In this instance, the sampling technique has to be carefully identified and customised to meet the needs of the web-based survey. For online surveys, the problem is that the nature of the Internet prevents random sampling (Kehoe and Pitkow, 1996) and non-response rate tracking (Kehoe *et al*., 1997). This means random sampling or gaining a representative sample is impossible, because there is no way to track all existing weblogs. Thus, using web-based survey might present serious sampling problems for the current study based on the quantitative tradition. For example, unlike telephone and mail surveys in which samples can be produced via census lists random digit dialling, the travel weblogs have no central registry of users, or master database. In brief, web-based surveys are limited to non-random and probability sampling (Yun and Trumbo, 2000; Couper, 2000; Dillman, 2000).

This study employs a non-probability sampling approach. According to Babbie (1990), non-probability sampling is commonly used when probability sampling is not feasible. It occurs where people have a greater, but unknown chance than others of selection (Babbie, 2004). Although probability samples are preferred by quantitative researchers (Neuman, 2000), there is no mechanism for random sampling the population of travel webloggers in this research. Also, due to the scope and research focus on travel webloggers' perceptions and behaviours, non-probability sampling is therefore more appropriate when posting an online survey.

In order to obtain a reasonable representation of travel webloggers in China, snowball sampling is employed in this research phase. According to Heckathorn (1997), snowball sampling is a special non-probability method for developing a research sample when existing study subjects recruit future subjects from among their acquaintances. It is a data record technique that is often employed in hidden populations (rare, difficult to identify) which are difficult for researchers to access (Atkinson and Flint, 2001). In sum, as a sampling technique, snowball sampling is mainly applied in two research situations: firstly, snowball sampling is recommended for obtaining knowledge about diffusion of information and informal social relations and in a small group or in a small organisation; secondly, it is considered the only technique suitable for sampling hidden populations (Atkinson and Flint, 2000).

However, the utilisation of the snowball sampling method encompasses a number of interrelated methodological problems. That is, before online surveys are being considered snowball sampling, some challenges must be overcome. For example, the use of this sampling technique might result in the non-representativeness of the larger population. It is therefore suggested to carefully employ this technique to produce samples that represent a specific subset of the population (Wimmer and Dominick, 1991). Also, because sample members are not selected from a sampling frame, snowball samples are subject to numerous biases. Response rate might be another criterion of the representativeness of the sample respondents (Babbie, 1990). By its nature, the Internet poses a unique set of problem to generate response rate.

In this study, non-response bias could only be partially assessed. For instance, in this online survey, demographic data including gender and age could only be collected through the questionnaire so comparisons based on this data could not be made. However the participants came from the same travel weblogs with a common interest and also that technicians from the travel weblogs helped the researcher to manage the questionnaire to ensure that respondents were from similar groups with similar interests. On this basis the researcher suggests that the non-respondents are similar to respondents.

It is commonly recognised that the response rate of a web-based survey cannot be calculated because there is no way in which to know how many individuals might have seen the survey or its links but decline to participate. For the researcher, he can only know the number of completed surveys but not the number of refusals. Swoboda *et al*. (1997) further point out, the response rates of online surveys might be influenced by a general mistrust of online surveys and reluctance to share opinions and preferences in a non-traditional research context. A final issue of concern is that individuals who choose to complete this web-based survey might differ from those who choose not to participate. It is believed that voluntary participants might be more interested, informed, and concerned about the survey topic, and their viewpoints might be stronger and acute (Asher, 1995; Wu and Weaver, 1997).

3.4.4 Data Analysis

Following the quantitative approach, a series of statistical techniques are utilised for answering research questions or achieving the objectives of the present study. SPSS for window 16.0 is used as the major software package for statistical analysis. Microsoft Office Excel is used to recognise the output from SPSS and to produce tables and figures. Wherein, scale reliability analysis, correlation analysis, exploratory factor analysis (CFA), and validity analysis are included. Research results are reported as data analysis progresses. In detail, the factor analysis technique is used to explore and identify simple structure in the data (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007), thereby reducing a larger number of variables to a smaller number of factors. In sum, using SPSS, frequencies and percentage distributions of respondents' demographic information are developed in tables to check that whether these responses are representative of the larger population of China and also to assess non-response bias. The Cronbach apha coefficient for each research variable is computed to test for reliability, while factor analysis is used for convergent and discriminant validity of the variables.

3.4.5 Ethical Consideration

Although the study may contain rich description and analysis of the phenomenon under study, certain limitations and concerns do exist in evaluation, which Guba and Lincoln (2005) refer to as “unusual problems of ethics”. In other words, the researcher has to consider: what the people who are involved in this study are doing, what they say, what they appear to others to be doing, and what in fact what are doing, may involve sources of considerable discrepancies that may create conflicting opinions both personally and politically. For instance, in conducting survey research to ascertain perceptions of the relative effectiveness of the dimensions of interactivity and user motives within a travel weblogging context, it is important to ensure that data is collected and reported correctly. Thus, the researcher attempts to minimise any potential bias or misinterpretation of the results.

In Tourism studies, researchers are essentially required to be ethical by protecting the rights of the participants and by ensuring that the research findings are derived by ethical determination (Jennings, 2001). Ethics involve the procedure of moral research (Neuman, 1994), and codes of ethics are the main types of tool which offers researchers guidelines for ethical conduct and checklists to be considered in conducting social research (Punch, 1998). In order to ensure a high level of ethical standards required for this survey research, a cover letter is designed to be sent out to the respondents first, in order to advise them of the researcher and the rationale of the research.

This study receives ethical approval from the Research Ethics Committee at the University of Portsmouth. It is made clear to the respondents that participation in the study is entirely voluntary and would be terminated at their request should the need arise. All respondents are provided with a consent form prior to the scheduled survey, and the survey is commenced only after consent has been received electronically, in print or verbally (implied consent). In order to protect the confidentially of the respondents, all company and individuals names are coded to prevent their identification. The identification of informants will never be exposed to other informants. All data that is fed back to the firms is done so in an aggregated form thereby eliminating the chances of identification of individuals or companies. No other person except for the researcher and his supervisors has access to the data.

3.5 Phase Two – Qualitative Interviews

3.5.1 Justification of Interview Methodology

This subsection primarily focuses on the justification of main issues associated with the qualitative interview methodology. On the basis of the nature of the research problem and research questions, the qualitative research technique are adopted to uncover the in-depth meaning of the proposed subjects being researched (Punch, 2005).

As already stated in the preceding section, the quantitative research phase investigates the behaviours and perceptions of Chinese travel webloggers (the owners of travel weblogs & active travel weblog visitors) towards interactive events. On the contrary, the qualitative research provides a deeper understanding of social phenomena than would be obtained from purely quantitative data (Silverman, 2000, p.8). Importantly, it produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification (Miles and Hberman, 1994, p.10). Therefore, a qualitative research approach is deeply rooted in this research phase through using an attitudinal survey to drill into the data generated in stage one. In other words, the primary purpose of this study is to elicit insights into the relative effectiveness of the dimensions of interactivity through an understanding of the subjective experiences of the owners of Chinese travel weblogs in more depth.

In addition, the qualitative design is employed since the studies of interactivity and user motives within travel weblogging settings are not previously well researched. Therefore, the potential richness in information gathered through qualitative methods used for this research is deemed to serve as a basis for the research. Also, it helps to instruct the researcher in deepening the knowledge and discovering what the interactivity is like to be in travel weblogging context.

Given this, eight in-depth interviews are conducted in four companies studied, two in each company. It is acknowledged that in-depth interviews are adopted when the research objective is to obtain an in-depth understanding of the interviewees' opinions, beliefs and experiences (Chrzanowska, 2002; McGivern, 2003) that cannot be directly observed and discovered by the researcher (Burns, 2000). One of the key benefits of using in-depth interviews is that it allows the researcher to develop a deeper rapport with informants (Daniels and Cannice, 2004, p.187). Also, the open-ended nature of this research method allows the respondents to answer the questions in terms of their own frame of reference (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998).

Another intention for employing in-depth interviews is that respondents' weblogging experiences cannot be based merely on the scale of measurement of questionnaires (previous quantitative survey) (Walle, 1997). Thus, the in-depth interview is more likely to generate a reasonable representation of the respondents' perspective (Mason, 2002). To sum up, the decision to conduct these in-depth interviews is based on the need to explore in-depth whether or not and how weblog owners perceive their weblogging practices. Importantly, as there is little substantial reference in the literature regarding "relative effectiveness of the dimensions of interactivity and user motives within a travel weblog settings", the findings from these in-depth interviews are important in relation to the research questions of the present study.

The use of the semi-structured interview is seen as an appropriate methodology for the present study. Semi-structured interviews are used as they allow "conversational rather than structured queries" (Yin, 2003, p.89). According to Bailey (2007), the semi-structured interview offers the researcher some flexibility yet allows a structure within which the interview can be conducted. Also, this type of interview allows for elaborate and detailed answers as well as permitting for more in-depth investigation into respondents' perspectives (Rapley, 2004, p.15). Thus, this technique is most suitable to develop an understanding of how weblog owners construct meaning of their weblogging experiences.

3.5.2 Proposed Framework for Semi-Structured Interviews

In this research phase, a purposive sampling approach is adopted, since samples have particular features which enable detailed exploration and understanding of the central themes (Ritchie *et al.*, 2003). In this regards, eight respondents working at travel companies across China are targeted to take part in semi-structured interviews. In particular, they are selected in the four companies studied, two in each company. Each interview last approximately 60 to 90 minutes in duration and are digitally recorded for subsequent transcription and review.

In addition, an email is sent to the administrators of selected travel companies for their permission to conduct the study. Consent from the company is collected by email. The researcher then attaches the invitation to participants, including a brief introduction to the researcher and to state the rationale of the research. For example, requires the respondents have certain period of involvement in order for the researcher to get insightful feedback. The invitation also includes a statement of confidentiality, advising participants they can remove themselves from the interview at any time, and informing them of the clearance by the University of Portsmouth Ethics Committee.

In order to collect breadth of informed opinions and shared perceptions, this qualitative research phase is designed to explore the concept of interactivity in depth with the panel of respondents rather than examining broad conceptions of interactivity among a larger sample. The qualitative interviews are intended to last about 10 days, in the middle of December 2009. These respondents all meet Marshall and Rossman's (1989, p.113) definition of elites: experts who are "considered to be influential, prominent, and/ or well informed people in an organisation". As Marshall and Rossman (1989) interpret, conducting interviews with those elites helps the researcher to discover the complex interconnections in social relationships, facilitating data analysis and validity checks, and providing great utility for exposing the subjective side of a phenomenon (travel weblogging context) under investigation. The primary task of semi-structured interviews is to:

- Discovering the subjective side of how the notion of interactivity is viewed;
- Documenting the evolution of the concept of interactivity;
- Documenting user motives toward travel weblogs

- Obtaining large amounts of contextual data (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994);
- Investigating both the ‘interactivity’ and “user motives” terminologies on travel weblogging practice;
- Providing background context and verify the finding from the quantitative phase.

The semi-structured interviews in company A are conducted with two divisional managers in the Sales & Marketing department. In relation to company B, three interviews are conducted with assistant manager, Managing editor of New Media Leader, and IT director. The third interview is conducted with Advertising manager and Managing editor of New Media Leader in company C. In company D, two interviews are conducted with the IT director and Advertising manager. The main purpose of interviews is to explore respondents’ descriptions and reflections regarding their practice of working with and through travel weblogs.

The eight interviews are appropriate to the present study because all interviewees are key informants concerning the objectives of the research. Also, owing to the limited resource and time, the researcher only obtained eight participants that were available to be interviewed. The number of interviews is also suitable as the information collected is rich, relevant, and sufficient to understand the key issues related to organisational weblogging practice and strategy. In addition, a written interview guide is used during the interviews as a memory board for the researcher, including some general and open-ended topics related to the research objectives (Carson *et al*., 2001). Also, a notebook is used to make sure that interviewer has accurately covered everything and give a more precise representation of the evidence.

In order to cover all the relevant aspects to generate insights form respondents and to make data collection more systematic for each respondent, an interview protocol (guide) is designed based on the question types. In brief, the interview protocol consists of three perspectives: background information of the respondents’ experience and opinions towards travel weblogs; content of the travel weblogs and its role in the company (from respondents’ perceptions); opinions and feelings towards the travel weblogging phenomenon and practices.

In detail, the interview protocol starts with a ‘welcome talk’. The purpose is to help the researcher to establish rapport with respondents and reducing the barrier during the interviewing process (Cavana *et al*., 2001). Given this, preliminary questions are given to invite the respondents to tell the story of their weblogging experiences related to the research (Patton, 1990; Perry, 1998), encouraging them to disclose their experience without restriction (Dick, 1990b). This study next investigates issues associated with the research question: how the respondents practice their travel weblogs. In detail, the researcher intends to investigate the respondents' behaviours in participating in the travel weblogs, identifying the interactivity and user motives concepts, exploring what the travel weblog are like in their minds and how they behave in it.

Then the study aims to discover the relative effectiveness of the key dimensions of interactivity identified/ determined in the literature studies: active control, two-way communications, and real-time information. Besides, three key constructs of user motives (information, social interaction, and enjoyment) are also included. As already discussed in the literature review chapter, the term 'interactivity' is an abstract word, wherein different people have different interpretations from various research contexts. In this instance, certain questions are designed to be more concrete to direct respondents to give specific answers.

The study concludes the whole interview with "cool down" questions. The questions are designed to obtain respondents' overall feeling about the travel weblog, experience with their company, and questions/ queries about the current research. The last section (Section Five) of the interview protocol is designed to identify the demographic information about the respondents, and to obtain further idea about them in travel weblogging research. The purpose is to ensure and increase the validity of the current research.

In order to fulfil the research aim and objectives, a pilot study is conducted to test the feasibility of the designed interview protocol. Pilot testing is essential, as it provides the considerable insights into the basic issues being studied, helps the researcher to explore the research problems and gives reference to the data collection methods finalisation (Yin, 2003). Therefore, a pilot testing of the interview protocol is employed in this research phase as a foundation before conducting the whole interview. In detail, a sample of four academics and five PhD students familiar with interview method are recruited. In this testing stage, participants are informed of the purpose of the research and guided to move through the interview. Wherein, this pretesting helps the researcher to elicit valuable comments through filtering the inadequacies with the research design (Yin, 2003). Afterwards, the researcher can adjust the protocol by simplifying the meaning of words and removing the repetitive questions. The time taken to complete the survey is between 10 and 12 minutes.

The interview questions are then translated (by the researcher himself) into the respondents' first language, the Chinese language for the presentation purposes of the research. Therefore, misunderstanding could be avoided and the respondents might comprehend better if all items are in their mother tongue. According to Hofstede (1980), the translator is suggested to be bilingual or speak multiple languages, in order to articulate the meaning of questions. Given this, the English interview protocol is designed and developed first. The researcher bilingual himself and translates the English interview protocol to Chinese. The researcher then tests the translated interview protocol with three Chinese friends, who are familiar with travel weblogs. The purpose is to check whether they would find any difficulties or ambiguities when reading and understanding the questions.

3.5.3 Data Analysis

In the current research, the interviews conducted are audio recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim by the researcher and analysed through the analysis technique. Practically, there are many analysis techniques being used by researchers. NVivo (qualitative data analysis package), for example, is widely advocated by a number of academics and researchers (Dey, 1993; Miles and Huberman, 1994; King, 1994; Crabtree and Miller, 1999). Cavana *et al*. (2001) state, this computer-aid program supports the decision making processes in the data analysis, helps the researcher deal with huge amount of data and provides a basis for theory building (Kelle *et al*., 1995). In this qualitative research phase, data collected is comparatively small and not complex. That is, adopting this computer software is not necessary. Therefore, the researcher chose to process the data analysis in Excel format manually, without using Nvivo program.

To this end, the qualitative analysis process will be conducted to identify all concepts and themes in all transcribed responses and was undertaken using Microsoft Word capabilities such as word searching, and highlighting text in multiple colours. The primary purpose of this qualitative approach is to elicit insights into the relative effectiveness of user motive constructs and interactivity dimensions, through an understanding of the subjective experiences of the owners of Chinese travel weblogs in more depth.

3.5.4 Reliability and Validity of the Semi-Structured Interviews

A key issue in any form of research is the extent to which the quality of the data can be trusted. In other words, the two measures of confidence generally used are reliability and validity (Silverman, 2000). The difficulty of measuring reliability to qualitative research is occurred due to the lack of standardised instruments or non-quantified data commonly employed in contrast to the quantitative research (Mason, 2002). It is expected that the results presented in this research are an accurate representation of the opinions and experiences of the travel webloggers who are interviewed. However, whether the same results would have been obtained from a different panel of respondents is open to question. The other measure of confidence is validity. The validity issues in this research are dealt with applying the qualitative technique to verify the descriptive results from the quantitative research phase.

In addition, there are other issues need to be considered. The findings of this research might have been biased by the novelty of the emerging phenomenon (weblogging phenomena). Also, the sample size is chosen from a selected target population and represents opinions, attitudes, and motivations of that population. However, it should be acknowledged that this is a general representation and cannot represent the entire target population. In addition, issues about time and cost constraints, the interviewer's bias, probing skills, interview experiences, interpretation of the interviewees' response need to be improved.

3.5.5 Ethical Considerations

It is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that ethical standards are highly maintained. According to Emory and Cooper (1991), the primary concern of research ethics is to protect research participants from harm or adverse consequences during research activities. Of this, numerous issues are identified in the literature including confidentiality, privacy, anonymity, deception, accuracy, harmless to participants and voluntary participation (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Ritchie and Lewis, 2003; Babbie, 2004; Neuman, 2006).

In the present research, ethical issues are addressed by adopting the following procedures: this research is approved by the University of Portsmouth Research Ethics Committee, wherein all research records are securely kept for future references and evidence before the conduct of the semi-structured interviews; the researcher presents a brief overview of the research rationale; participants are guaranteed/ promised that all information would remain anonymous and confidential; prior to the interviews, the researcher seeks participants' permission to tape-recorded the survey session; a cover letter is provided regarding ethical issues including confidentiality, privacy, research approval and contact details of the researcher and his supervisors for possible enquires; for the final research findings, they are reported objectively and honestly, in order to protect the integrity and reputation of the travel companies and research participants.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter deals with the research design and research methodology of this study. The nature and methodology of this research is indicated. The substantiation of the mixed-methods sequential explanatory design (both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods) is identified and discussed. The data analysis procedure on both research phases is delineated. The ethical consideration and the limitation of this study are outlined. The next two chapters present a comprehensive description of the data analysis and findings from both quantitative and qualitative research phase.

CHAPTER FOUR

QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter reports and discusses the results of the online survey analysis. As it is referred in the proceeding chapters, this study aims to determine how three principal dimensions of interactivity, namely, active control, two-way communications, and real-time communications, affect users' attitudes and usage intentions. Given this focus, this chapter aim is to explore a pattern of user motive and interactivity issues concerning users within the corporate travel weblogging context, and to validate the proposed research model. First, the response rate is determined in order to provide an indication of the appositeness of research findings. The demographic data of the sample are then examined to provide a better understanding of the sample's characteristic. Scale reliability analysis, correlation analysis, factor analysis, validity analysis are included.

4.2 Sample and Response Rates

The online survey lasted about one month, from the middle of October 2009 to the middle of November 2009. Of the 1043 questionnaire distributed a usable sample (696) was conveniently collected from all individuals using corporate travel weblogging services in China at the time the survey is conducted. The response rate was 66.73 percent. In this study, one-third of the chosen survey recipients did not complete the given questionnaire. Unlike member-based offline organisations, many weblogs don't provide too much detail information about users' occupations, income, or education backgrounds. Therefore, there are two possible reasons for this situation: 1) participants aren't interested in this survey; 2) participants do not have clear ideas regarding particular questions in this survey;

4.3 Descriptive Statistics

In the questionnaire (see Appendix 1), Section Three was designed to obtain some fundamental socio-demographic details of the respondents involved in this study. Results of the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents were illustrated in

Table 4.1 and Table 4.2.

Table 4.1 Gender of Questionnaire Respondents

GENDER

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	female	472	45.3	67.8	67.8
	male	224	21.5	32.2	100.0
	Total	696	66.7	100.0	
Missing	System	347	33.3		
Total		1043	100.0		

Of the entire 696 respondents in the sample, 472 (or 67.8 percent) are female and 224 (or 32.2 percent) are male.

Table 4.2 Age of Questionnaire Respondents

AGEGROUP

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-24	253	24.3	36.4	36.4
	25-29	239	22.9	34.3	70.7
	30-34	92	8.8	13.2	83.9
	35-39	54	5.2	7.8	91.7
	40-44	28	2.7	4.0	95.7
	45-49	19	1.8	2.7	98.4
	50+	11	1.1	1.6	100.0
	Total	696	66.7	100.0	
Missing	System	347	33.3		
Total		1043	100.0		

Regarding the age group, the table demonstrates that the majority of the respondents (36.4 percent+34.3 percent=70.7 percent) ranged from 18 to 29. The table indicates that travel weblog users were mainly distributed in the young generation categories.

In the questionnaire, Section Two was designed to obtain answers from respondents about their behaviour when visiting travel weblogs.

Table 4.3 Patterns of Visiting Travel Weblogs

PATTERN

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	daily	25	2.4	8.7	8.7
	weekly	82	7.9	28.4	37.0
	fortnightly	51	4.9	17.6	54.7
	monthly	55	5.3	19.0	73.7
	once every 2 months	10	1.0	3.5	77.2
	once every 3 months	66	6.3	22.8	100.0
	Total	289	27.7	100.0	
Missing	System	754	72.3		
Total		1043	100.0		

Table 4.3 indicates that the majority of respondents were located in the "weekly", "fortnightly" and "monthly" categories, although 26.3 percent of respondents participated in travel weblogs no more than once every 2 or every 3 months.

Table 4.4 Frequency of Respondents Who Read Travel Weblogs

READ

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	daily	151	14.5	53.9	53.9
	more than once a week	49	4.7	17.5	71.4
	once a week	30	2.9	10.7	82.1
	more than once a month	21	2.0	7.5	89.6
	once a month	17	1.6	6.1	95.7
	randomly	8	.8	2.9	98.6
	never	4	.4	1.4	100.0
	Total	280	26.8	100.0	
Missing	System	763	73.2		
Total		1043	100.0		

Table 4.4 shows the respondents' behaviour with regard to the frequency of their

travel weblog reading. The percentage of respondents who read travel weblogs more than once a week is 17.5 percent while 10.7 percent of respondents do it once a week. 2.9 percent of respondents randomly read the travel weblogs whereas almost 54 percent read the weblogs daily. The percentage of respondents reading travel weblogs more than once a month, only once a month and never read weblogs is 7.5 percent, 6.1 percent, and 1.4 percent respectively.

Table 4.5 Frequency of Respondents Who Publish Travel Weblogs

PUBLISH

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	daily	4	.4	1.6	1.6
	more than once a week	5	.5	1.9	3.5
	once a week	9	.9	3.5	7.0
	more than once a month	17	1.6	6.6	13.6
	once a month	24	2.3	9.3	23.0
	randomly	38	3.6	14.8	37.7
	never	160	15.3	62.3	100.0
	Total	257	24.6	100.0	
Missing	System	786	75.4		
Total		1043	100.0		

In contrast to the Table 4.4, 14.8 percent of the respondents publish travel weblogs randomly, 62.3 percent never publish travel weblogs, 9.3 percent publish travel weblogs once a month, 6.6 percent publish travel weblogs more than once a month, 1.9 percent publishes travel weblogs more than once a week, 3.5 percent publishes travel weblogs once a week and 4 respondents publish travel weblogs daily.

Table 4.6 Skills toward Weblogs

SKILLS

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	very knowledgeable	9	.9	3.1	3.1
	knowledgeable	32	3.1	11.0	14.1

	somewhat knowledgeable	152	14.6	52.2	66.3
	not that knowledgeable	64	6.1	22.0	88.3
	not knowledgeable at all	34	3.3	11.7	100.0
	Total	291	27.9	100.0	
Missing	System	752	72.1		
Total		1043	100.0		

The result indicates that the majority of respondents, 52.2 percent, have some knowledge. Respondents who are very knowledgeable and knowledgeable account for 3.1 percent and 11.0 percent respectively. The figure shows that weblog has aroused people's awareness, which suggests that more online marketing strategy efforts should be invested in this digitalised infrastructure in the future.

Table 4.7 Purpose of Visiting Preferred Travel Weblogs

PURPOSES

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	to keep up-to-date travel information	173	16.6	32.9	32.9
	to join or follow the discussion in the site	86	8.2	16.3	49.2
	for fun or entertainment	113	10.8	21.5	70.7
	to share experiences or to learn from others' diaries	154	14.8	29.3	100.0
	Total	526	50.4	100.0	
Missing	System	517	49.6		
Total		1043	100.0		

The result indicates that the majority of respondents concentrated on updated travel information and perceived the importance of experience sharing from the weblog being used. 16.3 percent of respondents' purpose for visiting is to join in the discussion group and 21.5 percentages of respondents seek enjoyment on the weblog site.

Table 4.8 Reasons to Visit Travel Weblogs

REASONS

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	this site is useful	119	11.4	20.8	20.8
	this site is easy to use	54	5.2	9.4	30.2
	this site is updated frequently	103	9.9	18.0	48.3
	this site is enjoyable	110	10.5	19.2	67.5
	this site is easy to navigate	96	9.2	16.8	84.3
	the text in this site is readable	30	2.9	5.2	89.5
	this visuals in this site are interesting	60	5.8	10.5	100.0
	Total	572	54.8	100.0	
Missing	System	471	45.2		
Total		1043	100.0		

Table 4.8 indicated that the majority of respondents cared more about ‘usability’ (30.2 percent), navigation of travel weblogs (16.8 percent) and entertainment (enjoyment) (19.2 percent). It gives a signal for today’s marketers to adapt this information into their online marketing strategies and tactics.

4.4 Testing the Measurement Model

The measurement model was examined from the following perspectives, reliability, validity, correlation analysis, and exploratory factor analysis. Reliability is an assessment of the degree of internal consistency and stability between multiple measurements of variable (Hair *et al.*, 2006). The concept of validity is termed as the accuracy of measurement (Davis and Cosenza, 1993; Churchill, 1995). Two types of measurement, content validity and construct validity, are relevant to this study. Correlation is seeking general statistical relationships between two or more variables (Cohen e*t al.*, 2003). Factor analysis is used to explore and identify simple structures in the data, thereby reducing a large number of variables to a smaller number of factors (Hair *et al.*, 2006).

This section first discussed the examinations of reliability and validity of the 27 scaled variables that measured the 6 perceptual variables. Measurements of reliability and validity are important steps in ensuring that the variables measure the relevant construct exactly and accurately. Without acceptable reliability and validity, results will be invalid.

As indicated in Chapter Two, the measure variables in the current study were obtained from extant studies. Although these measurement variables were developed and tested in the literature, it remained necessary to re-test their reliability and validity, especially in a new dataset. This assists in validating the previous findings. In this research, reliability was first examined, followed by validity testing in exploratory factor analysis.

4.4.1 Scale Reliability Analysis

Regarding reliability, the internal consistency of measurement is an indication of the homogeneity of the items which measure the same construct (Sekaran, 2003). The construct reliability test can indicate the degree to which a set of items used to measure a construct is consistent in their measurement (Vaus, 1999). Therefore, to obtain high reliability of a measurement, the items should be highly correlated with one another to independently measure the construct.

4.4.1.1 Cronbach Alpha Test

Cronbach Alpha tests the reliability of the factors obtained from the factor analysis. Reliability is an assessment of the degree of consistency between multiple measurements of a variable (Hair *et al*., 2006). This is the most commonly used measure of reliability, and is based on the concept of internal consistency. Reliability specifies the internal consistency between multiple measurements of a construct (Hair *et al*., 2006). In order to test the reliability of the data, Coefficient Alpha should be the first measurement one calculates to assess the quality of the measurement. Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha is used for all constructs above the generally agreed threshold of 0.7. A rule of thumb is that reliability between 0.6 and 0.7 may be acceptable. 0.7 or higher suggests good reliability (Hair *et al*., 2006).

4.4.1.2 Application of Cronbach Alpha Test

The remaining 27 variables were subjected to reliability tests. Cronbach Coefficient Alpha was used to measure reliability. From the Cronbach Alpha’s standpoint, the closer the Coefficient Alpha is to 1.0, the higher the internal consistency reliability. It means that only the reliabilities larger than and/ or equal to 0.70 are acceptable. Accordingly, the data obtained from this study were subjected to the internal consistency test. The results showed that all six sets of variables obtained acceptable reliabilities, as it can be seen from the Table 4.9, $0.7<\alpha<1$.

Table 4.9 Reliability of Scaled Items for Variables

Constructs	Item No.	Items	Cronbach Alpha	Items Adapted From
Active Control	AC1	I was in control over my visiting experience.	0.989	Liu, 2003; McMillan and Hwang, 2002; Wu 1999,
	AC2	I was delighted to be able to choose which link and when to click.		
	AC3	While surfing travel weblogs, my actions decided the kind of experiences I got.		
	AC4	While I was on the travel weblogs, I could quickly jump from one page to another.		
	AC5	While I was on the travel weblogs, I could freely choose what I want to see.		
Two-way Communication	TWC1	Travel weblogs facilitate two-way communications between weblog owners and active weblog users.	0.973	Liu, 2003; McMillan and Hwang, 2002; Wu 1999,
	TWC2	Travel weblogs would provide opportunities for me to communicate with other travel weblog users concurrently.		
	TWC3	Travel weblogs make me feel like it wants to listen to its visitors.		
	TWC4	Travel weblogs enable conversation.		
	TWC5	Travel weblogs encourage visitors to offer feedback.		
	TWC6	Travel weblogs are effective in gathering visitors' feedback.		
	TWC7	Travel weblogs give me the opportunity to talk back.		
Real-time Information	RTI1	The information provided from travel weblogs is relevant.	0.949	Liu, 2003;

	RTI2 RTI3 RTI4 RTI5 RTI6	The information I can get from travel weblogs is very fast. I was able to obtain the information I want without any delay. When I clicked on the links, I can obtain instantaneous information that published by other webloggers. Travel weblogs answered my questions immediately. I felt that travel weblogs processed my input very quickly.		McMillan and Hwang, 2002; Wu 1999,

Table 4.9 Reliability of Scaled Items for Variables

Constructs	Item No.	Items	Cronbach Alpha	Items Adapted From
Social Interaction	SI1 SI2 SI3 SI4	Travel weblogs engage weblog publishers and readers communicate with each other. I can express myself freely on the travel weblog. On the travel weblog, I am interested in other webloggers' opinions. I felt that I was part of the community when I visit travel weblogs	0.935	Kwon, 2003; Liu, 2003; McMillan and Hwang, 2002; Wu 1999
Information of Travel Weblogs	ITB1 ITB2 ITB3	The information published by other travel webloggers is generally satisfactory. A feedback and rating system is considered useful to webloggers to help make travel decisions. The hyperlinked images and texts from travel weblogs are helpful to fulfil webloggers' expectations.	0.901	Teo *et al*, 2003

Enjoyment	ENJ1	I felt interesting when I was reading the hot issues on travel weblogs.	0.878	Cyr *et al.*, 2007
	ENJ2.	I felt that the process of participating in travel weblogs is enjoyable.		
Attitude toward Travel Weblogs	ATT1	Travel weblogs make it easy for me to build a relationship with travel companies.	0.938	Chen and Wells, 1999
	ATT2	I feel satisfied with the service provided by the travel weblog.		
	ATT3	I feel comfortable in surfing travel weblogs.		
Intention to Revisit Travel Weblogs	IR1	I am likely to visit travel weblogs in the future.	0.963	Mackensie *et al*., 1986; Bruner *et al*., 2002; Bruner and Kumar, 2000; Ko *et al*.,2005
	IR2	I am probably to visit travel weblogs in the future.		
	IR3	I am possibly to visit travel weblogs in the future.		

4.4.2 Scale Validity Analysis

The next stage of analysis involved the determination of the convergent and discriminant validity of items from the given variables. Validity is the extent to which a set of measuring variables accurately represents the concept of interest (Hair *et al*., 2006). In other words, this test confirms if the multiple variables developed for a construct rightly measure that construct.

4.4.2.1 Convergent Validity

According to Hair *et al*. (2006), convergent validity is defined as the degree to which two measures of the same concepts are correlated. In other words, convergent validity is employed when a measure correlates highly with other measures designed to measure the same construct. Convergent validity can be assessed by examining the correlation between all the items within the modified research model.

Convergent validity can be tested by examining the factor loadings to see whether the items in a construct converge or load together on a single construct in the measurement model (Steenkamp, 1991). To this end, convergent validity exists when statistically-significant loadings for all items hypothesised to measure a latent variable are found (Dunn et al., 1994; Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). The critical ratio values in confirmatory factor analysis can be used to analyse the convergent validity of the items within the construct to check whether they are fitting together (Hair *et al*., 2006). A high correlation shows convergent validity, which is demonstrated in the Appendix 3 (Table 4.10). As suggested by Camines and Zeller (1979), factor analysis provides a suitable means to examine convergent validity. In factor analysis, loading can be used to detect whether or not an item appropriately loads on its predicted construct. According to Hair *et al*. (2006), loading of 0.5 or greater can be considered to be very significant. In this study, 0.5 loading is adopted as the threshold for removal. Using SPSS, multiple-item variables are tested with the VARIMAX rotation method to assess their loading. The final loadings are shown in Table 4.10 below. All the multiple-item constructs exceeded 0.5 threshold.

Table 4.10 Convergent validity

Variables	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Loading
Active Control (AC)	AC1	3.5975	.90176	**.792**
	AC2	3.7078	.93206	**.705**
	AC4	3.6950	.95066	**.691**
	AC5	3.6959	.92881	**.658**
	AC3	3.7917	.89791	**.654**
Two-way Communication (TWC)	TWC3	3.5935	.90072	**.801**
	TWC1	3.6232	.93656	**.733**
	TWC2	3.6006	.94780	**.733**
	TWC5	3.1638	1.15149	**.891**
	TWC4	3.1582	1.23870	**.866**
	TWC6	3.5460	1.17180	**.679**
	TWC7	3.9929	.83951	**.682**
Real-time Information (RTI)	RTI2	4.0073	.77954	**.826**
	RTI6	3.4648	.94301	**.801**
	RTI3	4.4696	.80271	**.794**
	RTI5	3.1886	1.01759	**.783**
	RTI4	3.4753	.93524	**.682**
	RTI1	3.9660	.72926	**.678**
Social Interaction (SI)	SI4	3.4585	.88193	**.872**
	SI2	3.2053	.74949	**.849**
	SI3	4.0506	.81714	**.831**
	SI1	3.6372	.74735	**.631**
Information of Travel Weblogs (ITB)	ITB1	3.2562	.83724	**.780**
	ITB3	3.2473	.87183	**.759**
	ITB2	3.2730	.88478	**.771**
Enjoyment (ENJ)	ENJ1	4.0492	.83017	**.704**
	ENJ2	3.4456	1.22181	**.631**
Attitude toward Travel Weblogs (ATT)	ATT1	3.3880	.84552	**.882**
	ATT2	3.9855	.92346	**.669**
	ATT3	3.7167	.93074	**.643**
Intention to Revisit Travel Weblogs (IR)	IR1	3.4577	1.05898	**.685**
	IR2	3.2810	1.04377	**.667**
	IR3	3.0421	.99488	**.701**

4.4.2.2 Discriminant Validity

According to Churchill (1979), to test discriminant validity is to assess whether the items that measure a construct do not correlate too highly with the measures from the other constructs. Discriminant validity measures the extent to which a measure is unique to a particular independent variable and not to other independent variables (Cronin and Taylor, 1992; Quester and Romaniuk, 1997; Sekaran, 2000).

Discriminant validity shows that the measure is not measuring the wrong construct. It refers to an assessment of the extent to which measures of different constructs are unique from each other (Bagozzi *et al*., 1991). In other words, it assesses whether the observed variables loaded significantly on expected latent variables but not on others. In other words, discriminant validity determines the extent that constructs are empirically distinct (Campbell and Fiske, 1959).

However, the conservative approach for establishing discriminant validity compares the variance-extracted estimates for any two constructs with the square of the correlation estimated between these two constructs (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Variance-extracted is the amount of variance captured by a construct compared with the variance due to measurement errors. If the variance extracted for two constructs are both higher than their squared correlation, the items represent their latent construct better than they represent the other constructs, suggesting that constructs possess discriminant validity.

To determine discriminant validity, the correlations of each of the measurement scale to all variables were compared. A correlation analysis between constructs measured was conducted. Discriminant validity is established when the estimated correlations between the factors or dimensions are not excessively high (Kline, 2005, p.73).In the present study, correlations between constructs ranged between 0.627 (Real time information 2 and Intention to revisit 3) and 0.991 (Active control 1 and Two-way communication 3). Therefore, the results showed that all constructs had discriminant validity.

4.4.3 Assessment for Factor Analysis

After the data were collected and tabulated, a series of statistical assumptions were tested to ensure the appropriateness of the data for factor analysis. Factor analysis in this section has two primary functions in data analysis. One function is to identify underlying constructs in the data and another is to reduce a large number of correlated variables into a more manageable set (Aaker *et al.*, 2005). According to Aaker et al. (2005), by reducing the number of correlated variables, factor analysis attempts to retain as much of the information as possible and make the remaining variables meaningful and easy to work with.

4.4.3.1 Statistical Assumptions for Factor Analysis

Hair *et al.* (2006) suggest that there are several methods to determine whether the correlations in the data matrix are sufficient for factor analysis. The methods are: 1) Examination of the correlation matrix, 2) Inspection of the anti-image correlation matrix, 3) Bartlett's test of Sphericity, 4) Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy. Therefore, the researcher followed Hair *et al.* (2006) suggestion to conduct the factor analysis.

4.4.3.1.1 Examination of the Correlation Matrix

This is the simplest method for determining the appropriateness of factor analysis (Hair *et al.*, 2006). If the objective of the research is to summarise the characteristics, factor analysis can be utilised on a correlation matrix of the variables (Hair *et al.*, 2006). Hair *et al.* (2006) further propose that factor analysis is appropriate if visual inspection reveals most of a substantial number of correlations to be greater than 0.3. In the present study, the correlation matrix (see Table 4.10 in Appendix 3) reveals that the range of substantial correlations was from 0.627 to 0.991. Therefore, this indicates that the items shared common factors and were suitable for factor analysis.

4.4.3.1.2 Inspection of the Anti-Image Correlation Matrix

Stewart (1981) proposes that the approach to determining the appropriateness of a correlation matrix for factor analysis is to adopt an inspection of the off-diagonal elements of the anti-image Covariance or correlation matrix. The anti-image correlation matrix includes the negatives of the partial covariances (SPSS, 2005). In terms of the anti-image correlation matrix, most of the off-diagonal elements should be small in a good factor model (SPSS, 2005). The measures of sampling adequacy for a variable can be shown on the diagonal of the anti-image correlation matrix (SPSS, 2005).

The anti-image correlation matrix (see Table 4.11 in Appendix 4), which represented the negative values of the partial correlations, showed that the majority of the off-diagonal values were low. This indicated that correlation matrix was appropriate for factor analysis.

4.4.3.1.3 Barlett's Test of Sphericity

Hair *et al*. (2006) demonstrate that this statistical test is to identify if correlations are present among the variables. This assumption provides the statistical significance that the correlation matrix has significant correlations among at least some of the variable (Hair *et al*., 2006).

Of this, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is a statistical test for the presence of correlations among the variables (Hair *et al*., 2006). Bartlett's Test of Sphericity calculates whether a set of items are associated with each other. This is a test of uni-dimensionality of the items. It is used to test the null hypothesis that the items are uncorrelated in the population (De Vaus, 2001). The main purpose of conducting this test was to examine whether the correlation matrix was different from an identity matrix (Fischman, Shinholser, and Powers, 1987). Table 4.12 presents the results of the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity and KMO measure of sampling adequacy. All constructs achieved a significant p-value, less than 0.001. The results of Bartlett's Test of Sphericity suggest that the items of the construct are sufficiently correlated, indicating that the data is suitable for factor analysis.

Table 4.12

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.952
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	24604.941
	df	528
	Sig.	.000

4.4.3.1.4 Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (MSA)

KMO test statistics are based on partial correlation. If two items share a common factor with other items, their partial correlation will be small, indicating the unique variance they share. The measures of KMO test can range from zero to one. But the overall score should be greater than 0.50 (De Vaus, 2001). A high chi-square value with a low *p*-value ($p<0.05$) indicates a significant relationship between the items, suggesting that the data is suitable for further analysis, such as factor analysis (Hair *et al.*, 2006).

Of this, Hair *et al*. (2006) propose the following guidelines in interpreting the KMO sampling adequacy score:

- Outstanding: 0.90-1
- Meritorious: 0.80-0.89
- Middling: 0.70-0.79
- Mediocre: 0.60-0.69
- Miserable: 0.50-0.59
- Unacceptable: <0.50

Hair *et al.* (2006) explain that if the KMO score is less than 0.50, it indicates a lack of systematic covariation in the data and the variables are essentially independent.

In this study, the scores of KMO measurements of sampling adequacy of all constructs are higher than the cut-off, 0.5. The scores range from 0.500 to 0.905. While items for the active control construct (0.905) are “outstanding”. The two-way communications construct (0.857) falls within “meritorious”. Items for the intention to revisit (0.764), social interaction (0.793), attitude toward travel weblogs (0.750), and real time information (0.779) are “middling”. Information of travel weblogs construct is 0.670, which belongs to “mediocre” group. The enjoyment construct (0.500) is “miserable”.

The results suggest that there is adequate and high variability in the data. In consideration of the satisfactory results of the Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity and KMO measure of sampling adequacy, further analysis based on the tested items in the constructs was considered.

Of this, Table 4.13 presents the results of the Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity and KMO measure of sampling adequacy. To sum up, all constructs achieved a significant p-value, less than 0.001. The results of Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity suggest that the items of the construct are sufficiently correlated, indicating that the data is suitable for factor analysis.

Table 4.13: Test of Sphericity and Measure of Sampling Adequacy

Constructs	KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy	Bartlett’s Tests of Sphericity
Active Control	0.905	Approx. Chi-Square =7145.355 df= 10 Sig. < 0.001
Two-way Communications	0.857	Approx. Chi-Square =6699.456 df=21 Sig. < 0.001
Real time Information	0.779	Approx. Chi-Square =3453.110 df=15 Sig. < 0.001
Information of Travel Weblogs	0.670	Approx. Chi-Square =1096.813 df=3 Sig. < 0.001
Social Interaction	0.793	Approx. Chi-Square =1672.849 df=6 Sig. < 0.001
Enjoyment	0.500	Approx. Chi-Square = 599.504

		df=1 Sig. < 0.001
Attitude toward Travel Weblogs	0.750	Approx. Chi-Square =1498.768 df=3 Sig. < 0.001
Intention to Revisit	0.764	Approx. Chi-Square=1775.887 df=3 Sig. < 0.001

4.4.3.2 Factor Analysis Results

The test for the statistical assumptions revealed that the data set was appropriate for factor analysis. Therefore principal components and factor analysis were conducted on all of the items that were compiled from the information gathered in the literature review. According to Stewart (1981), there was a well established body of literature associated with the role of factor analysis in determining how many factors should be extracted, and the criteria for ending extraction. Common criteria are termed as: 1) Latent root criterion, 2) Scree test criterion. The following sections summarise the key results.

4.4.3.2.1 Latent Root Criterion

The criterion of ‘latent root’ is the most commonly used technique for selecting the number of factors for further analysis. With the component analysis, each variable contributes a value of one to the total eigenvalues (Hair *et al*., 2006). In the latent root criterion, all factors with an eigenvalue (latent root criterion) greater than 1 are considered significant, otherwise they should be disregarded as the most reliable method when the number of variables is between 20 and 50 (Hair *et al*., 2006).

In the present study, the results of the latent root criterion (See Table 4.14) demonstrated that the 33 variables submitted for factor analysis should be extracted to form 3 dimensions. These 3 dimensions explained 91.53 percent of the variance in the data.

Table 4.14 Eigenvalues and the Explained Percentage of Variance by the Factors

Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	26.589	80.572	80.572	26.589	80.572	80.572
2	2.342	7.096	87.668	2.342	7.096	87.668
3	1.275	3.863	91.531	1.275	3.863	91.531
4	.686	2.078	93.610			
5	.360	1.090	94.700			
6	.325	.986	95.685			
7	.234	.710	96.396			
8	.161	.488	96.883			
9	.134	.406	97.289			
10	.118	.357	97.646			
11	.103	.313	97.960			
12	.089	.270	98.229			
13	.079	.239	98.468			
14	.071	.216	98.684			
15	.059	.178	98.862			
16	.046	.140	99.002			
17	.042	.129	99.131			
18	.039	.119	99.250			
19	.034	.104	99.354			
20	.031	.094	99.449			
21	.027	.081	99.530			
22	.022	.067	99.597			
23	.020	.059	99.656			
24	.018	.055	99.710			
25	.015	.046	99.756			
26	.015	.045	99.801			
27	.013	.039	99.840			
28	.012	.036	99.876			
29	.012	.035	99.912			
30	.009	.028	99.939			
31	.009	.026	99.965			
32	.007	.020	99.985			
33	.005	.015	100.000			

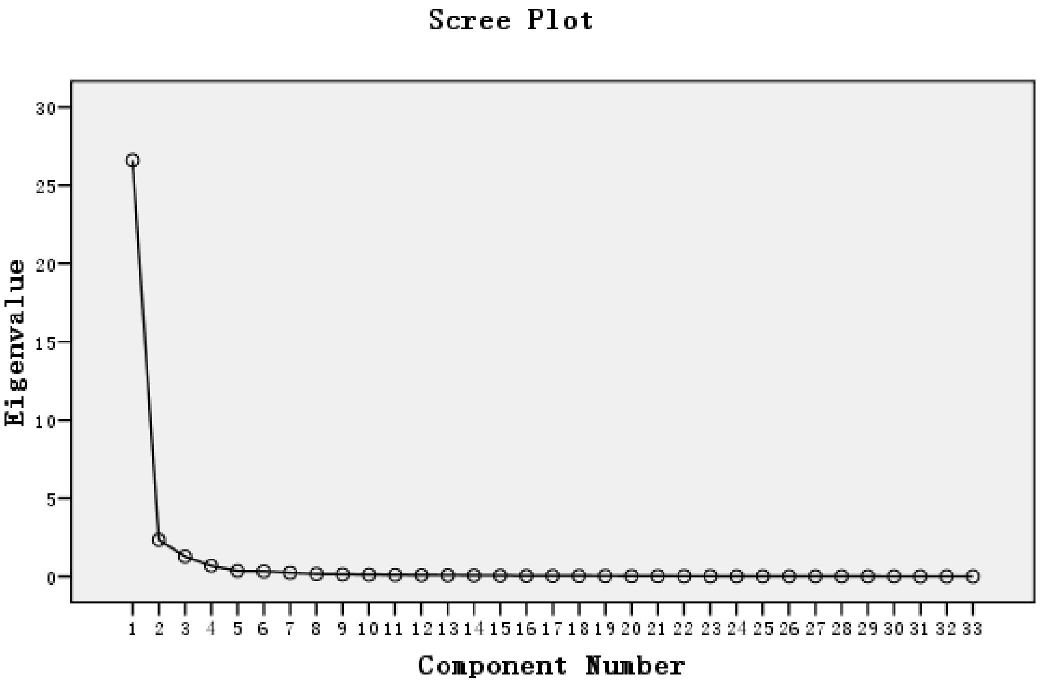
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

4.4.3.2.2 Scree Test Criterion

Scree test criterion is a criterion that is derived by plotting the latent roots against the number of factors in their order of extraction, and the shape of the resulting curve is used to assess the cut-off point (Hair *et al*., 2006).

By placing a straight edge across the bottom portion of the roots, there were 3 factors before the curve became approximately a straight line (See Figure 4.1). This indicated that the extraction of 3 dimensions was appropriate for this analysis.

Figure 4.1 The Scree Plot



4.4.3.2.3 Factor Rotation

Hair *et al*. (2006) indicate that factor rotation has been identified as the most important approach to factor interpretation. According to MathWorks (2007), the primary goal of factor rotation is to seek a solution for each variable with only a small number of large loadings.

The selection of the final factors involved interpreting the computed factor matrix (Hair *et al*., 2006). Within this matrix, the ambiguity of any meaningless patterns should be reduced. To this end, an orthogonal rotation (VARIMAX) was conducted.

There are several things to consider about the format of this matrix. First, factor loadings less than 0.1 have not been displayed because the researcher asked for these loadings to be suppressed. Second, the variables are listed in the order of size of their factor loadings because the researcher asked for the output to be “Sorted by size”.

SPSS output in Table 4.15 shows the rotated component matrix (also called the rotated factor matrix in factor analysis) which is a matrix of the factor loadings for each variable onto each factor. Table 4.15 also shows that there are three factors and variables load very highly onto only one factor (with the exception of one question). The suppression of loadings less than 0.10 and ordering variables by loading size also makes interpretation considerably easier.

Table 4.15 Rotated Component Matrices with VARIMAX Rotation

Rotated Component Matrix(a)

	Component		
	1	2	3
ATT1	.882		
SI4	.872		
SI2	.849		
SI3	.831		
RTI2	.826		
RTI6	.801		
TWC3	.801		
RTI3	.794		
AC1	.792		
ITB1	.780		
ITB3	.759		
TWC1	.733		
TWC2	.733		
AC2	.705		
ENJ1	.704		
AC4	.691		
ATT2	.669		
TWC5		.891	
TWC4		.866	

RTI5		.783	
ITB2		.771	
IR3		.701	
TWC6		.679	
AC5		.658	
AC3		.654	
ATT3		.643	
SI1		.631	
ENJ2			.775
IR1			.685
RTI4			.682
TWC7			.682
RTI1			.678
IR2			.667

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a Rotation converged in 16 iterations.

4.4.3.2.4 Interpretation of Factors

Hair *et al*. (2006) recommend that a sample size of approximately 350 and factor loadings greater than ± 0.30 should be considered as significant. The square loading is the amount of the variable's total variance explained by the factor loading in the correlation of the variable and the factor (Hair *et al*., 2006). In addition, a 0.50 loading implies that 25% of the variance is explained by the factor (Hair *et al*., 2006).

In this study, therefore, VARIMAX considered the factor loadings of ± 0.50 for 33 variables as significant, but none of them were less than 0.50 loadings. The remaining 33 variables had one loading on one factor (See Table 4.15, for details of the variable loadings). Each factor was subsequently renamed in accordance with the construct that they represented. The three factors were respectively renamed: (1) Travel webloggers' conduct; (2) Availability of travel weblogs' facilities, (3) Interpersonal interactivity.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented the empirical results based on research plan and the methodology outlined in Chapter Four. The size of the sample was designed to evaluate reliability and validity of the measurement model. An examination of the data set indicated that the questionnaire was reliable and valid.

Factor analysis was conducted to test the measurement model which contained 33 items and 8 constructs. After using principal components and factor analysis, the original proposed 6 dimensions. Examination of the data set indicated that the statistical assumptions required for performing factor analysis, correlation analysis were met. The research finding indicated that all independent variables were significant in this study.

CHAPTER FIVE

QUALITITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

This study aims to investigate how three principal dimensions of interactivity, namely, active control, two-way communications, and real-time communications, affect users' attitudes and usage intentions. In Chapter four the quantitative data from the web survey were analysed and recorded in terms of the patterns of responses found within the data. The analysis of the web survey responses received from the participants identified a number of factors related to interactivity, user motives and travel weblogs. The results indicated that the proposed research model was accurate in its forecast.

In an effort to complement the quantitative findings, a number of semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect expert perspectives from the senior management levels that were central to the operation of the travel weblogs. The primary purpose of the chapter was to elicit insights into the relative effectiveness of each of the dimensions of interactivity and selected user motives through an understanding of the subjective experiences of the owners of Chinese travel weblogs in more depth.

This chapter is organised as follows. Section 5.2 provides background information concerning the interview participants. In Section 5.3, the researcher describes the method of analysing the qualitative data. Section 5.4 provides an analysis of comments made by the participants with respect to the questions in the semi-structured interviews. The chapter concluded in Section 5.5 with a summary of current research.

5.2 Background Information

Descriptive information relating to the participating candidates is provided in this section. (See Table 5.1) All eight interview participants were selected from the four companies studied, two from each company. Those interviewed held positions of senior management in their companies, for example, General Manager of the Sales & Marketing department, Managing Editor of New Media leaders, Advertising Managers and IT Directors. The interviews were conducted between December 2009 and January 2010. Each interview was approximately 30 to 40 minutes in duration and was digitally recorded for subsequent transcription and review.

Table 5.1 Background Information about Interviews

Interview Ref. No.	**Gender**	**Interviewee Position**	**Solid Travel Weblog Skills**	**Weblogging Experience (Years)**	**Interview Duration (Minutes)**
1	Female	Managing Editor of New Media Leader	Yes	5	46.37
2	Male	Advertising Manager	Yes	3.5	31.38
3	Male	General Manager (Sales &Marketing Department)	No	2.5	27.24
4	Female	IT Director	Yes	3	24.41
5	Female	General Manager (Sales &Marketing Department)	No	2	23.17
6	Male	IT Director	Yes	4.5	26.32
7	Male	Advertising Manager	Yes	4	32.09
8	Male	Managing Editor of New Media Leader	Yes	4.5	38.53

As seen in the table above, 3 of the participants in the interviews were female (37.5%) and five were male (62.5%). All interview participants had between two and five years weblogging experience and 75% rated themselves as having solid weblog skills. The table indicated that they had a variety of backgrounds in relation to travel weblog usage. The majority of the interview participants were fully qualified and adequately experienced to discuss the relevant issues. Interview sessions took 31 minutes on average. The first column of the Table 5.1 lists each interviewee's reference number (also used on each transcript). Throughout this chapter, and elsewhere, interview reference numbers are used to refer to each specific interviewee, and these are supplemented with the interview question number to identify the quotations used (e.g., 2: 5 refers to the fifth interviewee's response to Question 2 from the interview guide).

5.3 Qualitative Data Analysis Approach

The qualitative analysis was commenced by examining all the interview transcripts to identify concepts and themes associated with the constructs from the proposed research model. Since the interviews were semi-structured and the interview guide was built around the research main constructs, it was easy for the researcher to identify themes related to the constructs. Synonyms for constructs were identified and used in theme extraction. For instance, terms such as "talking back", "interchangeable" and "dialogue" were used to identify themes around two-way communication concerns. This process was conducted to identify all concepts and themes in all transcribed responses and was undertaken using Microsoft Word capabilities such as word searching, using Word's search facility and highlighting text in multiple colours.

Data then were categorised in terms of the identified themes. Since the interview questions were structured directly around the research constructs and their relationships as proposed in the research model, it was relatively straightforward to classify responses associated with identified themes from each research construct. Microsoft word was used to present this classification in table format.

5.4 Qualitative Findings Associated with Research Constructs

The research model, as presented in Chapter 1, consisted of six constructs that were proposed to influence the intention to use corporate travel weblogs. The constructs were expected to affect the attitude towards corporate travel weblogs influencing the intention to revisit. This section provides an analysis of comments made by the interview participants with respect to the constructs from the research model that is based on the interview data.

5.4.1 Prior Weblogging Experience and Importance of Travel Weblog Services

On the basis of interviews, the vast majority of interviewees had substantial weblog skills. Regarding the history of company weblog, for example, interviewee 1 stated, *"I have used our business weblog for 5 years and it has gone well since the beginning. Our weblog is ultimately the synthesis of two perspectives – 1) what am I interested in writing about and 2) what do the readers respond to. I've experimented with a variety of different types of content and have had varied results."(1:1)*

Interviewee 6 stated, *"Well, we started using it at the end of 2006. And it provided very good results for us, especially after Beijing 2008 Olympic Games. After the games, our company name became more popular than ever before. It is great!"(6:1)*

Interviewee 2 stated, *"Our weblog was started in 2007. We established the site on the principles of community, friendship, openness with an especially strong focus on quality of content. We know that some sites grew fast, but I do not believe they ever will, or can, produce the real travellers, real information."(2:1)*

Interviewee 7 said, *"In China the weblogging services developed very fast. Our weblog is clearly aimed at frequent travellers for their business and their private trips. This weblog's search engine is better than others in three ways:*

- *Quality of search: We do not show every offering in the web, but select only the best ones. And the best ones are those that provide the best combination to the travellers – e.g. the perfect flight is not only determined by the lowest price, but equally also by the departure and arrival time and carrier.*
- *Features (Weblog attribute): For example, with our itinerary view feature, for the first time, users can simultaneously select, plan and manage all elements of their journey from different suppliers, These itineraries can easily be changed or rescheduled – This weblog automatically rearranges all parts of the journey.*
- *Easy to use (Web attribute): Nowadays many travel searches are very technical, our weblog is different. The clearly arranged configuration of the weblog, like a desktop application gives travellers all the information and functions needed in one place –no scrolling, no use of different windows. We took a lot of the information out".(7:1)*

Two interviewees mentioned that they had very little skill travel weblogs. For example, interviewee 5 stated, *"There has been a debate inside our company. We still prefer using our websites. As for the weblog experience, I have little knowledge of it."*

(5:1)

Similarly, interviewee 3 expressed, *"I always concern the risk that weblog brings to us. I think there is no big difference between websites and weblogs. Sometimes when I tried to persuade the weblog readership to participate in our weblog site there has been very little interest at all. It became clear to me early on that the vast majority of the readership was not going to become members of our weblog." (3: 1)*

Concerning the trends of travel weblogs, interviewee 4 stated, "*Well, the first trend is the explosive growth of the travel blogosphere which makes it almost impossible to keep up. I add new weblogs every week and could probably do so daily if I wanted to. The good news is that there are many more interesting, unique, high quality travel weblogs available to find. Another trend is the increasing use of video in travel weblogs – both posting of content found on sites like YouKu and self-produced travel videos. There's even an online community site specifically focused on developing and sharing travel videos."* The interviewee also stated, *"One other trend I would note is the use of advertising on travel weblogs."(4: 1)*

Owing to the increasing number of travel weblogs, interviewee 4 adds, *"The most important point here is that the company must keep updating their weblog on a daily basis. Some weblogs do very well. They provide titles of pretty good articles in a timely manner. There is a link from those key words to the corporation website. The purpose of doing this is to enhance interactive effects of linkage from articles to articles. In other words, improving interactivity is very important to us" (4: 1)*

In terms of the significant issues on the success of travel weblog, interviewee 1 stated, "*Well, this is a debatable topic. For me I would label a successful weblog by how many loyal readers it could attract. Loyal readers generate debates and discussions. These discussions will shape the views and maybe practices of both the weblog publishers and the weblog readers. Another sign of a good weblog is how it could help you build good relationships with people you would never possibly meet in your daily life. For instance, webloggers usually talk about how their weblogs won them friends and how they had the chance to meet one of them in an overseas trip just because they were mentally engaged over a weblog post or on a weblog site."(1:1)*

Interviewee 8 also stated, *"Certain travel weblogs seek to promote their products and services, while others simply share event announcements and travel experiences or use their weblogs to promote their travel-related activities and travel campaigns."(8:1)*

Interviewee 6 commented on the role of the travel weblog, "*Within the travel community itself, I think travel weblogs often play a similar role to websites in some areas. They offer a broader range of independent perspectives and they cover more niche topics than are available in the traditional travel media. Through weblogs, anyone can be a reporter, an analyst, or a tourism improvement theorist.*

Others mentioned their motivations towards using travel weblog services. For example, interviewee 7 stated, "*In my opinion, there are a number of different motives to use travel weblogs. Some people just want to share their travel experience with others. Some want to collect their thoughts and ideas somewhere and don't really care if anyone actually reads them. Others are looking to benefit from being part of the travel weblog community. Some have a niche interest they want to bring greater exposure to. Others probably just enjoy writing (diaries) about travel experiences." (7:1)*

Interestingly, interviewee 1 identified the importance of 'interactivity' experienced during the weblogging activities. She stated, "*Importantly, interactivity, and the sense of community which it provides, is the key. Readers continue the discussion by posting comments; other webloggers can respond in their own weblogs. The result is a virtual community of people with shared interests who can experience a common set of information and continually extend it. Through travel weblogging, I now have many travel (backpacker) friends from all over the world. That's amazing. For managers, they should increase the intensity of interactivity and communications between visitors and corporations, in order to increase their sales." (1:1)*

5.4.2 Views on the Concept of Interactivity

The interviews revealed that the majority of interview participants recognised the significance of incorporating medium interactivity into their weblog sites. Regarding the understanding of the concept of interactivity, participants provided different opinions.

Interviewee 4 said, "*From my point of view, interactivity is not only a spring subway but a wing of the Internet. With the development of new technologies, traditional print media and new media will be integrated gradually. I think that interactivity is to touch or communicate with each other in a virtual environment. In other words, it refers to any interpersonal communication in the online world. To be exact, it might refer to the informational interaction, if you like. Nowadays nearly all media make much of effort on this issue. You published or disseminated entertainment information, but without audiences' interactive communication or engagement. So what! You are just enjoying yourself."*

While some interviewees were innovative in incorporating interpersonal interactivity, for example, interviewee 1 said, "*Well, I think that anything on the travel weblog that interacts with your readers belongs to this category, whether it is audio, video, your comments section, or the availability of author contact information. In my opinion, interactivity is important when it comes to developing a relationship with your audience, and it is important that, whatever interactivity your weblog does possess, it is effective and functional." (2:1)* similarly, interviewee 2 stated, *"interactivity is an important part of online publishing or publications, and it is much more personal than traditional media." (2:2)*

Other participants discussed interactivity from the weblog itself. For example, interview 4 said, **"***Interactivity can be explained as one of the aspects of web news/web presentation. Many online newspaper producers were excited to offer many options on their websites and considered the news platform as key to interactivity."* He described interactivity as, *"the ability of the user to self*-*direct and control his/her experience of consuming travel information and in my opinion, and the main thing about interactivity is immediacy.*' *(4:2)*

Interviewee 7 stressed the perspective of entertainment. He said, "*Just having fun can be regarded as a crucial component of interactivity*."

From a communication perspective, interviewee 3 stated, *"in my opinion, interactivity* *is to continue a valued dialogue between travel weblog publishers and readers on the weblog site. I think currently for there to be true interactivity, there has to be communication between two or more parties. On the weblog site, a discussion board, a debate about a particular topic, an ongoing debate, a chat room. They are interactive . . ." (2:3)*

Besides, interviewee 2 stated, **"***In my opinion, interactive means that the message is not only sent to the consumer but they can interact with it – respond to it – create something. So yes, it is a good word to communicate the above but I think it should go along with a strong slogan that really communicates the strength or power of what the company offers***.** *The word interactive to me means interacting with each other…motion…progression…I think today the industry uses the word interactive too much so that it's starting to lose its meaning. Companies place a lot of interactive material out there in which most of the time the concepts are off strategy. There is no substance to it. When done properly, it's amazing what interactivity can do." (2:2)*

Also, interviewee 5 commented, *"I don't know how other companies use the word "interactive", but I am involved in direct sales and in the industry we use the term "interactive commerce". I am sure you have heard of e-commerce which is doing business on the web instead of in a traditional store. Interactive commerce is almost the same but instead of the consumer just going on a website and buying something they are actually able to take part in the profit. So the consumer is interacting with the producer and creating or sharing the profit with the producer. This can be very profitable for both sides because it creates loyalty between the consumer and the producer creating a win/win situation." (2:5)*

"In my opinion, interactivity is the core of the Web 2.0 evolution – the idea that web sites, and in the case of newspapers, the folks I deal with day in and day out, news content online – is no longer about a reporter or other content producer dictating one-way communication to a passive audience. It's about the audience becoming the publisher, the writer, the photographer and / or part of the conversation." (Interviewee 4) (2:4)

Overall, participants offered different opinions and ideas in discussing interactivity –

medium or human – most of them mentioned efforts to communicate with the audience in a variety of ways, and their opinions of levels of interactivity also varied widely. For example, some participants are concerned with supporting the need for human-to-human communication in news sites.

5.4.3 Functions of Interactivity within a Travel Weblog Context

The respondents provided their opinions on different functions of interactivity within a travel weblog setting. Interviewee 8 expressed enthusiasm, *"Travel weblog is free, easy to setup and easy to use. Actively users can control the weblog site content, responsiveness is obvious. It occurs in a two-way communication context. It allows you to enhance your leadership by reaching out to the people, making new connections, exploring your own ideas, and getting feedback from your peers." (3:8)*

Interviewee 2 commented, "*There is one point that I consider important. That is the users' participation and interactivity. In other words, each weblog is viewed as a community, wherein people can publish information, communicate with each other, state their comments or opinions, or make friends. On the basis of BBS, weblogs, podcasts, V-weblogs, SNS regardless of technical supports, functions etc, they have 'interactivity' in common The common purpose is to turn each end user into both participant and contributor, in order to maintain the reputation of the company. "*

Interviewee 8 generalised, "*interactivity is the soul of any weblog, interactivity is the badge of success of any weblog. I would like to suggest that all web operation managers should enhance the interactivity with users, improving the frequency of user to user communication."(3:8)* In detail, he summarised nine aspects that he considered to be relevant to the question: *Personally I think that there are nine aspects that should be included in it:*

[1] Ranking: e.g. ranking of travel weblogs, ranking of photos, ranking of members etc.

[2] Critical Evaluation: for example, he advocates appraisals of travel information such as articles and other material.

[3] Recommendation: Weblog owners and users ought to recommend places of interest.

[4] Statistics: How many members actually surf his or her weblog?

[5] Encouragement: to encourage the increase of contribution and participation from users.

[6] Commentaries: enables any users to publish any comments on the basis of certain topics.

[7] Discussion: e.g. online discussion and online election

[8] Convenience: the weblog site must be easy to operate and response should be quick.

[9] Participation: simplify the participation for users.

Interviewee 7 stated, "*The idea to create a community for people interested in China as a destination was initially born more out of necessity than out of desire. When marketing China there are always vast amounts of beautiful things to share with your audience and a multitude of activities to present. When I sat down to formulate the strategy for the website as a whole I spent a lot of time looking at the information needs of our target audience as well as trends in the on-line community. Our target audience places a high emphasis on up to date and trustworthy information. It is also important that information coming from their peers is trustworthy. We're hoping to create a place where potential visitors to China can talk to experienced webloggers and other travellers who have already visited China. With the help of this virtual meeting of peers, the decision process of going to China will hopefully become easier and more fun!"(3:7)*

5.4.4 Concerns on Levels of Interactivity

Regarding the levels of interactivity, participants gave their personal concern. For example, interviewee 3 said, "*The important one is the user control that encourages and allows free expression; the last one is the bi-directional. (4:3)* she further explained *"Compared with the traditional communication media, weblogs whether travel weblogs or other types of weblogs, they have those two features in common in my opinion. As for the travel weblogs, tourism practitioners can employ travel weblogs as a new marketing strategy. For us, the main purpose of publishing weblog normally is to express emotions, such as writing articles, publishing photos etc. Some of my weblog friends suggested that I add some professional articles for discussion. I don't agree, as for myself, the key of publishing weblog is to express my feelings or senses. It will lose its nature if my weblog is just fulfilling others' personal* *value."(4:3)*

Interviewee 1 emphasised the importance, in her opinion, of two-way communication and responsiveness perspectives. She stated, "*Keep interactive communicating with customers on the online platform. Here, two-way communication as one of the key characteristics of interactivity directly influences the effects of certain weblogs. It is important for a company to fully utilise posted messages and comments from visitors, reply to them or respond (responsiveness) to them ASAP. Some information, enquiries on the price of given products and services is extremely important for us. In addition, we can adopt kinds of incentives, such as gifts and special offers, in order to motivate or stimulate more comments or messages and enhance interactivity of weblog platform." (4:1)*

Interviewee 8 supported, *"People have always endeavoured to interact with the media. However, interactivity can be far more flexible and deep in a weblog context. This is because the internet provides a far wider range of communication flow than that afforded by any other medium. In my opinion, interactivity distinguishes weblog from traditional forms and has created a new relationship between the weblog publisher and weblog users. Therefore, understanding interactivity and how it works is fundamental to understanding the likely success of internet services."(4:8)*

Interviewee 6 provided what he considers to be the three most important dimensions of interactivity experienced on the weblog site. He said, "*In my opinion, weblog provides the opportunity to implement three levels or dimensions. First of all, it is the users' control. Interactivity at its simplest level is the hyperlink which allows users to move from point to point within the same page, within the same site or even with external sites and pages. They allow users to background the story, read related weblog articles or follow the storytelling development. Providing a facility that allows users to email the weblog publisher in relation to the story increases responsive interactivity putting pressure on the weblog to be more accountable for their work. Due to the nature of the internet, the flow of communication is instant meaning interactivity is more dynamic than written correspondence. Bulletin boards allow the user to interact with other users exchanging comments and criticisms. Providing a chat room encourages users to engage in discussion about the topic and* *can provide a journalist with an idea for a further story. As you know, most people who access our weblog sites are interested in finding specific information. The fast and efficient way for people to find what they want is by using a search function. News weblog sites that do not provide this function will quickly lose their audience." (4:6)*

Also, interviewee 6 identified some problems when applying interactivity into weblog practice. He said, "*Many weblogs have not properly utilised these possibilities taking limited advantage of the multi-directional information flow. Many of the earlier weblog sites and quite a few of the present ones simply transplant articles from their print counterparts onto the web page. In my opinion, the weblog should use caution when choosing how to apply interactivity to their site." (4:6)* He continued, "*I think that a weblog should offer choice, not only in content, but also in levels of interactivity across a variety of platforms. If the site is discriminative in requiring users to have top level equipment or expensive software a large proportion of users will be excluded causing a digital divide." (4:6)*

5.4.5 The Nature of Active Control employed within Travel Weblogs.

Some participants agreed that the nature of the active control is important within travel weblog context. For example, interviewee 4 said, "*The control criterion raises the possibility of switching from communicators (weblog owners) to audiences (active weblog visitors) during the interactive event. For instance, webloggers use weblogs actively to satisfy their communication needs. Interestingly, they have full control over the content and form, which are designed to influence other webloggers. They are given the opportunity to add or change everything on weblogs. In other words, control over the communication through weblogs is completely in the hands of the webloggers." (5:4)*

Similarly, interviewee 6 held the same opinion, "*Whatever the content, colour, text, or anything else, webloggers can control them. The weblog is becoming more and more popular now and nowadays everyone can express themselves on this platform. I am an ordinary person, and have no chance to get to know some famous person such as a movie star. By using the weblog platform, the relations get closer than ever before. Through communication, I suddenly found that he or she had the same hobby as* *me."(5:6)*

Interviewee 2 commented, *"On the basis of 'control', I agree. For example, I can delete the comments or articles whenever I want; I can freely express my opinions on the platform according to my writing or lifestyle; I can reposition my weblog according to others' suggestions or comments. Once before, a reader of my weblog left a comment to me: I read your weblog everyday and feel that you are very knowledgeable on travelling. You got so many experiences on it. Would you please plan a 10 days travel for my family. I trust you and your company." (5:2)*

Interviewee 2 also talked about the issue that caused him some concern. He stated, "*I found that quite a few of travel industry weblogs were not being applied very well. I wonder why they cannot use it as a window to demonstrate their places of interest and culture. On the other hand, it is a good way to market their company. In my opinion, in fact the traditional travel website is easily controllable, but it is the control from the company not the website visitors themselves. In other words, website always tell us how good it is, what features they have, wherein there is a very few mutual communication. Visitors have a limited chance to speak." (5:2)*

Interviewee 4 said. "*It is important that travel companies should provide some space for their end users. Nowadays personalised travel or individual travels are becoming more and more popular. They need to give more spaces to discuss, to express, to release feeling. In doing so, we can recognise what they need, what they like or dislike, their tastes, and many other things, in order to conduct our business in an effective and efficient way."* (5:4)

5.4.6 The Nature of Two-Way Communication Employed within Travel Weblogs.

Some participants observed that two-way communication was one of key factors for travel weblogging activities. For example, interviewee 1 said, "*Based on my 5 years' work experience, I found that some features such as we can communicate with our customers, including real travellers were of great value. I can say it is two-way based communication".* She added, "*In my opinion, word of mouth communication is very important. I think in the past, websites were a fairly static, one-way type of communication. Through the weblog platform, people nowadays can participate more* *easily by adding their voice. For example, hotel and travel service providers, such as my company, are now at the mercy of what other people post about them, and so the challenge for them is to please as many people as they can, and hope they spread the word. This in turn helps other travellers make more informed decisions about their plans."(6:1)*

Regarding the importance of the function of word of mouth, interviewee 5 stated, "*This is exactly where we can see the potential in our weblog: personal recommendations, word-of-mouth communication, if you like, helps products and services much more than traditional structured marketing. Our members have no reason to promote a hotel or a destination; it's about real experiences and honest impressions. While classical travel guides (for example, books) always have to deal with a subjective selection of topics, the scope of content at our weblog platform is unrestricted. This means that even smaller or to-date unknown travel destinations have a chance at gaining a larger audience. In addition, a community is the perfect answer to the problem of the increasing diversity in our society. Target groups are diversifying and demands are becoming more individual, in that even very individual information and answers are demanded, which our weblog can deliver perfectly."*

Interviewee 6 gave a similar idea, he said, "*From my point of view, every company desire communication through two-way interaction, as it is necessary to share our business voices with our customers. I am not saying that the traditional one-to-many communication does not work anymore. It is still reasonable sometimes. But today's society is information overloaded, therefore, we have to get used to the emerged new or digital media, such as weblogs. These advanced media may help our company go further through two-way communication format. Another reason came into my mind is 'what and how our competitors are doing'. As I know, they all just or have started conducting their business from weblogs. It is a warning signal for us. We have to keep up with them; otherwise, we might lose our competitive edge. You see." (6:6)*

Interviewee 2 commented as well. He said, "*In fact, I did not spend a lot of energy on marketing. Through the weblog platform, the relationship between me, weblog publisher and him, weblog reader, gets closer and closer. It saved cost for our company to a great extent. In this instance, this is actually a kind of word of mouth* *with stronger interactive nature. We hope the contact and relationship among travel webloggers will continue to be enhanced. We would like more and more co-operation for the future. (6:2)*

5.4.7 The Nature of Responsiveness Utilised within Travel Weblogs.

When asked to give opinions on the issue of responsiveness, many stressed the importance of the function. For example, interviewee 1 stated, "*Compared with the traditional media, travel weblogs have the greater advantage. It is because it has a more interactive nature than other print or broadcast media. We normally respond to enquiries from webloggers very quickly, and obtain much valuable information, good or bad, from them on time. It is very good and vital to our company's online marketing strategy and the company's development."(7:1)*

Similarly, interviewee 6 reinforced this comment. He said, "*Travel weblogs provide a platform for making communications much more synchronized. For instance, webloggers can easily and quickly acquire the information needed and respond to it. During the interactive process, not only can weblog owners' actions appear to be instantaneous, but also responsive to the actions of active weblog visitors. For corporate weblogs, it is suggested that an improvement in their ability to respond to webloggers' actions and requests in a timely manner, would be beneficial." (7:6)*

Referring to this term, responsiveness, interviewee 8 thought that reciprocity was fully reflected in the context of travel weblogs. He said, "*Reciprocity acts as a spatial dimension, since there has to be a connection between the interacting parties, weblog owners and active weblog visitors that supports the actions and reactions between them. For instance, weblog owners create interactivity via text, audio, and conversations, which leaves a comment space for active weblog visitors to react. With the aid of the weblog platform, active weblog visitors are enabled to post their comments or hold a discussion with other webloggers related to the given topic. Under these circumstances, two-way communication is formed, as webloggers are able to react to the feedback in turn. It is clear that the interactive feature offers potential for one-to-many (one weblog owner-to-many active weblog visitors), one-to-one communication (one weblog owner-to-one active weblog visitor) or many-to-many communications (many weblog owners-to-many active weblog visitors).*

Therefore, it facilitates two-way, conversational communication among interacting parties."(7:8)

5.4.8 Travel Weblog Marketing and its Importance.

The vast majority of respondents gave their opinions on the importance of travel weblog marketing. For example, interviewee 8 stated, "*Although* the *corporate weblog entered into China more than 8 years ago now, most of companies, do not fully understand what weblog is and what benefits we can obtain from it. In my opinion, this newer marketing tool, employed by companies in terms of interactivity application mode is ideal to publicise corporate information, communicate with customers* timely*, and develop marketing activities."(8:8)*

Interviewee 6 stated, "*It is the community for the honest exchange of experiences among travellers and travel weblog users. Travel tips, hotel reviews, restaurant recommendations, travel diaries and travel pictures which are published by members provide transparency and offer inspiration for other travellers. In addition, the weblog brings together travellers with similar interests through intelligent match-making methods." (8:6)*

Interviewee 8 commented, "If you calculate the return in terms of investment on weblog and traditional website, weblog is found to hold the advantage over the traditional website in terms of its wider coverage, more interactivities, and accuracy. Here, accuracy means the effectiveness of targeting your audiences, less wasted investment and so on." (8:8)

Interviewee 1 pointed out three advantages of using travel weblogs:
"*1) Higher interactivity and creditability: as a tool of publicising and communicating travel information, weblogs facilitate more interactivities among weblog publishers and weblog readers. Inside the weblog community circle, webloggers are greatly influenced by each other. Also, the comments from the site are much more credible than any other medium;*
2) Outstanding search engines: this can increase the number of linkages to company weblogs, adding more potential customers. Also, it helps to prolong the length or duration of communications, not constrained by time limits;

3) Increases autonomy compared with BBS (Bulletin Board System) and traditional websites, webloggers are enabled to publish any travel information or news. More importantly, there is no cost for companies do not charge any advertising costs to anyone."(8:1)

From an advertising perspective, interview7 claimed, "*It is certain that users would be suspicious if a company only mentions good aspects of a product in an advertisement. To this end, all topics or discussions must be authentic when conducting topic marketing on a weblog site. There must be definitely positive and negative comments on that site to satisfy the people who are judging the advert. Weblog can be deemed as a platform for communication wherein, many webloggers can share their own opinions or comments with other webloggers. Here, webloggers could include weblog readers and weblog publishers. It certainly means an immense interactivity that any advertiser would wish to see." (8:7)*

Considering the current financial crisis, interviewee 4 stated, "*Just the same as most of corporations, we had a tough time under the financial crisis. An easy way for us is to reduce or cut our advertising budgets or select cheaper media resources. In this instance, cheaper media resources such as BBS, weblogs and Email are particularly favoured by SMEs. The main reason for choosing these is that interactivity is the key. Of these, the weblog, is the most widely used by both corporations and people. Interestingly, the weblog has become a unique marketing model and has influenced and promoted corporations' informational communications to a greater extent. It is extremely innovative." (8:4)*

Interviewee 5 commented, "*In my opinion, weblog marketing is used for spreading or communicating a company's culture, product value, seeking and exploring potential customers, increasing market share and maximising profits by means of the weblog platform. Obviously, weblog marketing is a systematic process, opening a new weblog, communicating, interactivity, purchase order and making profits. Like other Internet Marketing, corporations should develop relevant plans before launching their weblogs. Compared with complete Internet marketing plans, weblog marketing is simpler but more specific."(8:5)*

Interviewee 1 stressed the importance of word of mouth communication. She stated, "*Personal experience is the best advisor. This is especially true for travelling. The rating of travel destinations is surely one of the most positive and far-reaching changes for the industry in recent years. So knowing the best destination is one thing, but finding the best way to travel is at least as important. This is currently what we are doing, but we have also plans for building an innovative travel community in the future." (8:1)*

5.4.9 The Future Development of Travel Weblogs

In providing their opinions about the future development of travel weblogs, many of the participants provided useful insights and suggestions. For example, interviewee 4 described the developing trends of travel weblog services in China, "*The Internet marketing as a new market place keeps growing as a whole. By 2009, its market turnover has exceeded $14 billion. The figure will maintain a rapid growth in the year ahead. This financial crisis won't influence the Chinese market a lot." (4:8)*

Interviewee 1 provided a point which she referred to as "effect marketing". She stated, "*Regarding the marketing methods, B2B platform and search engines still dominate the arena of Internet marketing. Here, I would like to stress another term 'effect marketing', which will become future marketing trends; Web 1.0 will turn to Web 2.0 Effect Marketing will be favoured by more and more corporations."* She explained the process that Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 followed. "*Web 2.0 includes: site creation—site promotion—transforming volume and rate of flow. While traditional Web 1.0 includes: site creation—site promotion or just promoting the site, there are many flaws in Web 1.0: For instance, many corporate websites cannot meet the requirements of Internet marketing. Owing to lack of effective volume of flow they will miss or waste many opportunities."(1:1)*

Other respondents pictured the weblogosphere changing over the next few years. For example, interviewee 2 claimed, "*One thing that's interesting about weblogs is that popularity and credibility don't track with academic or other forms of formal thinking. From my point of view, all weblog marketers should consider the factors that make a successful weblog. How to make weblog users to believe or trust the corporate weblogs? We have to set up a good or standard weblogging system, such as fun nature,* *providing real time updated information etc., in order to enhance the controllability of weblog users. Also, the quality of our travel products and services is the key of our business success.”* He also commented from a communication perspective, “*In my opinion, it will be great if we can make use of wisdoms of weblog publishers. Try to be different and attractive, in order to attract more and more weblog users get involved into our weblog platform. Importantly, I think we should demonstrate the value of our weblog. Providing a platform for them to show their real inspiration, make their ideas and comments to be approved by the public, achieve their spiritual pleasure, enjoy themselves etc.”*

Interviewee 1 provided some suggestions for today’s managers. She suggested, “*The managers of companies should pay more attention to their staff rather than updating the weblog individually. They should be good at listening to the opinions of their staff. However, not all staff within companies are qualified to use the weblogs. The inequalities of education levels and ability toward new technology, for example might lead to errors and wrong information being posted on the weblog. Therefore, I strongly suggest that company take care when conducting their business on the weblog platform until they have a fully trained and competent staff.” (9:1)*

An interesting point was raised by interviewee 6. The issue was “weblog real-name registration system”. This is a new form of legislation introduced in China in an attempt to combat criminal activities carried out through fraudulent weblog owners. .He commented, “*Nowadays the real-name registration system is becoming more popular than ever before. This system fulfils the national policies development but does not comply with personal branding. It is very important. For example, I built up a weblog with a fake name. You could not find me and catch me if I were to do bad things. On the other hand, by using the real-name registration system, it helps by giving me credibility when advertising or marketing myself. Also, it restrains me to a certain extent.” (9:6)*

Interviewee 2 raised what he considered to be a problematic issue related to the great volume of content. He stated, “*The problem today is that there are so many social networking sites, such as weblogs, podcasts, and reviews that it can be hard to find and extract any valuable information. With the huge amount of user generated content* *we need sophisticated filters to allow us to sort through the noise. Then we can really harness the value that everyone is generating online.”* He further pointed out, *“Confusion also exists about how to implement and utilize interactivity. While the general consensus is that it is a good thing, concrete problems are associated with a more liberated communication environment. Producers are generally interested in the idea of participatory dialogic journalism, but putting it into practice can cause problems.” (9:2)*

5.5 Summary of Qualitative Findings

This chapter discussed the findings from the qualitative phase of the current study. The chapter first presented background information about the interview participants. As previously mentioned, the qualitative data was intended to complement the questionnaire (web survey) findings, provided in-depth details of interactivity (concepts and dimensions) and its impact on behavioural intention to travel weblogs.

The interviewees had a range of different backgrounds in relation to the travel weblog services, but the majority of them rated themselves as having solid weblog skills. The next section of the chapter presented a construct by construct synthesis of the comments made by the participants with respect to the constructs from the research model. This was followed by an examination of whether the qualitative data obtained from the interviews was consistent with the research hypotheses. The result showed that the qualitative data was consistent with the proposed hypotheses.

Additional comments from the participants regarding the likelihood of success of travel weblog services in China were also presented. Most interview participants believed that the travel weblog services in China will be successful though this will take time. Participants identified factors that they believe need to be addressed for the travel weblog to be successful in future. The chapter concluded with a brief comparison of the quantitative and qualitative findings. Noticeably the findings reported in the qualitative phase were consistent with previous quantitative results. That is, there was a consistency between the findings obtained using the two different yet interlinked research methods. The next chapter will provide a detailed discussion of both the quantitative and qualitative results in respect of the research questions.

CHAPTER SIX - CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the quantitative and qualitative research results as presented in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. In Section 6.2, the progress towards achieving the three main research objectives is discussed. The chapter then presents in Section 6.3 to test the research hypotheses. Section 6.4 discussed the implications of the research and suggested future research. Some recommendations for practice to the Chinese travel companies are presented in Section 6.4. Section 6.5 concludes the thesis by summarising the key features of the research and its significance.

6.2 Summary of This Study

The main purpose of this research is to investigate the effect of three key dimensions of interactivity (i.e., active control, two-way communication, and responsiveness) and three user motives (i.e., information, social interaction, and perceived enjoyment) on attitude toward corporate travel weblogs, and the impact of attitude toward corporate travel weblogs on intention to revisit corporate travel weblogs.

On the basis of previous literature studies (Mackenzie, Lutz and Belch, 1986; Chen and Wells, 1999; Wu, 1999; McMillan and Hwang, 2002; Bruner, Gordon, and Kumar, 2002; Liu, 2003; Ko, Cho, and Roberts, 2005; Johnson, Bruner, and Kumar, 2006; Song and Zinkhan, 2008; Jiang, Chan, and Tan, 2010), the researcher adopted and modified existing scales to measure interactivity, user motives, attitude toward corporate travel weblogs, and intention to revisit.

The results from the survey and interview of corporate travel weblog publishers and readers supported the proposed research constructs of three dimensions of interactivity and three user motives. Importantly, the results supported research hypotheses that there were significant relationships between: 1) dimensions of interactivity and attitude toward corporate travel weblogs 2) webloggers’ motives and their attitudes toward travel weblogs, 3) attitude toward corporate travel weblogs and intention to revisit. In addition, the effect of interactivity and user motives on intention to revisit was fully mediated by attitude toward corporate travel weblogs.

6.3 Research Hypotheses

This section interpreted the results of this study and explored the implications both for future researchers studying the interactivity and user motives for practitioners who wish to apply the lessons of this study in a particular context. To test the research hypotheses, the researcher sought to investigate the relationships among interactivity, user motives, attitude toward the corporate travel weblogs, and intention to revisit.

6.3.1 Proposed Research Hypotheses

Four hypotheses in this study examined the effect of interactivity and user motives, as it was manipulated within the corporate travel weblog context, to determine if interactivity impacts attitude toward corporate travel weblogs and intention to revisit corporate travel weblogs. Both quantitative and qualitative results show evidence supporting some effects of the interactivity and user motives concept. The four proposed hypotheses are showing as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Interactivity is positively associated with attitude toward corporate travel weblogs.

Hypothesis 2: User motives are positively associated with attitude toward corporate travel weblogs.

Hypothesis 3: Attitude toward travel weblogs is positively associated with intention to revisit corporate travel weblogs.

Hypothesis 4: Attitude toward corporate travel weblogs fully mediated the relationship between antecedents (user motives and interactivity) and intention to revisit.

6.3.2 Testing the Research Hypotheses

To test the research hypotheses, the researcher proceeded to examine the relationships among interactivity, user motives, attitude toward corporate travel weblogs, and intention to revisit.

6.3.2.1 Discussion of Quantitative Results

6.3.2.1.1 Relationship between Interactivity and Attitude toward corporate Travel Weblogs

The quantitative analysis, regardless of any other manipulation, shows that interactivity is significant predictors of attitude toward corporate travel weblogs, which consequently influences intention to revisit corporate travel weblogs. The research objective one was achieved.

Hypothesis 1 proposed the effects of interactivity on the attitude toward the corporate travel weblogs. The results indicated that corporate weblog users with high perceived interactivity are more likely to have a positive attitude toward the corporate travel weblogs. The results pertaining to interactivity are consistent with previous studies (Cho and Leckenby, 1999; Johnson et al., 2006; McMillan and Hwang, 2002; McMillan, Hwang and Lee, 2003; Liu and Shrum, 2002; Lee, 2005).

McMillan et al. (2003) indicated that there is a positive correlation between interactivity and attitude toward the website. They also examined the relationship between each interactivity dimension and attitude toward the websites: real-time conversation (i.e., two-way communication), engaging (i.e., active control), and no delay (i.e., responsiveness).

It is important to note in this quantitative study that attitude toward the corporate travel weblogs is affected more by interactivity than by motives. This result indicated that travel marketers would be suggested to invest more efforts into creating and developing interactivity functions on their corporate weblog sites, such as providing more customisation functions (i.e., active control function) and real-time information (i.e., responsiveness function). Such strategies may facilitate a positive attitude toward corporate travel weblogs among weblog publishers and readers (McMillan et al., 2003).

In terms of the individual interactivity dimension, the results indicated that interactivity in corporate travel weblogs is related to active control, two-way communication, and responsiveness. Two-way communication was found to have a relatively small relationship with interactivity. In the same vein, the mean scores of active control and responsiveness were significantly higher than two-way communication. The results imply that respondents were more likely to utilise interactivity tools for getting prompt information while controlling information. Two-way communication tools are likely not as important as the other two dimensions.

6.3.2.1.2Relationship between User Motive and Attitude toward Corporate Travel Weblogs

Hypothesis 2 proposed the effects of user motives on the attitude toward corporate travel weblogs. The results indicated that weblog users have various and specific motives to visit corporate travel weblogs. And weblog users are likely to have positive feelings about corporate travel weblogs if the content meets their needs and wants.

On the basis of a theoretical perspective, this study supported uses and gratification (UGC) theory. A primary purpose of this theory is to: “1) explain how people use media to gratify their needs, 2) understand motives for media behaviour, 3) identify functions or consequences that follow from needs motives and behaviour” (Rubin, 2000, p.527).

The present study provided evidence supporting the principle of uses and gratification theory. In other words, users’ attitude toward corporate travel weblogs is affected by certain motives for using corporate travel weblogs. The results are consistent with previous Internet studies rooted in the field of marketing and advertsing (Chen and Wells, 1999; Ducoffe, 1996; Ko, Cho, and Roberts, 2005; Johnson, Bruner, and Kumar, 2006; Song and Zinkhan, 2008; Jiang, Chan, and Tan, 2010).

The researcher identified three motives for corporate travel weblogs in terms of individual motives (information, social interaction, and enjoyment). The three factors were significantly related to the latent construct user motives.

The results indicated two particular factors (social interaction and enjoyment) were strong predictors of corporate travel weblog user motives, while information had a smaller impact on corporate travel weblog user motives. The mean scores of social interaction and perceived enjoyment were higher than information construct.

Therefore, the results imply that respondents are more likely motivated to visit corporate travel weblogs for social interaction and enjoyment.

This finding does not consistent with some previous studies that proved the importance of information construct. For example, Papacharissi and Rubin's (2001) Internet motivation study indicated that information-seeking and entertainment had the highest mean scores compared to other motives. Similar finding is the enjoyment construct, which consistent with previous researches (Chen and Wells, 1999; Ko et al., 2005; Luo, 2002; Lin, 2001; Stafford and Staffor, 2001; Ducoffe, 1996).

The results of the current study, however, indicated some other issues to be concerned. Firstly, this study did not include other motive factors such as escape and economic, a possible explanation is that since this study was focused on the content of corporate travel weblogs. Escape and economic factor will not be concerned. Of this, future researchers should not discard the importance of economic and escape motives, since it could be an influential factor when using certain types of corporate travel weblogs.

6.3.2.1.3Relationship between Attitude toward Corporate Travel Weblogs and Intention to Revisit

Hypothesis 3 included the proposition that attitude toward corporate travel weblogs would be a significant predicator of intention to revisit those corporate travel weblogs. The results indicated that users with a more positive attitude toward corporate travel weblogs have stronger intentions to visit the corporate travel weblogs again in the future.

The result supported the proposed research model and was consistent with previous Internet research (Chen and Wells, 1999; Lin, 2001; Stafford and Staffor, 2001; Ducoffe, 1996; Ko, Cho, and Roberts, 2005; Johnson, Bruner, and Kumar, 2006; Song and Zinkhan, 2008; Jiang, Chan, and Tan, 2010). From a marketing perspective, it is important that users frequently visit travel weblogs. It is worth noting that users will actively engage in the corporate weblog sites if they frequently visit the sites (Ko, 2002).

6.3.2.1.4The Mediation Effects of Attitude toward Travel Weblogs

To test Baron and Kenny’s (1986) mediation effect, the results also indicated that attitude toward travel weblogs fully mediated the relationship between two antecedents, namely interactivity and user motives, and intention to revisit (Hypothesis 8). This result implied that attitude toward travel weblogs was a critical indicator for evaluating travel weblog effectiveness.

6.3.2.2 Discussion of Qualitative Results

According to the review of literature presented in Chapter Two, six factors (active control, two-way communication, real time information, social interaction, information of travel weblogs, and enjoyment) are proposed to affect attitude toward travel weblogs, and intention to revisit.

6.3.2.2.1Conclusions Pertaining to Research Objective One

Research objective one was achieved. Hypothesis 1 proposed that Interactivity is positively associated with attitude toward corporate travel weblogs. The result indicated that three key dimensions of interactivity play a significant role in influencing weblog users’ perceptions of the corporate travel weblogs’ services. Interactivity also indirectly affects the intention to revisit corporate travel weblogs. This study found that Chinese corporate travel weblogs are no different from corporate travel weblogs in other countries.

As indicated in the interview data, all interviewees believed that the use of travel weblogs will become increasingly popular. For example, Interviewee 7 said, *“In China the weblogging services developed very fast.* His task was clearly focused at frequent travellers for their business and their private trips. Similarly, interviewee 4 identified two trends of travel weblogs.

One is explosive growth of the travel weblogosphere, the other one is the use of advertising to communicate with travel weblog users. He said that “*The good news is that there are many more interesting, unique, high quality, and video-based travel weblogs available to find.”* Interviewee 2 also indicated that the use of video clips in the travel weblogs enables more interaction on the platform. In the same vein, interviewee 6 claimed the importance of using hyperlinked images and texts to travel weblogs. He said, "*The purpose of doing this is to enhance interactive effects of linkage from articles to articles. In other words, enhancing interactivity is very important to us"*.

Referring the dimension of interactivity, participants gave their personal concerns. For instance, interviewee 3 stated that travel weblogs took advantages over traditional communication media in terms of active control and two-way communication perspectives. He said, "*Travel weblogs is controllable, as it enables weblog users to freely express themselves."* Interviewee 5 held the same agreement. She also pointed out, "*It is also a way of interactive owing to bidirectional communication nature."* From the strategic marketing perspective, she suggested that tourism practitioners can employ travel weblogs to build a sustainable customer relationship in a profitable way.

Apart from this, participant 1 shared her concern on the issues of two-way communication and real time information. For example, she claimed that in an online context, weblog users can keep interactive communication with each other, in order to share interests and experiences. As she said, "*two-way communication as one of key characteristics of interactivity directly affects the effects of certain weblogs."* Referring the nature of real time information, interviewee 7 stressed the importance of the speed of responses. He said, "*To fully utilise posted message and comments from visitors, reply them or response to them ASAP*."

In consistent with above statements, interviewee 6 stressed three most important dimensions of interactivity experienced on the weblog site. He claimed that travel weblogs provides the opportunity to implement all above three dimensions. His first concern was about users' control. He said, "*Interactivity at its simplest level is the hyperlink which allows users to move from point to point within the same page, within the same site or even with external sites and pages."* Then he pointed out the second concern, which was two-way communication. According to his statement, of which the flow of communication was more dynamic than written correspondence. For example, "*Bulletin boards on travel weblogs allow the user to interact with other users exchanging comments and criticisms due to the feature of Internet-based technology."* The last comment made by him was the real time information. As he claimed, “[travel weblogs] *is the fast and efficient way for people to find what they want.”*

In addition, interviewee 1, 2, and 6 identified current problematic matters toward the application of interactivity on travel weblogs’ practice. Such as, interviewee 1 stressed the significance of two-way communication. He said, “*Some travel weblogs have not properly utilised these possibilities taking limited advantage of the multi-directional information flow.”* Interviewee 2 agreed with her opinion. He also added, “*Many of the earlier weblog sites simply transplant articles from their print counterparts onto the weblog page.* [Therefore, the travel marketers should clear] *how to apply interactivity to their site.”* Interviewee 6 further commented, “*A weblog should offer choice, not only in content, but also in levels of interactivity across a variety of platforms.”*

The above findings pointed out two noteworthy issues. Firstly, this finding contributes to previous argument that research findings on the effects of interactivity on various measures of marketing and advertising effectiveness have been remarkable for their lack of consistency across various research disciplines. Secondly, the effects of interactivity in travel weblogging context are similar to its effects on the websites.

6.3.2.2.2Conclusions Pertaining to Research Objective Two

Research objective two was achieved as Hypothesis 2: User motives are positively associated with attitude toward corporate travel weblogs. The hypothesis was supported by the significant positive effects on their related constructs.

Interviewee 2 and Interviewee 3 both stated that travel weblogs provided an online platform for weblog users to “*express emotion*”, in forms of “*writing articles and uploading photos.*” In view of factors of user motives, interviewee 7 stated, “*Personally, I believe, there are a number of different motivations to use travel weblogs, for example, sharing travel experience with others, collecting thoughts and ideas, and being part of the travel weblog community.”* He also added the enjoyment as another motivation factor, for example reading and writing travel dairies is really enjoyable. Interviewee 4 further stated that reading the latest articles has become one part of the travel webloggers’ daily life.

With regard to social interaction perspective, interviewee 1 claimed that one of the benefits of travel weblogs is to communicate directly with the other travel webloggers and opinion leaders. It is because "*generally, webloggers are perceived as opinion leaders*." Similarly, Interviewee 8 stated, *"Certain travel weblogs seek to promote their products and services, while others simply share event announcements and travel experiences or uses their weblogs to promote their travel-related activities and travel campaign."* Interviewee 6 commented the role of travel weblogs. He said that I think travel weblogs often play a similar role to weblogs in other areas within the travel community.

6.3.2.2.3Conclusions Pertaining to Research Objective Three

Research objective three was achieved as Hypotheses 3 and 4 were supported by the significant positive effects on their related constructs.

Hypothesis 3: Attitude toward corporate travel weblogs is positively associated with intention to revisit corporate travel weblogs.

Hypothesis 4: Attitude toward corporate travel weblogs fully mediated the relationship between antecedents (user motives and interactivity) and intention to revisit.

Interviewee 8 considered that the features provided by the travel weblogs were directly effect on the relationship building with travel webloggers. He said *"travel weblogs facilitate many types interactions among weblog users in a way of which create mutual influence among parties."* Interviewee 4 held similar comment on the statement by interviewee 8. She said that *"our company is using feedback and rating system to evaluate travel webloggers' attitudinal level. Meantime, we adopt kinds of incentives, such as presents and specially offers."* The purpose of their policy is to motivate more comments or messages, in order to enhance interactivity of travel weblogs.

From the perception of interviewee 4, interactivity distinguishes weblog from its traditional forms and has created a new relationship between the weblog publisher and travel weblog users. She further added "*understanding interactivity and how it works* *is fundamental to understanding the likely success of internet services.”* In addition, interviewee 5 pointed out that travel weblogs should have three characteristics, such as *“quality of search, features, and easy to use”*, in order to attract travel webloggers’ attention.

The above findings pointed out some noteworthy issues. Firstly, three user motive factors (information, social interaction, and perceived enjoyment) are strongly associated with travel webloggers’ attitude toward that weblog site, and impact their intentions to revisit. This finding was consistent with the previous studies on user motives and attitudinal factor, and behavioural intentions. Secondly, other concerning issues came out to their minds. For example, weblog real-name registration system has been put up by respondents. As interviewee 6 argued, “*Nowadays the real-name registration system is becoming more popular than ever before. This system fulfils the national policies development but does not comply with personal branding. It is very important. For example, I built up a weblog with a fake name. You could not find me and catch me if I do bad things. On the contrary, by using the real-name registration system, on one hand, it helps to advertising or marketing me. Also, it restrains me to a certain extent.”*

6.3.2.3 Consistency between Quantitative and Qualitative Analyses

This chapter reflected the pragmatic approach that was selected for this study as described in Chapter 3 (Research Methodology). As previously mentioned, the qualitative data was intended to complement the questionnaire (web survey) findings, provided in-depth details of interactivity (concepts and dimensions) and its impact on behavioural intention to corporate travel weblogs. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were employed in a complementary manner to minimise the disadvantages a single research method. In this section, the researcher compared the results of the two approaches (quantitative approach and qualitative approach) to refine the overall research findings.

As described in Chapter 5 (Quantitative Data Analysis), the analysis of quantitative findings provided support for the four hypotheses. Table 6.1 listed the proposed hypotheses and indicated whether the results from the qualitative analysis were consistent with them. The interview data was consistent with the quantitative findings for six of the hypotheses. In other words, four hypotheses that were supported by the quantitative analysis also found support from the qualitative analysis.

Table 6.1 Consistency between results of quantitative and qualitative analyses

The Hypothesis	Quantitative Analysis	Does qualitative analysis consistent with quantitative analysis?
Hypothesis 1: Interactivity is positively associated with attitude toward corporate travel weblogs.	**Supported**	**Yes**
Hypothesis 2: User motives are positively associated with attitude toward corporate travel weblogs.	**Supported**	**Yes**
Hypothesis 3: Attitude toward travel weblogs is positively associated with intention to revisit corporate travel weblogs.	**Supported**	**Yes**
Hypothesis 4: Attitude toward corporate travel weblogs fully mediated the relationship between antecedents (user motives and interactivity) and intention to revisit.	**supported**	**Yes**

CHAPTER SEVEN – IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE RESEARCH

7.1 Implications of This Study

In former chapters (Chapter 1 – Chapter 6), all discussions centred on the aim of this study that is to determine how three principal dimensions of interactivity affect users' attitudes and usage intentions, followed by three research objectives : 1) to critically appraise the significance of the dimensions of interactivity considered as key features of corporate travel weblogs; 2) to measure the importance of key user motives in the use of corporate travel weblogs; 3) to investigate the impact of proposed motives and interactivity on attitudes toward corporate travel weblogs. To ensure fulfilment of the given research aim and objectives, a research model (Figure 1.1 in Chapter 1) was proposed and tested by explicitly elaborating on association among four constructs: interactivity, weblog user motives, attitude toward travel weblogs, and intention to revisit those weblog sites. Inside the model, the main action of the story revolves around the term 'interactivity'.

This study has several important implications for the development of theories of interactivity and offers practical insights for travel weblog marketing practice. Theoretical and entrepreneurial implications of the study are discussed in this section respectively.

7.1.1 Academic Implications

Looking back upon the Literature Review Chapter (Chapter 2), the concept of interactivity has been used in many different fields of study including Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) (Hoffman and Novak, 2009), e-Commerce (Dholakia *et al*., 2000), Media (Ha and James, 1998), Marketing (Klein, 2003), and Advertising (Coyle and Thorson, 2001).

It was already established that interactivity is an essential element of successful online communication, as in general, there is a positive relationship between effects of interactivity and websites (Raney, 2003; Ko *et al*., 2005; Sicilia, 2005; Liu and Shrum, 2002; Williams *et al.*, 2005). Along with the spread of the Internet, virtual interaction among weblog users has become commonplace, which has led some tourism researchers and marketers to point out that interactivity plays a significant role in the weblog context (Baker and Green, 2005; Dearstyne, 2005; Du and Wagner, 2006; Douglas and Mills, 2006; Liu and Huang, 2006; Pan *et al.*, 2007; Hsu and Lin, 2008; Alegre and Cladera, 2009; Ko and Kuo, 2009).

Though various studies have examined the concept of interactivity in the past, little effort has been invested to reconcile the various conceptualisations and to identify the most critical dimensions of interactivity within an online context. Given this, the main theoretical implication of this study relates to filling in the knowledge gap of the influence of interactivity dimensions reviews on corporate weblog user performance in the tourism industry. As the first attempt, this study aims to investigate how interactivity impacts the effectiveness of corporate travel weblogs, since there is no previous study which has examined the interactivity concept in relation to Chinese corporate travel weblogs. By spotting the similarities in interactivity literature, this study goes beyond prior interactivity studies by identifying the nature of interactivity within corporate weblog context.

Specifically, this empirical study pioneers in investigating the tenets of interactivity by providing theoretical and empirical explanations to explicate its impacts within a corporate weblog context. The study results have indicated support for the tenets stating that interactivity features can enhance users' attitudes toward a particular corporate weblog site, and in turn impact on their behavioural intention. As it is discussed in the previous chapter (Chapter 6), the theoretical implication drawn from the current interactivity study parallels the research findings in the previous studies (Liu and Shrum, 2002; McMillan and Hwang, 2003).

Importantly, the study contributes to knowledge development in tourism by revealing the positive impact of interactivity dimensions on weblog users' attitudes and behavioural intentions. On the basis of previous literature studies, the current study investigates a three-dimensional model of interactivity: active control, two-way communications, and real-time communication. These three dimensions are extremely important to web advertising and marketing research (Deighton, 1997; Blattberg and Deighton, 1999; Alb *et al.*, 1997; Liu and Shrum, 2002; McMillan and Hwang, 2002;

Liu, 2003), and they will contribute significantly to the study of weblog user behaviour. In this instance, this study opens up numerous avenues for future research on this promising application of interactivity within the travel weblogs context. Through reviewing the extant interactivity literature and identifying key components of multidimensional interactivity concepts empirically, this research provide a theoretical step toward a more complete understanding of interactivity in a weblogging environment.

Secondly, the current study develops a measure of weblog interactivity on the basis of the multidimensional conceptualisation of the construct by Liu and Shrum (2002). The measurement scales used in this study show a high overall level of reliability and validity and offer the researcher the opportunity to reliably measure and test a wide variety of relevant interactivity dimensions under empirical conditions. By rendering the interactivity constructs operationally more effective, they can serve as valuable tools for researchers and scholars in the application of interactivity towards different types of social media context, such as Facebook and Twitter. Results also confirm that active control, two-way communication, and real-time communication are three independent yet correlated dimensions of interactivity. Therefore, these three dimensions and their measurement scales can be applied in academic research to understand how interactivity affects users' response to an online communication. Given the importance of interactivity in the weblog context, the current understanding of interactivity is highly inadequate. Therefore, more precise measurements of the construct are called for to help expose a more accurate relationship between interactivity and the dependent variables.

Thirdly, one significant aspect of the current study is to focus on the psychological perspectives of corporate travel weblogs including motives, attitudes, and behavioural intention. Although a few recent studies have examined motives for visiting corporate travel weblogs (Chung and Kim, 2008; Akehurst, 2009), there is still a lack of research exploring the psychological aspects of such weblogs. In other words, a full understanding of weblog users' psychological perspective is crucial to the success of corporate travel weblogs. The current study examines the importance of three user motives (information, social interaction, and enjoyment). The results are consistent with some previous Internet studies. In particular, social interaction and perceived enjoyment were the primary indicators of corporate travel weblog user motives, indicating that weblog users mainly seek social interaction and enjoyment from weblog sites.

Finally, the current study represents a first step towards the development of a research model of corporate travel weblogs, which includes antecedents (i.e., interactivity and user motives) and a consequence (i.e., intention to revisit) of attitudes towards corporate travel weblogs. In particular, the results indicate that there is a significant and positive relationship between attitude and interactivity (McMillan and Hwang, 2002; Liu and Shrum, 2002), between attitude and user motives (Chen and Wells, 1999), and between attitude toward corporate travel weblogs and the intention to revisit them. The creation of this research model serves as a starting point for systematic research on interactivity. Specifically, the proposed model makes an important contribution to the emerging literature on weblog research.

7.1.2 Managerial Implications

First, conceptualising weblog interactivity with active control, two-way communications and real-time communication, has immediate practical implications for companies. According to Srinivasan et al. (2002), interactive features for facilitating website control and customer communication represent the most common interactivity issues faced in actual websites. However, two-way communications in this study was found to have a relatively small relationship with interactivity. Rather, the research findings imply that respondents are more likely to utilise interactivity tools for obtaining prompt information while controlling information. The two interactivity concerns are related to the implementation of active control and two-way communications features on weblog sites. The examination of these two dimensions seeks to provide practitioners with insights into the impact of these essential interactivity features on weblog users, allowing practitioners to employ these features more effectively.

Secondly, the current study indicates that interactivity should be considered as a significant indicator of attitude towards corporate travel weblogs. To foster perceived levels of interactivity, travel marketers could create active control contents and real-time information. In this study, the results indicate that real-time communication is a strong predictor of interactive communication. Developing real-time information may satisfy the corporate travel weblog users' desire for immediate information. Therefore, travel marketers should develop tools to help corporate travel weblog users to access quickly updated information when developing or updating corporate travel weblogs.

Thirdly, based on empirical data analysis (Chapter 4 and Chapter 5) in this study, dimensions of interactivity and user motives constructs are important factors to affect users' attitude toward weblogs and to predict the future usage intention. These results provide several important implications to companies. For example, it provides an implication that travel weblog marketers should consider the usage situation of travel weblogs and design different weblog contents to fit different consumers' needs. Also, travel companies should provide more informative, entertaining weblog services to consumers. Besides, the research result indicates that interactivity is positively associated with weblog users' attitudes and behavioural intentions. This might have profound implications for weblog design, web advertising and marketing. In order to generate positive attitudes toward corporate travel weblogs, travel marketers should consider a better design of the corporate travel weblogs with social interaction and enjoyment content. In addition to delivering social interaction and enjoyment content, travel marketers should understand how to utilise and integrate interactivity functions into corporate travel weblogs.

Fourthly, according to Gronroos (2004, p.249), the development of the information technology makes it possible for companies to interact, build, and sustain relationships with their customers. Managerially, actively looking for information will help marketers understand which information channel or media vehicle they should utilise to reach out to their target audiences. This utilisation will help decrease market research time, and help to increase the time available to market products (Egan, 2004). For instance, travel weblogs or other types of social media can develop the awareness to their advantage, by providing factual information and encouraging consumers to exchange knowledge. In this instance, marketers would be able to get real-time feedback from their consumers, thus building customer loyalty and generating sales (Goldsmith and Horowitz, 2006).

Fifthly, as the most representative of Web 2.0, travel weblogs provide more opportunities to facilitate the implementation of interactivity among users. In this instance, a weblog marketer should consider two-way communications among its target audience to determine whether more or less, advanced web technologies may be implemented. In the same vein, the weblog marketers should take into account active control and real-time communication among its target audience to decide whether these two dimensions should be incorporated into the weblog site. The results also indicate that having useful interactivity tools is very important for corporate travel weblogs in order to attract potential weblog users and create positive feeling about that corporate travel weblog sites. How to establish channels and systems for engaging consumers through social media is the key. In addition, tourism managers need to be aware that the proper use of traveller reviews on the weblog sites could, help a tourism business to improve their services and gain a competitive edge (Au *et al.*, 2010).

Finally, the measurement scales (Liu and Shrum, 2002) used in this study can also provide some managerial implications. For travel companies, they can use the scale to evaluate their weblogs for such indicators as popularity and performance. Owing to the multi-dimensional nature of the scale, it can help travel companies identify individual problems encountered with their travel weblogs. For example, does the weblog try to control consumers too much? Or, is the weblog site responding to consumers' requests fast enough? Finding and resolving these problems can help to pinpoint the deficiencies in a company's travel weblog sites and to provide a better way to utilise the interactive potential of the Internet.

7.2 Limitations and Future Research

Notwithstanding the important implications for both academic and managerial perspective, it should be noted that this study suffers from several limitations of its own. Given this, this section aims to identify existing limitations embedded within the current study. Also, the researcher makes some recommendations for future research. First, this study realises the limitations of solely investigating travel weblogs themselves. However, except for corporate travel weblogs, there are many other types of corporate weblogs which might produce interesting studies in the future, for example, Politics, Military, and Sports weblogs. Future researchers will need to apply the proposed research model and scales to different types of corporate weblog sites. By applying them to weblogs in different categories, it will be possible to determine whether the same results will hold.

Secondly, as antecedents of attitude toward corporate travel weblogs, the study presented two independent variables, interactivity and user motives. Previous research has investigated these two variables in the online research context. The result from quantitative study indicated that approximately 92% of the variance of attitude toward corporate travel weblogs was represented by interactivity and user motives. It is believed that there are more variables which influence a user’s attitude toward corporate travel weblogs. Therefore, future researchers should identify what other variables may be related to attitude.

Thirdly, though significant relationships were discovered in weblog user motives as indicators for ‘attitude toward travel weblogs’ and in turn, to impact on ‘intention to revisit those weblog sites’, it is notable that those predictors usually account for a small proportion of variance. For example, what are the other factors responsible for determining weblog users’ behaviour? In this instance, the question needs to be explored in both quantitative and qualitative manner to give more clues on empirical studies.

Fourthly, this research represents one approach to the study of the impact of interactivity and motivation on users’ attitudes and follow-up users’ behavioral intentions. It offers some empirical evidence to support that there are positive impacts of interactivity and motivation on users’ attitudes and follow-up users’ behavioral intentions within a corporate travel weblog context. This research used samples from China and the result may be affected by the fact that the sample size of the study is small and small effect components may not be statistically detectable. Results from this sample might also differ of that from other Asian countries or from Western countries. Future research could focus on this difference since the relationship between interactivity and social media performance may vary in different cultural contexts. In the Chinese context, interactivity in business may be associated with ‘guanxi’ network, which could be a unique type of culture embedded interactivity. A multi-country comparative study may help to further verify the theoretical prediction that cultural and institutional difference can affect the applicability of the ‘interactional approach’ to both large and Small Medium Size (SMEs) companies in different countries.

Fifthly, widely accepted and consistent operationalization of different forms and dimensions of interactivity in the context of social media are required for future research. One area of research will be to clarify and quantify the dimensions of interactivity in terms of the different media research contexts. Another area is the development of a systematic process to identify new dimensions of interactivity and to explore new approaches to existing constructs in the context of media study. As with this study, future studies should continue to refine and identify more dimensions and forms of interactivity so as to enable interactivity theory to be more applicable to the context of research. Additionally, future studies may want to continue to systematically test the interaction effect with other forms of interactivity, or to identify some other types of interactivity in different social media contexts, such as online discussion forums and Facebook.

A sixth limitation is that, the researcher selected only three dimensions of user motives concepts to investigate. Future studies should investigate other dimensions of user motives such as escape and economic constructs. Perhaps with the use of other research stimuli the results of this study will be altered. For instance, more complex digital infrastructures would probably affect attitude and behavioural intentions toa greater extent than the present weblog stimulus.

In addition, it is accepted that no measurement scales are perfect and the current scale must have its limits. In this instance, more rigorous scale development for interactivity, attitude and behavioural constructs toward weblogs are desired. Future research can expand the current scale to all forms of online communication. For example, a universal scale would allow convenient comparison of the existing online marketing communication tools on their interactivity levels. Of this, it can deepen our understanding of how to utilise the Internet for marketing purposes.

This study creates a baseline for future research on weblog users’ attitudes and behavioural intentions through an investigation of user motives and relative effectiveness of the dimensions of interactivity. One noticeable phenomenon is the development of weblog technology, wherein, more and more multimedia elements are imported into weblog sites. Another limiting factor is that, in this study, only textual weblogs were included but it is assumed that motivations of multimedia weblogs such as video weblogs might be different from those, which mainly rely on textual accounts. As such, subsequent studies on various forms of weblogs are called for to help to provide a better understanding of the impact brought by multimedia technology to weblog users' behaviours.

Finally, in consideration of the current HCI research, some comments have been presented here. As discussed in the preceding chapter (see section 2.2.1.2 in Chapter 2), specific focuses of this study have been made on shifting the HCI research towards two directions:

1) extending the HCI research from understanding users as information seekers and/or consuming decision-makers, to a behavioural approach, in order to understand users in the sphere of human mass communications;
2) extending HCI from navigation of information via devices, agent platforms, weblogging tools and/or any other advanced IT, to a paradigm for considering about an effective convergence or divergence of services that manages consumers who produce the spaces through their motives crossing common interests, preference, enjoyments or other activities and practices.

These two proposals are not direct solely at HCI designers. Rather, they should also enable others to conceptualise the exchange of consumers' positions or even roles in their online communities.

The interactive dimensions are to be inter-related with consumers' motives. The consumers would be developers of the information spaces as well as being participants in the communication process, which, taken altogether would produce an influential impact on the communication. With regard to the web based communications among online communities, further research is called for to understand the communications that are increasingly becoming vague and ambiguous.

Furthermore, future researchers will require an understanding of how the online users are enabled to personalise and create, as well as discover information. Researchers should understand that the personalisation will not only be based on users' learning and decision making cognition, but also be reflecting levels of their experiences of using and creating information.

Research is needed to design interactivity as an action space that embeds users' own experiences. Their multidimensional interactions can be even forms of their learning and querying information (Gade, 1996; Feng *et al.*, 2006). The development of weblog applications must make optimum use of the individual user's contribution and its influence in developing information spaces and attitude towards the weblog.

HCI is likely to become ubiquitous (Hollan *et al.*, 2000) so the interfaces are likely to be disappearing. For example, users may be increasingly turning to wearable devices such as iPhone and iPad as they are able to interact with information networks through such wearable devices. Such wearable autonomy may be realised fully through multi agents or self-adaptive agents (Espinoza *et al.*, 2001). However, such HCI oriented design in the travel weblog spaces (based on the ubiquity) requires further developments.

The navigation of information space is users' contextual and location sensitive, where users can create, discover, exchange, organise and manipulate the information by what they see, where they see, and how they interact with their surroundings at the time.

Additionally, the control and monitoring of their participation in an activity require meeting the accountability compliances (whatever the framework would be delivered to regulate such compliances). The multidimensional views studied in this thesis take all the informational artefacts into account to the extent that the informational artefacts constrains would be set in the context where the information would be stored, retrieved, and transformed.

Finally, the advanced technology such as Web 2.0 enables the users to interact with computer-based information systems at a multidimensional level. These emerging characteristics of communication clearly involve some assumptions and foreknowledge of the users who participate in the online communities in the first place. Therefore, the orientations of weblog users seem to be based on the groups who have common interests. To what extent their share the common experiences are still worth investigating.

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Appendix 1

1. 态度方面 （Attitudinal Dimension）

请说明同意与不同意以下的陈述并在适当的选项上画圈。
Please indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with the following by circling the appropriate number in the scale next to each statement.

1. 根据我的浏览经验，我可以控制我的旅游博客。
I was in control over my visiting experiences.

○ 强烈反对 （Strongly Disagree）
○ 反对 （Disagree）
○ 中立 （Neutral）
○ 同意 （Agree）
○ 强烈同意 （Strongly Agree）

2. 我很高兴选择何时点击连接
I was delighted to be able to choose which link and when to click.

○ 强烈反对 （Strongly Disagree）
○ 反对 （Disagree）
○ 中立 （Neutral）
○ 同意 （Agree）
○ 强烈同意 （Strongly Agree）

3. 在握浏览旅游博客时，我的行动决定了我会得到什么样的经验。
While surfing the travel weblogs, my actions decided the kind of experiences I got.

○ 强烈反对 （Strongly Disagree）
○ 反对 （Disagree）
○ 中立 （Neutral）
○ 同意 （Agree）
○ 强烈同意 （Strongly Agree）

4. 在我浏览博客时，我可以快速的在网页之间转换。
While I was on the travel weblogs, I could quickly jump from one page to another.

○ 强烈反对 （Strongly Disagree）
○ 反对 （Disagree）
○ 中立 （Neutral）
○ 同意 （Agree）
○ 强烈同意 （Strongly Agree）

5. 在我浏览旅游博客时，我可以随时的选择浏览内容。

While I was on the travel weblogs, I could freely choose what I want to see.

○ 强烈反对 （Strongly Disagree）

○ 反对 （Disagree）

○ 中立 （Neutral）

○ 同意 （Agree）

○ 强烈同意 （Strongly Agree）

6. 旅游博客为博主跟读者提供了创建了双向沟通的平台。

Travel weblogs facilitate two-way communications between weblog owners and active weblog users.

○ 强烈反对 （Strongly Disagree）

○ 反对 （Disagree）

○ 中立 （Neutral）

○ 同意 （Agree）

○ 强烈同意 （Strongly Agree）

7. 旅游博客为提供了跟其他博主交流的机会。

Travel weblogs would provide opportunities for me to communicate with other travel weblogs users currently.

○ 强烈反对 （Strongly Disagree）

○ 反对 （Disagree）

○ 中立 （Neutral）

○ 同意 （Agree）

○ 强烈同意 （Strongly Agree）

8. 旅游博客让我感到会听取其他访客的建议。

Travel weblogs make me feel like it wants to listen to its visitors.

○ 强烈反对 （Strongly Disagree）

○ 反对 （Disagree）

○ 中立 （Neutral）

○ 同意 （Agree）

○ 强烈同意 （Strongly Agree）

9. 旅游博客易于交谈。

Travel weblogs enable conversation.

○ 强烈反对 （Strongly Disagree）

○ 反对 （Disagree）

○ 中立 （Neutral）

○ 同意 （Agree）

○ 强烈同意 （Strongly Agree）

10. 旅游博客鼓励访客给予反馈。

Travel weblogs encourage visitors to offer feedback.

○ 强烈反对 （Strongly Disagree）

○ 反对 （Disagree）

○ 中立 （Neutral）

○ 同意 （Agree）

○ 强烈同意 （Strongly Agree）

11. 旅游博客有效的收集访客的意见反馈。

Travel weblogs are effective in gathering visitors' feedback.

○ 强烈反对 （Strongly Disagree）

○ 反对 （Disagree）

○ 中立 （Neutral）

○ 同意 （Agree）

○ 强烈同意 （Strongly Agree）

12. 旅游博客提供了让我交流的机会。

Travel weblogs give me the opportunity to talk back.

○ 强烈反对 （Strongly Disagree）

○ 反对 （Disagree）

○ 中立 （Neutral）

○ 同意 （Agree）

○ 强烈同意 （Strongly Agree）

13. 旅游博客提供了很多相关信息。

The information provided from travel weblogs is relevant.

○ 强烈反对 （Strongly Disagree）

○ 反对 （Disagree）

○ 中立 （Neutral）

○ 同意 （Agree）

○ 强烈同意 （Strongly Agree）

14. 通过旅游博客，我可以迅速的得到信息。

The information I can get from travel weblogs is very fast.

○ 强烈反对 （Strongly Disagree）

○ 反对 （Disagree）

○ 中立 （Neutral）

○ 同意 （Agree）

○ 强烈同意 （Strongly Agree）

15. 我可以在没有延迟的情况下获得信息。

I was able to obtain the information I want without any delay.

○ 强烈反对 （Strongly Disagree）

○ 反对 （Disagree）

○ 中立 （Neutral）

○ 同意 （Agree）

○ 强烈同意 （Strongly Agree）

16. 当我点击连接时，我可以瞬间得到其他博主发布的信息。

When I clicked on the links, I can obtain instantaneous information that published by other webloggers.

○ 强烈反对 （Strongly Disagree）

○ 反对 （Disagree）

○ 中立 （Neutral）

○ 同意 （Agree）

○ 强烈同意 （Strongly Agree）

17. 旅游博客可以立刻回答我的问题。

Travel weblogs answered my questions immediately.

- ○ 强烈反对 （Strongly Disagree）
- ○ 反对 （Disagree）
- ○ 中立 （Neutral）
- ○ 同意 （Agree）
- ○ 强烈同意 （Strongly Agree）

18. 我感觉旅游博客可以快速的处理我输入的信息。

I felt that travel weblogs processed my input very quickly.

- ○ 强烈反对 （Strongly Disagree）
- ○ 反对 （Disagree）
- ○ 中立 （Neutral）
- ○ 同意 （Agree）
- ○ 强烈同意 （Strongly Agree）

19. 旅游博客使博主与读者参与到互动中。

Travel weblogs engage weblog publishers and readers communicate with each other.

- ○ 强烈反对 （Strongly Disagree）
- ○ 反对 （Disagree）
- ○ 中立 （Neutral）
- ○ 同意 （Agree）
- ○ 强烈同意 （Strongly Agree）

20. 我可以自由的在旅游博客中发表言论。

I can express myself freely on the travel weblog.

- ○ 强烈反对 （Strongly Disagree）
- ○ 反对 （Disagree）
- ○ 中立 （Neutral）
- ○ 同意 （Agree）
- ○ 强烈同意 （Strongly Agree）

21. 在旅游博客中，我对其他博主的意见非常感兴趣。

On the travel weblog, I am interested in other webloggers' opinions.

○ 强烈反对 （Strongly Disagree）

○ 反对 （Disagree）

○ 中立 （Neutral）

○ 同意 （Agree）

○ 强烈同意 （Strongly Agree）

22. 当我访问旅游博客时，我感到我是团体的一部分。

I felt that I was part of the community when I visit travel weblogs.

○ 强烈反对 （Strongly Disagree）

○ 反对 （Disagree）

○ 中立 （Neutral）

○ 同意 （Agree）

○ 强烈同意 （Strongly Agree）

23. 博主发布的信息一般来说都是令人满意的。

The information published by other travel webloggers is generally satisfactory.

○ 强烈反对 （Strongly Disagree）

○ 反对 （Disagree）

○ 中立 （Neutral）

○ 同意 （Agree）

○ 强烈同意 （Strongly Agree）

24. 反馈跟等级评定系统对博主做旅行决定是非常有帮助的。

A feedback and rating system is useful to help webloggers make travel decisions.

○ 强烈反对 （Strongly Disagree）

○ 反对 （Disagree）

○ 中立 （Neutral）

○ 同意 （Agree）

○ 强烈同意 （Strongly Agree）

25. 旅游博客的图片跟文字的连接能够帮助博主达到他们的期望。
The hyperlinked images and texts from travel weblogs are helpful to fulfill webloggers' expectations.

○ 强烈反对 （Strongly Disagree）
○ 反对 （Disagree）
○ 中立 （Neutral）
○ 同意 （Agree）
○ 强烈同意 （Strongly Agree）

26. 我喜欢在旅游博客阅读热门话题。
I felt interesting when I was reading the hot issues on travel weblogs.

○ 强烈反对 （Strongly Disagree）
○ 反对 （Disagree）
○ 中立 （Neutral）
○ 同意 （Agree）
○ 强烈同意 （Strongly Agree）

27. 我感到参与到旅游博客的过程是有趣的。
I felt that the process of participating in travel weblogs is enjoyable.

○ 强烈反对 （Strongly Disagree）
○ 反对 （Disagree）
○ 中立 （Neutral）
○ 同意 （Agree）
○ 强烈同意 （Strongly Agree）

28. 通过旅游博客我可以比较容易的与旅游公司建立关系。
Travel weblogs make it easy for me to build a relationship with travel companies.

○ 强烈反对 （Strongly Disagree）
○ 反对 （Disagree）
○ 中立 （Neutral）
○ 同意 （Agree）
○ 强烈同意 （Strongly Agree）

29. 我对旅游博客提供的服务非常满意。

I feel satisfied with the service provided by the travel weblog.

○ 强烈反对 （Strongly Disagree）

○ 反对 （Disagree）

○ 中立 （Neutral）

○ 同意 （Agree）

○ 强烈同意 （Strongly Agree）

30. 在浏览旅游博客时我感到很舒服。

I feel comfortable in surfing travel weblogs.

○ 强烈反对 （Strongly Disagree）

○ 反对 （Disagree）

○ 中立 （Neutral）

○ 同意 （Agree）

○ 强烈同意 （Strongly Agree）

31. 以后我可能会访问旅游博客。

I am likely to visit travel weblogs in the future.

○ 强烈反对 （Strongly Disagree）

○ 反对 （Disagree）

○ 中立 （Neutral）

○ 同意 （Agree）

○ 强烈同意 （Strongly Agree）

32. 以后我或许会访问旅游博客。

I am probably to visit travel weblogs in the future.

○ 强烈反对 （Strongly Disagree）

○ 反对 （Disagree）

○ 中立 （Neutral）

○ 同意 （Agree）

○ 强烈同意 （Strongly Agree）

33. 以后我也许会访问旅游博客。

I am possibly to visit travel weblogs in the future.

○ 强烈反对 （Strongly Disagree）

○ 反对 （Disagree）

○ 中立 （Neutral）

○ 同意 （Agree）

○ 强烈同意 （Strongly Agree）

2. 行为方面 （Behavioural Dimension）

1. 下面选项中哪一个最能够表述你的博客访问模式？
which of the following best describe the pattern of your visits to travel weblogs?

○ 每天一次 （Daily）
○ 每周一次 （Weekly）
○ 每两周一次 （Fortnight）
○ 每月一次 （Monthly）
○ 每两个月一次 （Once every 2 months）
○ 每三个月一次 （Once every 3 months）

2. 你多久浏览一次旅游博客？
How often do you read travel weblogs?

○ 每天一次 （Daily）
○ 每周最少2次 （More than once a week）
○ 每周一次 （Once a week）
○ 每月至少一次 （More than once a month）
○ 每月一次 （Once a month）
○ 无计划的 （Randomly）
○ Never

3. 你多久在旅游博客上发表一次博文？
How often do you publish travel weblogs?

○ 每天一次 （Daily）
○ 每周最少2次 （More than once a week）
○ 每周一次 （Once a week）
○ 每月至少一次 （More than once a month）
○ 每月一次 （Once a month）
○ 无计划的 （Randomly）
○ Never

4. 你怎样来评价你的博客技能？

How would you rate your weblog skills or expertise?

○ 非常博识 （Very knowledgeable）

○ 博识 （Knowledgeable）

○ 稍微博识 （Somewhat knowledgeable）

○ 一般博识 （Not that knowledgeable）

○ 一无所知 （Not knowledgeable）

5. 请说明你浏览你喜欢的旅游博客的目的**?** 请尽可能的圈出相关的选项。

Please indicate the purposes for visiting your preferred travel weblogs? Please circle as many as appropriate.

□ 保持最新的旅游信息 （To keep up-to-data travel information）

□ 参与及时的讨论（To join or follow the discussion in the site）

□ 为了娱乐 （For fun or entertainment）

□ 为了分享或学习其他博主的经验 (To share experiences or to learn from others' diaries)

6. 请说明为什么你对旅游博客感兴趣？请尽可能多的圈出相关的选项。

Please indicate why you are interested in visiting travel blogs? Please circle as many as appropriate.

□ 有用的 （This is useful）

□ 使用方便 （This site is easy to use）

□ 经常更新 （This site is updated frequency）

□ 有趣的 （This site is enjoyable）

□ 易于浏览 （This site is easy to navigate）

□ 文章的易读性 （The text in this site is readable）

□ 有趣的视觉效果 （This visuals in this site are interesting）

3. 个人信息方面 （Socio-Demographics Dimension）

1. 请选出你的性别

Please specify your gender

○ 女 （Female）
○ 男 （Male）

2. 请选出你所在的年龄段？

Which of the following age group do you belong to?

○ 18-24
○ 25-29
○ 30-34
○ 35-39
○ 40-44
○ 45-49
○ 50+

Appendix 2 Prologue of Semi-structured Interviews

Hello and welcome.

First, I would like to thank you for taking time to come here today to help me. My Chinese name is Wang Hui but here in England I am called Steven Wang. I am from the University of Portsmouth, in the UK where I am currently conducting the final year of my PhD studies in Marketing.

I am interested to hear your thoughts on issues concerning the concept of interactivity in relation to travel weblogs. To this end, I am speaking with key informants at senior management level in order to obtain various impressions of "effectiveness of different interactional dimensions within a travel weblog context".

The research is intended to contribute to our understanding of both academic and practitioner aspects associated with interactivity. Primarily, this research will fill a gap in the literature concerning divergent conceptualisations of interactivity. Importantly, this research promotes the evolution of an interactivity concept and should help future researchers across many academic disciplines, such as education, computing as well as marketing and management. In addition, what I learn from today's discussion will help to facilitate managerial decision-making and provide solutions to problems related to the operation of organisations' weblogs.

I am tape recording our conversation so that, in the weeks ahead, I will be able to refer to the tape and make notes from it. Please feel free to answer the questions with whatever comes to mind. The information gathered from this interview and others will be analysed as a basis to write a PhD thesis. It is not intended for any other purpose. I will not include your name or any other information that could identify you in my publications that I produce. I will destroy the notes and audio tapes after I have completed my studies and published the results. This ensures that your answers will remain confidential. You will enjoy complete anonymity. I expect the interview to last no more than about 30-40 minutes. Are you comfortable with that? Thank you.

Appendix 3 Semi-structured Interview Questions

1. Would you give me a brief outline of your own role and explain the importance of your travel weblog in your activities?
2. ‘Interactivity’ is a word that is used often by people in connection with the Internet. What is your understanding of that word?
3. How would you describe the function of interactivity in relation to a travel weblog?
4. Do you consider there to be different levels of interactivity and, if so, how would you describe the extent of the differences?
5. Some kinds of weblog communication afford the publisher greater levels of control than those afforded the reader. What is your opinion on this issue and how it may affect interactive communication?
6. To what extent, if any, do you consider it possible that a fully interactive travel weblog may provide circumstances in which the roles of publisher and reader become interchangeable?
7. It is sometimes assumed, although not necessarily correctly, that interactive communication must take place in “real time”, that is, that the responses must be instantaneous, for it to be authentically interactive. How important do you consider to be the speed of response?
8. Finally, thank you for your willingness to take part in this research and for sharing your ideas on these topics. Are there any areas or issues that you feel we may have missed and what are your views on the future development of travel weblogs?

Appendix 4

Anti-image Matrices

		AC1	AC2	AC3	AC4	AC5	TWC1	TWC2	TWC3	TWC4	TWC5	TWC6	TWC7	RTC1	RTC2	RTC3	RTC4	RTC5	RTC6
Anti-image Covariance	AC1	.023	.000	.003	-.001	.005	.004	-.005	-.014	-.003	-.004	.002	-.002	.000	-.009	.001	.003	-.005	-.003
	AC2	.000	.020	-.003	-.010	-.004	-.003	.001	.001	8.480E-5	-.003	.003	-.004	.000	.003	-.003	.001	.002	-9.501E-5
	AC3	.003	-.003	.068	.002	-.009	.001	.002	.000	-.004	-.002	-.012	.015	-.007	-.019	-.009	.001	.003	.009
	AC4	-.001	-.010	.002	.018	-.006	-.003	-.002	.000	.000	.000	.000	.001	.000	-.005	.005	.000	-.001	.003
	AC5	.005	-.004	-.009	-.006	.027	4.506E-7	.001	-.005	-.014	.000	-.003	.006	-.008	-.010	-.002	.011	.007	.006
	TWC1	.004	-.003	.001	-.003	4.506E-7	.014	-.010	-.005	.002	-.006	.004	-.005	.000	-.002	.003	.000	.002	.002
	TWC2	-.005	.001	.002	-.002	.001	-.010	.021	.003	.001	.002	-.005	.007	.001	-.001	-.005	-.001	.001	-.010
	TWC3	-.014	.001	.000	.000	-.005	-.005	.003	.016	.003	.007	-.004	.004	.003	.009	-.008	-.002	-.003	-.008
	TWC4	-.003	8.480E-5	-.004	.000	-.014	.002	.001	.003	.034	-.006	-.002	-.005	.019	.011	.000	-.023	-.007	-.013
	TWC5	-.004	-.003	-.002	.000	.000	-.006	.002	.007	-.006	.025	-.012	.016	.002	.009	-.012	.003	-.013	.003
	TWC6	.002	.003	-.012	.000	-.003	.004	-.005	-.004	-.002	-.012	.020	-.021	-.007	.008	.013	-.006	.003	-.006
	TWC7	-.002	-.004	.015	.001	.006	-.005	.007	.004	-.005	.016	-.021	.040	-.015	-.005	-.019	-.004	.002	.001
	RTC1	.000	.000	-.007	.000	-.008	.000	.001	.003	.019	.002	-.007	-.015	.075	-.022	-3.984E-5	-.004	-.022	.012
	RTC2	-.009	.003	-.019	-.005	-.010	-.002	-.001	.009	.011	.009	.008	-.005	-.022	.058	-.011	-.024	.015	-.026
	RTC3	.001	-.003	-.009	.005	-.002	.003	-.005	-.008	.000	-.012	.013	-.019	-3.984E-5	-.011	.033	.009	-.011	.003
	RTC4	.003	.001	.001	.000	.011	.000	-.001	-.002	-.023	.003	-.006	-.004	-.004	-.024	.009	.063	-.018	.001
	RTC5	-.005	.002	.003	-.001	.007	.002	.001	-.003	-.007	-.013	.003	.002	-.022	.015	-.011	-.018	.071	.014
	RTC6	-.003	-9.501E-5	.009	.003	.006	.002	-.010	-.008	-.013	.003	-.006	.001	.012	-.026	.003	.001	.014	.150
Anti-image Correlation	AC1	.941[a]	-.047	.084	-.061	.216	.223	-.213	-.733	-.113	-.152	.083	-.065	-.020	-.242	.050	.083	-.117	-.058
	AC2	-.047	.968[a]	-.085	-.544	-.166	-.153	.050	.029	.003	-.136	.154	-.143	-.020	.078	-.113	.018	.051	-.002
	AC3	.084	-.085	.970[a]	.068	-.199	.035	.060	-.030	-.074	-.039	-.318	.278	-.098	-.308	-.197	.016	.047	.090
	AC4	-.061	-.544	.068	.965[a]	-.255	-.188	-.102	-.014	-.017	-.011	-.037	.039	.003	-.143	.219	-.009	-.040	.049
	AC5	.216	-.166	-.199	-.255	.951[a]	2.349E-5	.041	-.226	-.461	.006	-.107	.177	-.176	-.245	-.052	.266	.170	.093
	TWC1	.223	-.153	.035	-.188	2.349E-5	.939[a]	-.622	-.374	.074	-.335	.213	-.219	-.007	-.074	.137	-.019	.060	.054
	TWC2	-.213	.050	.060	-.102	.041	-.622	.952[a]	.139	.053	.077	-.244	.247	.032	-.031	-.202	-.036	.030	-.180
	TWC3	-.733	.029	-.030	-.014	-.226	-.374	.139	.914[a]	.142	.368	-.221	.177	.095	.282	-.362	-.065	-.090	-.154
	TWC4	-.113	.003	-.074	-.017	-.461	.074	.053	.142	.933[a]	-.201	-.092	-.142	.376	.258	-.025	-.506	-.147	-.176
	TWC5	-.152	-.136	-.039	-.011	.006	-.335	.077	.368	-.201	.909[a]	-.527	.510	.054	.226	-.419	.071	-.313	.042
	TWC6	.083	.154	-.318	-.037	-.107	.213	-.244	-.221	-.092	-.527	.893[a]	-.724	-.191	.225	.498	-.162	.076	-.115
	TWC7	-.065	-.143	.278	.039	.177	-.219	.247	.177	-.142	.510	-.724	.885[a]	-.269	-.095	-.520	-.086	.041	.018

	RTC1	-.020	-.020	-.098	.003	-.176	-.007	.032	.095	.376	.054	-.191	-.269	.953[a]	-.329	.000	-.060	-.306	.108
	RTC2	-.242	.078	-.308	-.143	-.245	-.074	-.031	.282	.258	.226	.225	-.095	-.329	.907[a]	-.260	-.390	.230	-.283
	RTC3	.050	-.113	-.197	.219	-.052	.137	-.202	-.362	-.025	-.419	.498	-.520	.000	-.260	.919[a]	.196	-.218	.040
	RTC4	.083	.018	.016	-.009	.266	-.019	-.036	-.065	-.506	.071	-.162	-.086	-.060	-.390	.196	.947[a]	-.274	.015
	RTC5	-.117	.051	.047	-.040	.170	.060	.030	-.090	-.147	-.313	.076	.041	-.306	.230	-.218	-.274	.961[a]	.133
	RTC6	-.058	-.002	.090	.049	.093	.054	-.180	-.154	-.176	.042	-.115	.018	.108	-.283	.040	.015	.133	.979[a]

a. Measures of Sampling Adequacy(MSA)

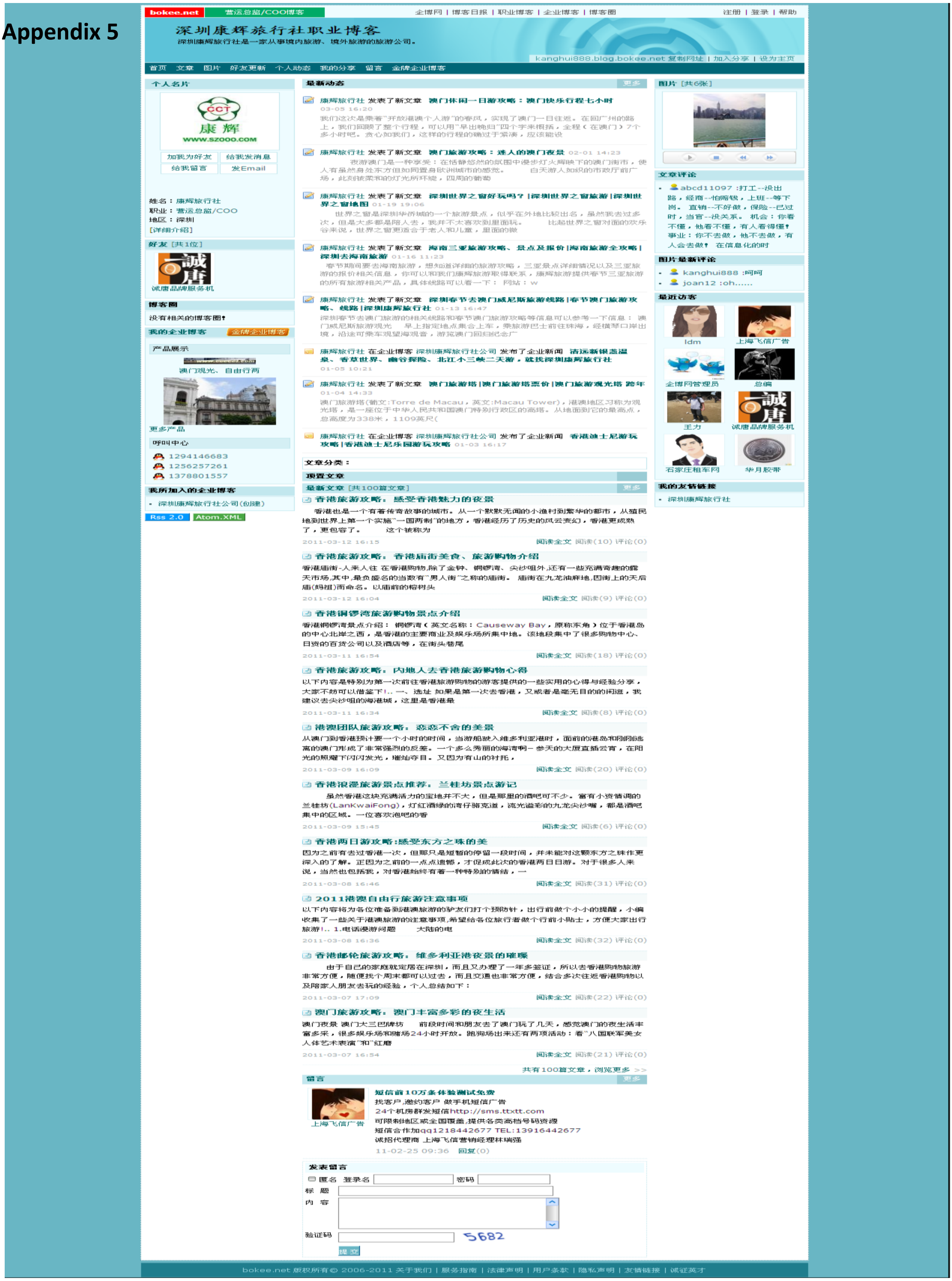
Correlations

		AC1	AC2	AC3	AC4	AC5	TWC1	TWC2	TWC3	TWC4	TWC5	TWC6	TWC7	RTC1	RTC2	RTC3	RTC4	RTC5	RTC6
AC1	Pearson Correlation	1	.946**	.903**	.939**	.918**	.943**	.948**	.991**	.829**	.862**	.847**	.818**	.802**	.796**	.906**	.805**	.854**	.930**
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	651	651	651	646	628	621	621	647	455	531	522	560	589	550	624	446	493	651
AC2	Pearson Correlation	.946**	1	.951**	.985**	.969**	.978**	.975**	.949**	.864**	.888**	.861**	.814**	.822**	.788**	.890**	.818**	.841**	.897**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	651	657	653	646	628	621	621	647	455	531	522	560	589	550	624	446	493	654
AC3	Pearson Correlation	.903**	.951**	1	.953**	.960**	.940**	.935**	.906**	.859**	.847**	.870**	.818**	.837**	.784**	.861**	.847**	.807**	.869**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	651	653	653	646	628	621	621	647	455	531	522	560	589	550	624	446	493	653
AC4	Pearson Correlation	.939**	.985**	.953**	1	.979**	.987**	.977**	.943**	.867**	.885**	.867**	.817**	.830**	.797**	.881**	.829**	.837**	.895**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	646	646	646	646	628	621	621	646	455	531	522	560	589	550	624	446	493	646
AC5	Pearson Correlation	.918**	.969**	.960**	.979**	1	.968**	.958**	.926**	.884**	.883**	.872**	.818**	.835**	.795**	.876**	.830**	.823**	.877**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	628	628	628	628	628	621	621	628	455	531	522	560	589	550	624	446	493	628
TWC1	Pearson Correlation	.943**	.978**	.940**	.987**	.968**	1	.988**	.949**	.852**	.889**	.859**	.815**	.826**	.796**	.892**	.815**	.844**	.892**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	621	621	621	621	621	621	621	621	455	531	522	560	589	550	621	446	493	621
TWC2	Pearson Correlation	.948**	.975**	.935**	.977**	.958**	.988**	1	.951**	.848**	.884**	.859**	.809**	.818**	.791**	.893**	.815**	.842**	.901**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	621	621	621	621	621	621	621	621	455	531	522	560	589	550	621	446	493	621
TWC3	Pearson Correlation	.991**	.949**	.906**	.943**	.926**	.949**	.951**	1	.829**	.863**	.846**	.810**	.796**	.787**	.910**	.796**	.848**	.927**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	647	647	647	646	628	621	621	647	455	531	522	560	589	550	624	446	493	647
TWC4	Pearson Correlation	.829**	.864**	.859**	.867**	.884**	.852**	.848**	.829**	1	.938**	.938**	.790**	.673**	.571**	.800**	.904**	.907**	.778**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	455	455	455	455	455	455	455	455	455	455	455	455	455	455	455	446	455	455
TWC5	Pearson Correlation	.862**	.888**	.847**	.885**	.883**	.889**	.884**	.863**	.938**	1	.906**	.773**	.739**	.668**	.843**	.824**	.912**	.793**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	531	531	531	531	531	531	531	531	455	531	522	531	531	531	531	446	493	531
TWC6	Pearson Correlation	.847**	.861**	.870**	.867**	.872**	.859**	.859**	.846**	.938**	.906**	1	.926**	.840**	.750**	.819**	.935**	.895**	.835**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	522	522	522	522	522	522	522	522	455	522	522	522	522	522	522	446	493	522

TWC7	Pearson Correlation	.818**	.814**	.818**	.817**	.818**	.815**	.809**	.810**	.790**	.773**	.926**	1	.919**	.864**	.822**	.887**	.803**	.832**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	455	531	522	560	560	550	560	446	493	560
RTC1	Pearson Correlation	.802**	.822**	.837**	.830**	.835**	.826**	.818**	.796**	.673**	.739**	.840**	.919**	1	.905**	.802**	.809**	.769**	.801**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	589	589	589	589	589	589	589	589	455	531	522	560	589	550	589	446	493	589
RTC2	Pearson Correlation	.796**	.788**	.784**	.797**	.795**	.796**	.791**	.787**	.571**	.668**	.750**	.864**	.905**	1	.811**	.693**	.655**	.825**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	550	550	550	550	550	550	550	550	455	531	522	550	550	550	550	446	493	550
RTC3	Pearson Correlation	.906**	.890**	.861**	.881**	.876**	.892**	.893**	.910**	.800**	.843**	.819**	.822**	.802**	.811**	1	.783**	.836**	.833**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	624	624	624	624	624	621	621	624	455	531	522	560	589	550	624	446	493	624
RTC4	Pearson Correlation	.805**	.818**	.847**	.829**	.830**	.815**	.815**	.796**	.904**	.824**	.935**	.887**	.809**	.693**	.783**	1	.860**	.786**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	446	446	446	446	446	446	446	446	446	446	446	446	446	446	446	446	446	446
RTC5	Pearson Correlation	.854**	.841**	.807**	.837**	.823**	.844**	.842**	.848**	.907**	.912**	.895**	.803**	.769**	.655**	.836**	.860**	1	.763**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	493	493	493	493	493	493	493	493	455	493	493	493	493	493	493	446	493	493
RTC6	Pearson Correlation	.930**	.897**	.869**	.895**	.877**	.892**	.901**	.927**	.778**	.793**	.835**	.832**	.801**	.825**	.833**	.786**	.763**	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	651	654	653	646	628	621	621	647	455	531	522	560	589	550	624	446	493	654

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

Appendix 5


bokee.net
营运总监/COO博客
企博网 | 博客日报 | 职业博客 | 企业博客 | 博客圈
注册 | 登录 | 帮助
kanghui888.blog.bokee.net 复制网址 | 加入分享 | 设为主页
首页 文章 图片 好友更新 个人动态 我的分享 留言 金牌企业博客
CCT
康辉
WWW.SZOOO.COM
加我为好友
给我发消息
给我留言
发Email
更多
金牌企业博客
提交

深圳康辉旅行社职业博客

深圳康辉旅行社是一家从事境内旅游、境外旅游的旅游公司。

个人名片

姓名：康辉旅行社
职业：营运总监/COO
地区：深圳
[详细介绍]

好友 [共1位]

诚唐品牌服务机

博客圈

没有相关的博客圈!

我的企业博客

产品展示

澳门观光、自由行两

更多产品

呼叫中心

1294146683
1256257261
1378801557

我所加入的企业博客

- 深圳康辉旅行社公司(创建)

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最新动态

康辉旅行社 发表了新文章 **澳门休闲一日游攻略：澳门快乐行程七小时**
03-05 16:20
我们这次是乘着"开放港澳个人游"的春风，实现了澳门一日往返。在回广州的路上，我们回顾了整个行程，可以用"早出晚归"四个字来概括，全程（在澳门）7个多小时吧。贪心如我们，这样的行程的确过于紧凑，应该能设

康辉旅行社 发表了新文章 **澳门旅游攻略：迷人的澳门夜景** 02-01 14:23
夜游澳门是一种享受：在恬静悠然的氛围中漫步灯火辉映下的澳门街市，使人有虽然身处东方但如同置身欧洲城市的感觉。　　白天游人如织的市政厅前广场，此刻被柔和的灯光所环绕，四周的葡萄

康辉旅行社 发表了新文章 **深圳世界之窗好玩吗？|深圳世界之窗旅游|深圳世界之窗地图** 01-19 19:06
世界之窗是深圳华侨城的一个旅游景点，似乎在外地比较出名，虽然我去过多次，但是大多都是陪人去，我并不太喜欢到里面玩。　　比起世界之窗对面的欢乐谷来说，世界之窗更适合于老人和儿童，里面的微

康辉旅行社 发表了新文章 **海南三亚旅游攻略、景点及报价|海南旅游全攻略|深圳去海南旅游** 01-16 11:23
春节期间要去海南旅游，想知道详细的旅游攻略，三亚景点详细情况以及三亚旅游的报价相关信息，你可以和我们康辉旅游取得联系，康辉旅游提供春节三亚旅游的所有旅游相关产品，具体线路可以看一下：　网站：w

康辉旅行社 发表了新文章 **深圳春节去澳门威尼斯旅游线路|春节澳门旅游攻略、线路|深圳康辉旅行社** 01-13 16:47
深圳春节去澳门旅游的相关线路和春节澳门旅游攻略等信息可以参考一下信息：　澳门威尼斯旅游观光　　早上指定地点集合上车，乘旅游巴士前往珠海，经横琴口岸出境，沿途可乘车观望海观音，游览澳门回归纪念广

康辉旅行社 在企业博客 深圳康辉旅行社公司 发布了企业新闻 **清远新银盏温泉、香草世界、幽谷探险、北江小三峡二天游，就找深圳康辉旅行社**
01-05 10:21

康辉旅行社 发表了新文章 **澳门旅游塔|澳门旅游塔票价|澳门旅游观光塔 跨年**
01-04 14:33
澳门旅游塔(葡文:Torre de Macau，英文:Macau Tower)，港澳地区习称为观光塔，是一座位于中华人民共和国澳门特别行政区的高塔。从地面到它的最高点，总高度为338米，1109英尺(

康辉旅行社 在企业博客 深圳康辉旅行社公司 发布了企业新闻 **香港迪士尼游玩攻略|香港迪士尼乐园游玩攻略** 01-03 16:17

文章分类：

顶置文章

最新文章 [共100篇文章]

香港旅游攻略：感受香港魅力的夜景
香港也是一个有着传奇故事的城市。从一个默默无闻的小渔村到繁华的都市，从殖民地到世界上第一个实施"一国两制"的地方，香港经历了历史的风云变幻，香港更成熟了，更包容了。　　这个被称为
2011-03-12 16:15　阅读全文 阅读(10) 评论(0)

香港旅游攻略：香港庙街美食、旅游购物介绍
香港庙街-人来人往 在香港购物,除了金钟、铜锣湾、尖沙咀外,还有一些充满奇趣的露天市场,其中,最负盛名的当数有"男人街"之称的庙街。　庙街在九龙油麻地,因街上的天后庙(妈祖)而命名。以庙前的榕树头
2011-03-12 16:04　阅读全文 阅读(9) 评论(0)

香港铜锣湾旅游购物景点介绍
香港铜锣湾景点介绍：　铜锣湾（英文名称：Causeway Bay，原称东角）位于香港岛的中心北岸之西，是香港的主要商业及娱乐场所集中地。该地段集中了很多购物中心、日资的百货公司以及酒店等，在街头巷尾
2011-03-11 16:54　阅读全文 阅读(18) 评论(0)

香港旅游攻略：内地人去香港旅游购物心得
以下内容是特别为第一次前往香港旅游购物的游客提供的一些实用的心得与经验分享，大家不妨可以借鉴下!.. 一、选址 如果是第一次去香港，又或者是毫无目的的闲逛，我建议去尖沙咀的海港城，这里是香港最
2011-03-11 16:34　阅读全文 阅读(8) 评论(0)

港澳团队旅游攻略：恋恋不舍的美景
从澳门到香港预计要一个小时的时间，当游船驶入维多利亚港时，面前的港岛和刚刚逃离的澳门形成了非常强烈的反差。一个多么秀丽的海湾啊－参天的大厦直插云宵，在阳光的照耀下闪闪发光，璀灿夺目。又因为有山的衬托，
2011-03-09 16:09　阅读全文 阅读(20) 评论(0)

香港浪漫旅游景点推荐：兰桂坊景点游记
虽然香港这块充满活力的宝地并不大，但是那里的酒吧可不少。富有小资情调的兰桂坊(LanKwaiFong)，灯红酒绿的湾仔骆克道，流光溢彩的九龙尖沙嘴，都是酒吧集中的区域。一位喜欢泡吧的香
2011-03-09 15:45　阅读全文 阅读(6) 评论(0)

香港两日游攻略:感受东方之珠的美
因为之前有去过香港一次，但那只是短暂的停留一段时间，并未能对这颗东方之珠作更深入的了解。正因为之前的一点点遗憾，才促成此次的香港两日日游。对于很多人来说，当然也包括我，对香港始终有着一种特别的情结，一
2011-03-08 16:46　阅读全文 阅读(31) 评论(0)

2011港澳自由行旅游注意事项
以下内容将为各位准备到港澳旅游的驴友们打个预防针，出行前做个小小的提醒，小编收集了一些关于港澳旅游的注意事项,希望给各位旅行者做个行前小贴士，方便大家出行旅游!.. 1.电话漫游问题　　大陆的电
2011-03-08 16:36　阅读全文 阅读(32) 评论(0)

香港邮轮旅游攻略：维多利亚港夜景的璀璨
由于自己的家庭就定居在深圳，而且又办理了一年多签证，所以去香港购物旅游非常方便，随便找个周末都可以过去，而且交通也非常方便，结合多次往返香港购物以及陪家人朋友去玩的经验，个人总结如下：
2011-03-07 17:09　阅读全文 阅读(22) 评论(0)

澳门旅游攻略：澳门丰富多彩的夜生活
澳门夜景 澳门大三巴牌坊　　前段时间和朋友去了澳门玩了几天，感觉澳门的夜生活丰富多采，很多娱乐场和赌场24小时开放。跑狗场出来还有两项活动：看"八国联军美女人体艺术表演"和"红磨
2011-03-07 16:54　阅读全文 阅读(21) 评论(0)

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图片 [共6张]

文章评论

- abcd11097 :打工--没出路，经商--怕赔钱，上班--等下岗。　直销--不好做，保险--已过时，当官--没关系。　机会：你看不懂，他看不懂，有人看得懂!事业：你不去做，他不去做，有人会去做!　在信息化的时

图片最新评论

- kanghui888 :呵呵
- joan12 :oh......

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