Factors Affecting Millennial Tourists' Behavioral Intention in using User-Generated Content for Travel Planning

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the factors affecting millennial tourists' behavioural intention in using user-generated content (UGC) websites for travel planning. Four main determinants were being used in this study which include perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, perceived risk and trust. The research objective is to identify the most used user-generated content websites among millennial tourists and to determine the factors that influence millennial tourists' behavioural intention in using user-generated content websites for travel planning. 134 respondents responded to the online survey and this survey was conducted strictly for millennials who have experience in using user-generated content (UGC) websites for travel planning. User-generated content (UGC) websites in Malaysia include Booking.com, Trivago, Agoda, TripAdvisor and many more. The findings in this survey show that perceived usefulness is the most important factor that influences millennial tourists' behavioural intention in using user-generated content websites for travel planning in Malaysia.

Keywords: *behavioural intention, user-generated content, travel planning*

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, most tourists often use the Internet to seek information about certain destinations before the decision is made (Jeng & Fesenmaier, 2002). This is because the tourism industry took the opportunity of the rapid use of websites and social media by offering much information related to the experiences and reviews about destinations (Manap & Adzharudin, 2013). Social media and web applications are an important part of the travel planning process. Litvin et al., (2008) stated that the reviews about destinations or property available on the Internet and social media not only have the ability to attract or detract consumers but also build consumer expectations. This can be supported by The World Bank Group's second report, The Voice of Travelers, in collaboration with TripAdvisor, which highlights how peer reviews and other forms of user-generated content (UGC) available on digital platforms have become the most important sources of travel information compared to the materials published by tourism boards and other traditional outlets (Oon, 2018). One of the reasons is that consumers nowadays are more affected by people's recommendations about products that have been experienced by others. This can be

seen when the consumers choose to believe the views of fellow travellers, friends and strangers' comments on UGC websites like TripAdvisor and Yelp for travel reviews (Oon, 2018). The role of traditional marketing has vanished due to the advancement of information and communication technology (ICT) (Hjalager, 2010 as cited in Balouchi et. al., 2017). The advancement of ICT coincides with the opportunities in the tourism industry as it heavily relies on information. With the help of the internet, potential tourists can collect travel-related information efficiently which can help them in the decision-making process. Balouchi et al. (2017) added online content specifically user-generated content (UGC) websites are a crucial source of information for the potential tourists before planning their travels. Therefore, this study aims to identify the most used user-generated content websites among millennial tourists and to determine the factors that influence millennial tourists' behavioural intention in using user-generated content websites for travel planning.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Online travel communities portray an incredible opportunity for travellers to figure out people's views about certain locations and facilities including hotels, restaurants and attractions. Tourists regularly appear to depend on other vacationers' reviews and recommendations during travel planning. Hence, they usually produce important changes in consumer behaviour in the travel industry (Casalo, Flavian & Guinaliu, 2010). Before booking a hotel, guests often seek advice by consulting reviews on information-mediation platforms such as Booking, TripAdvisor, Expedia, and Yelp. These reviews, which reflect other guests' experiences and ratings, are spontaneous, insightful, and sometimes passionate, offering easily accessible information anytime and anywhere (Alarcon-Urbistondo et al., 2023). Travel companies need to step up their game with the aid of developing their online communities such as user-generated content (UGC) to offer better value to consumers and attract them. UGC has become an adequate tool for travellers to use in gathering information during travel decision-making (Ukpabi & Karjaluoto, 2017). Approximately 80% of travellers claim to read reviews about a hotel before planning a trip, and 53% say that they will not book a hotel that has no evaluation found (Tsao, Hsieh, Shih, and Lin, 2015). According to Godes & Mayzlin, (2004), online reviews are one of the forms of user-generated content which are daily written with the aid of thousands and thousands of internet users globally. These reviews are considered word-of-mouth and have been recognized as one of the most significant resources of information broadcast since the beginning of society, especially for experience goods (Abarghouei, 2012). An increasing amount of consumer-generated online reviews on different travel-related facilities is due to the swift growth of Internet applications in hospitality and tourism. Potential travellers can benefit from the free information provided concerning new markets, new topics, and sensitive issues by viewing previous travel experiences through text, pictures, and videos (Tsao et al., 2015).

There are a few types of UGC which include social networking sites, blogs and online communities that allow countless content to spread through it. This can be supported by data from a trend survey conducted by Vase.Ai in 2017, 81% of respondents agree that social media are one of their foremost sources of online travel inspiration including Facebook and Instagram which play a huge role in inspiring fellow Malaysians to travel. Other than that, another source of inspiration includes travel reviews and booking sites such as Trip Advisor, Booking.com, and Airbnb. This would be a wake-up call for content material marketers to supply more video content material on social media platforms and in-house websites. Additionally, they also like to view travel-related content from people who are similar to them (42%) or their friends and family's videos (43%) even though brand core and self-absorption will not work within the UGC. Therefore, if hospitality and tourism practitioners want to maximize the use of this emerging platform for their online marketing strategies an understanding and deep study of traveller's utilization of UGC for travel planning is essential.

Perceived ease of use refers to an extent where the users expect a certain system to make their life easier. For this study, perceived ease of use can be described where the user has confidence that using UGC websites to plan their travel is easy and not much effort is needed. Perceived usefulness can be seen

where the users believed that using one application can improve an individual's efficiency. However, for this study, usefulness suggests that to the extent wherever someone admits that UGC websites will help them during travel planning. According to Littler & Melanthiou (2006), risk is explained when the consumer feels lacking in terms of assurance about the possible outcomes and consequences during the process of purchasing a product or service. There were two scopes for the concept of source credibility which are expertise and trustworthiness. However, this study solely specializes in trustworthiness. Trustworthiness can be defined as to the extent which the users have confidence that the application or system used is safe and valid (Balouchi et al., 2017). Behavioural intention can be defined as to the extent which a person has attentive plans to perform or not perform certain specified future behaviours. Therefore, behavioural intention could be a fair dimension to envision future behaviour. In addition, if an individual decides to perform a specific behaviour, it means that they have an intention to do so (Balouchi et al., 2017).

METHODOLOGY

For this study, quantitative research is adopted to analyze the millennial tourists' views on UGC for travel planning. An online survey was conducted by the researchers to gather relevant information. The questionnaire was developed by using Google Forms and the link has been distributed through social media. For the first stage, the link to the questionnaire was forwarded to friends or relatives who had been engaged in UGC. Then, the respondents were asked to share the links with whomever they thought qualified and matched the criteria for the study. The online questionnaire consists of three main sections. For the first section of the questionnaire, the respondents were asked whether they were familiar with UGC websites and whether they were born between the 1980s to early 2000s. Only those who answered both of the questions with "yes" are allowed to proceed to the next section. The screening questions are made to avoid any irrelevant data. Other than that, the respondents also were asked what the most used UGC websites for travel planning are. Next, the second segment of the questionnaire comprised demographic questions which included the respondents' gender, age, education level, household income and marital status. This section was measured by the nominal scales to give the researchers an effective understanding of the traits of the respondents (Balouchi et. al., 2017). The last part of the questionnaire has 5 subsections to measure all the variables. Likert scale was used to evaluate the variables. It is a scale designed to survey how likely respondents agree or disagree with the statements on a five-point scale which includes 1= "strongly disagree", 2 = "disagree", 3 = "neutral, 4 = "agree" and 5 = "strongly agree". Convenience sampling has been implemented in this study. In this study, frequency analysis is used to summarize the demographic profile of the respondents. Besides, descriptive analysis was used to provide the overall mean and standard deviation.

RESULTS

Based on Table 1, it was found that 75% or 100 individuals, identified as female, and 25% of respondents, equivalent to 34 individuals, identified as male. In terms of education, 82.1% of the respondents possess a bachelor's degree, followed by a diploma with a percentage of 14.9%, high school and postgraduate share the same percentage which is 1.5% respectively. For the household income, the highest percentage is 40.3%, less than RM1000, followed by 24.6% which is income above RM4000, 17.9% for income range RM1000 – RM1999, and 9% for income range RM2000 to RM2999. The lowest percentage is the income range of RM3000 – RM3999 with 8.2%. Since the study focused on the millennial group, most of the respondents are single with 99.03%, while, married with 0.7%. In terms of familiarity with the existence of the user-generated content, 66.7% of respondents were familiar with UGC websites, while 33.3% of the respondents were not familiar with it. The most UGC websites that have been used by the respondents are Booking.com and Trivago with a percentage of 59.4% and 58.7% respectively.

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Table 1: Demographic Analysis

	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	34	25.4
	Female	100	74.6
Education	Highschool	2	1.5
	Diploma	20	14.9
	Bachelor's degree	110	82.1
	Postgraduate	2	1.5
Household income	Below RM1000	54	40.3
	RM1000-RM1999	24	17.9
	RM2000-RM2999	12	9.0
	RM3000-RM3999	11	8.2
	Above RM4000	33	24.6
Marital status	Single	133	99.3
	Married	1	0.7
Familiar with UGC websites	Yes	92	66.7
	No	46	33.3
The most used UGC websites	Trivago	81	58.7
	Agoda	56	40.6
	TripAdvisor	40	29
	Expedia	22	15.9
	Booking.com	82	59.4
	Traveloka	2	1.4
	Internet	1	0.7
	Never use any	1	0.7

From Table 2, the mean value for perceived ease of use is 4.16 with a standard deviation of 0.60. This shows that most of the respondents answered the items in the perceived ease of use with a value of 4 (Agree). It demonstrates that the respondents agreed with the questions regarding the perceived ease of use. Next, the second variable is the perceived ease of usefulness. The mean value for perceived ease of usefulness is 4.22 with a standard deviation of 0.60. This shows that most of the respondents respond to the items in perceived ease of usefulness with value 4 (Agree). It indicates that the respondents agreed with the perceived ease of usefulness statements. For the third variable, perceived risk, the mean value for perceived risk is 3.29 with a standard deviation of 0.87. This shows that the majority of the respondents chose value 3 (Neutral) for the items in perceived risk with value 3 (Neutral). It was that the respondents were being natural in perceived risk statements. As for the fourth variable, trust, the mean value for trust is 3.72 with a standard deviation of 0.74. It shows that the respondents were being natural with trust statements. Lastly, behavioural intention. The mean value for behavioural intention is 4.06 with a standard deviation of 0.63. The result shows that most of the respondents answered the items in behavioural intention with a value of 4 (Agree). It shows that the respondents agreed with behavioural intention statements.

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis

Variables	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Perceived ease of use	134	4.16	0.60	2.50	5.00
Perceived ease of usefulness	134	4.22	0.60	2.00	5.00
Perceived risk	134	3.29	0.87	1.00	5.00
Trust	134	3.72	0.74	1.00	5.00
Behavioural intention	134	4.06	0.63	1.40	5.00

DISCUSSION

Based on the results analyzed, the most used UGC website among millennial tourists is Booking.com which received the highest percentage 59.4%. The second-highest percentage for the most used UGC websites is Trivago and the third-highest percentage for the most used UGC websites is Agoda. It shows that respondents preferred to use Online Travel Agents during their travel planning. This is because the users can read the reviews from the OTA and make purchases at the same time. Thus, they need UGC websites such as Booking.com, Trivago, and Agoda where they can provide reviews and features where the users can make reservations.

According to the analysis, three factors influence the behavioural intention of millennial tourists when using user-generated content in travel planning which are perceived ease of usefulness, perceived ease of use and trust. The study finds that perceived ease of usefulness has the highest mean score which indicates that it has the highest significance in influencing millennial tourists when using user-generated content websites in travel planning. The finding of the study is aligned with the findings of a study conducted by Ayeh et al. (2013). This study also indicates that millennial tourists perceived the usefulness of the UGC websites made the practice of UGC websites increase from day to day to plan their travel. Hence, it could be perceived that UGC can boost accessibility to information and help to plan travel.

The next factor that influences millennial tourists is perceived ease of use. Based on the findings, the respondent finds that employing UGC websites for travel planning is easy and less hassle. The millennial tourist thinks that using UGC websites is much easier than using traditional or manual ways in travel planning. As the efficiency and convenience of user-generated content websites is increasing in number, it made the user feel convenience in using user-generated content websites. This indicates that the user was aware of the effectiveness and usefulness of UGC but at the same time, they were aware of the threat behind the convenience. The most recent UGC website update could cater to various age groups and be able to customize on the needs and wants of the consumer. Thus, it searches to be more niche and able to cater to each of the user's needs and wants way better than the manual way.

The last factor that influences the behavioural intention of millennial tourists is trust. Consumer trust enables them to influence them in employing user-generated content to plan travel. The increasing advancement in security and firewalls put ease of mind in consumer's hearts. For them to employ user-generated content for travel planning especially when an online transaction or online banking action is needed to complete the booking, payment and other functions need trust in the consumer. However, from the result of the study, the researchers found out that perceived risk does not influence the behavioural intention to use UGC among millennial tourists. This is because when using an online transaction process, the users are normally aware of the different types of danger that they need to face. Thus, it is expected that perceived risk could lower the millennial tourists' behavioural intentions to use UGC in travel planning.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, all the factors are interconnected with one another, and it will influence the millennial tourist behavioural intention in using user-generated content websites for travel planning. Based on this study, it can be concluded that the most used User Generated Content (UGC) website among millennial tourists is Booking.com. This is because they found that UGC websites are easy to use even for first-time users. It also helps them plan their travel efficiently. Other than that, the content and information provided in UGC are reliable and can be trusted. However, according to the data, the millennial tourists felt unsafe when using UGC websites because of their insecure feelings about the leaks of personal information. Future research perhaps can do an in-depth study on their travel pattern.

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Liana Syazwani, M.Z., Nur Khaleda Atiqah, A.J., and Siti Amirah, A. carried out the data preparation and contributed to the interpretation of the results. Norfadhilah, M.A. took the lead in manuscript refinement. All authors provided critical feedback and helped shape the research, analysis and manuscript.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION

We certify that the article is the Authors' and Co-Authors' original work. The article has not received prior publication and is not under consideration for publication elsewhere. This research/manuscript has not been submitted for publication, nor has it been published in whole or in part elsewhere. We testify to the fact that all Authors have contributed significantly to the work, validity and legitimacy of the data and its interpretation for submission to Jurnal Intelek.

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