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FROM THE DESK OF THE GUEST EDITORS

The World Tourism Organisation terms Tourism and Internet as ideal partners. The last two decades of eTourism have only demonstrated that the tourism industry has accepted e-commerce to such an extent that the very structure of the industry has changed and continues to evolve. Disintermediation led to re-intermediation, online travel agents (OTAs) were born, technology providers became critical partners, new business models emerged, consumer behaviour changed, travel planning was never the same, tourists benefitted from the social Internet, mobile technologies enhanced tourist mobility, sharing economy tasted its success in eTourism. The initial use of Information Technology (IT) in Tourism for operational efficiency and distribution has paved the way for eTourism as a smart modus operandi and competitive advantage for Tourism enterprises, and consumer behaviour-shaping and enabling technology for tourists.

Of course, the big leap has been from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 (a.k.a. Social Internet). The advent of Web 2.0 characterized by the read-write Web instead of the read-only Web 1.0, and wherein the customer are not only consumers but also producers of information, brought a social dimension to eTourism. Driven by Web 2.0 tools for networking, online publishing and sharing, the Internet-empowered tourist engages with online communities, publishes blogs, photos, videos as consumer-generated content (CGC) and shares reviews and ratings, besides collaborating with tourism enterprises and fellow travellers alike. The implication for tourism enterprises was to include social media marketing by meeting the customers wherever they are on the Internet besides the traditional website-centric e-commerce.

In the context of these exciting developments, the Journal of Tourism is proud to bring out a special issue on eTourism for smart Tourism with the purpose of showcasing contemporary research on the industry-wide impacts of eTourism, enterprise-wide practices of eTourism and tourist-side influences of eTourism. This special issue has six interesting research papers covering key areas in the eTourism spectrum.

The first paper titled 'Evaluation of Websites using Balanced Scorecard Approach in the Hotel Landscape in India' by Ashish Dahiya and Duggal Shelley illustrated the use of Balanced Scorecard approach to hotel website evaluation. This study is high on practical implications and it offers significant insights for hotel managers and web developers.

The second paper 'Content analysis of Tripadvisor reviews on restaurants: a case study of Macau' by Simon Lei and Rob Law has underscored the utility of electronic word-of-mouth to understand a firm's current position and competitive advantages. Through a content analysis of restaurant reviews on Tripadvisor, they assessed customer satisfaction on the dining experience in Macau and have offered useful insights to service industry practitioners.

The third paper titled 'Comparative content analysis of visual images on shopping festival websites: The case of Dubai Shopping Festival and Grand Kerala Shopping

Festival' by Sangeeta Peter and Ansted Iype Joseph provides an understanding of the use of images of shopping festivals in building the destination image, in an online environment. Destination Marketing Organisations seeking to promote shopping festivals through their websites will benefit from the findings and suggestions from this study.

The next paper on 'Smart Tourism challenges' by Ulrike Gretzel, Sofia Reino, Sebastian Kopera and Chulmo Koo is a timely concept paper that delineates Smart tourism from general eTourism. They have discussed a series of challenges currently ignored in Smart tourism agendas and the academic literature. This paper carries implications at several levels starting from researchers to destination marketers, while highlighting the need and scope for research in Smart Tourism.

In the paper titled 'Evolving maturity of Malaysian Regional Tourism Organization websites: A longitudinal study using the extended model of Internet commerce adoption', Victor Anandkumar and Anil Kumar have carried out a longitudinal study of Malaysian RTOs and found out a significant move from low-to-moderate interactivity to moderate-to-high interactivity. This study will help RTOs towards running a mature website which is particularly high on interactivity.

The fifth paper is titled 'Inclusive tourism through website accessibility for the visually impaired tourists: An assessment of Indian Regional Tourism Organization websites' and is written by Vinod Kumar and Kamal Manohar Motupalli who have dwelt on an under-researched area of tourism website accessibility. The paper has provided a comprehensive and useful categorization of accessibility issues that can facilitate a systematic redressal by the practitioners.

The last paper titled 'Marketing utility of Tripadvisor for Hotels: An importance-performance analysis' by Sk. Md. Nizamuddin has assessed the gap between hotel marketing managers' perceived importance and their actual use/performance of CGC. While presenting the supply-side utility of CGC, this paper makes recommendations to hotel managers to harness CGC.

We sincerely hope that this special issue would be of significant relevance and use to the tourism academia, researchers and industry practitioners. At this juncture, we express our gratitude to the Editor-in-Chief and his editorial team for the opportunity to bring out this special issue. We also place on record our sincere appreciation of the services rendered by the expert reviewers and the interest shown by the authors.

Dr. S. Victor Anandkumar

Dr. Sangeeta Peter

Guest Editors

JoT special issue on 'eTourism for smart Tourism'

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Contents

	Research Paper	Author	Page
1	Evaluation of Websites using Balanced Scorecard (BSC) Approach in the Hotel Landscape in India	Dahiya Ashish, Duggal Shelley	1
2	Content Analysis of Tripadvisor Reviews on Restaurants: A Case Study of Macau	Simon Lei, Rob Law	17-28
3	Comparative content analysis of visual images on shopping festival websites: The case of Dubai Shopping Festival and Grand Kerala Shopping Festival	Sangeeta Peter, Ansted Iype Joseph	29-39
3	Smart Tourism Challenges	Ulrike Gretzel, Sebastian Kopera, Chulmo Koo	41-47
4	Evolving maturity of Malaysian Regional Tourism Organization websites: A longitudinal study using the extended model of Internet commerce adoption	S. Victor Anandkumar, Anil Kumar T. V.	49-57
5	Inclusive tourism through website accessibility for the visually impaired tourists: An assessment of Indian Regional Tourism Organization websites	G. Vinod Kumar, Kamal Manohar Motupalli	59-67
6	Marketing utility of Tripadvisor for Hotels: An importance-performance analysis	Sk. Md. Nizamuddin	69-75
7	Publication, Conferences and Seminars		75

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Evaluation of Websites using Balanced Scorecard (BSC) Approach in the Hotel Landscape in India

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Abstract

This study aims to evaluate the websites from ten renowned hotel chains in India in the business to Customer (B2C) framework. The modified Balanced Scorecard (BSC) approach is incorporated into the evaluation by taking into consideration four perspectives: technical, user friendly, marketing effectiveness, and site attractiveness. A set of website evaluation criteria representing these four perspectives is then used to examine the websites from ten renowned hotel chains. Almost fifty percent hotel websites perform very well and prove to be very effective scoring more than eighty percent on performance scale. Most of the sample hotel websites are found to be user-friendly and attractive. More is needed to be done to make sample websites technically sound and marketing effective. The study proposes numerous implications, mainly for the hotel management wanting to improve their services online focusing on proposed areas of website improvement so that the desired requisites are being met to achieve business goals.

Keywords: Balanced scorecard, Hotel websites, websites requisites

INTRODUCTION

India; known for its rich kaleidoscope of landscapes, majestic historical sites and royal cities, colorful people, glorifying heritage and cultures; holds a unique place at the international stage of hospitality. Hospitality is an ancient tradition in India. The actual growth story of the Indian hospitality industry started in the 1980s, when many renowned hotels were developed to cater to the Asiad Games in New Delhi. Until about a decade ago, however, the Indian hospitality industry continued to be characterized by its extremely limited choice of options into the cities other than Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, and Bangalore. Other aspiring hospitality markets have been gradually catching up, such as Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Goa, Hyderabad, and Pune. After many years of obscurity, the Indian hospitality industry has now received its share of limelight at the global hospitality front. The Indian hospitality industry, today, is bejeweled with major players like leading domestic hotel chains; such as The Taj Group of Hotels, Oberoi Hotels & Resorts and ITC

Welcome Group; emerging Indian brands as Leela and The Lalit and the market entrants from outside the country like Sheraton, Hilton, Hyatt, Radisson, Marriott, and Le Meridien etc. This growth has raised the competition in the tourism and hospitality industry and now the hotels are looking for innovative ways and means to market their hotels in the best possible way to attract huge pool of customers.

There has been a drastic change in the marketing strategies adopted by the hospitality industry over the past decade. A decade back, the brand name itself was a major driver but today's techno savvy and well educated travelers have led the hotel companies to realign their marketing strategies and thus, meeting the challenge of global competition through internet has become quintessential. The Internet has marked its presence as a marketing tool in early 1990. Since the launch of commercial Internet applications, many researchers have noted the potential of the World Wide Web in business, and advocated incorporating the Internet into the tourism industry (Burger, 1997). Today, Internet is thought to be the most economical value packed marketing tool ever devised. Moreover, the need to use Internet as a marketing tool in the hospitality industry is felt urgent owing to the fact that there has been constant growth in the number of Internet users across the globe and is reported to increase further at a phenomenal rate. That is why, the Internet is considered as a significant sales and marketing distribution channel in the hotel industry and website is an important tool for online marketing via internet.

A website designed for the hotel acquaints the customers to the various aspects of the hotel like rates and packages, promotions, facilities provided, on-line booking etc. and also provides a virtual tour to the prospective guests to feel the interiors and exteriors of the hotel. When a hotel has an effective website that is optimized for search engines, there is a continual increase in hotel bookings, customer loyalty and a good return of investment. Effectively designed hotel websites, no doubt, are the best medium for building client relationships, building hotel brand, retaining customers, and encouraging repeat visits. "Poor Web design will result in a loss of 50 per cent of potential sales due to users being unable to find what they want, and a loss of 40 per cent of potential repeat visits due to initial negative experience" asserted Cunliffe (2000) while focusing on effective website design. Jeong, M., Oh, H., & Gregoire, M Jeong (2003) claimed that developing and maintaining an effective web site would be critical to the success of the business. In short, companies are trying to make their websites as informative and appealing as possible (Liang and Law, 2003). In today's "out of sight, out of mind" marketplace, it is crucial for the hotels to have a website with all the requisite features so as to leave an ever lasting impression in the customers' mindset to help retaining them. Websites that do not provide positive experiences may cause customers to decide that it is easier to go to a physical store rather than purchase online (Van der Merwe and Bekker, 2003). To reach the potential customers, the discerning hotel management companies are not leaving any stone unturned and trying to design the hotel website in most effective manner incorporating all the ingredients of a successful website. The swift growth of the internet in recent years imbued the minds of the intellectuals with an increasing

interest in the evaluation of the websites. Law R, Qi S, Buhalis D. (2010) also opined that with the increase in the number of internet users, the focus of hospitality and tourism practitioners have shifted towards developing their hotels' websites effectively for maintaining customer relationships and for fetching a big market share. Chung and Law in 2003 conceptualized a framework for measuring the hotel websites on five dimensions encompassing facilities information, customer contact information, reservation information, surrounding area information and website management and the performance showed significant variations for luxury, mid-price and budget hotel websites. BSC approach was adopted by Kline et al (2004) to evaluate the user friendliness, site attractiveness, marketing effectiveness and technical aspects of Bed & Breakfast (B&B) websites. Though the sample websites were found to be attractive but improvements were strongly recommended in all the four categories. E-relationship marketing features on hotel websites were evaluated through an operational framework by Bai et al. in 2006 and certain hotel companies were found to use higher level e-relationship marketing features on their websites.

Schmidt S, Cantallops AS (2008) evaluated the performance of hotel websites of Spain and Brazil to measure their effectiveness and Musante MD (2009) in his study found the use of attribute ratings by hotel type to evaluate hotel websites of Singapore hotels. Belkhamza Z (2013) evaluated the current websites of Sabah hotels in Malaysia and analyzed the web information richness in the search engines. Ashish D & Shelley D (2015) evaluated the performance of official websites of SAARC nations pertaining to information on food tourism using BSC approach and suggested numerous measures to be adopted to make websites effective enough to pull gastronomy tourists to these nations. This paper focuses on the evaluation of the significant tool of internet marketing i.e. website of a hotel, a platform of direct contact between hotels and customers in perspective of Indian hospitality sector. The present study aims at analyzing and evaluating the contents of the websites of the top ten renowned hotel chains in India in order to find out if these are meeting the desired requisites. The desired requisites are actually those parameters which were undertaken in the previous research studies as ingredients of a successful hotel websites and as well modified and improved over the years to fulfill the needs and demands of today. And for this, the literature is reviewed extensively to analyze and identify website features which are to be employed as the measurement instrument in evaluating the websites of top ten hotel chains in India. The results are discussed and concluded with some valuable suggestions for further research, and employed by concerned hotels to fix up their website flaws and improve their overall performance.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature is reviewed extensively and it is implied that prior studies on website evaluation comprised of two segments – the study of the content of a successful website i.e. the information services provided on a website and the measurement of performance of websites.

Literature Review Regarding Website Content – The Ingredients of a successful website

The first generation of hotel websites was merely an electronic brochure, commonly referred to as brochureware. Murphy et al. (1996) conducted a study to examine the contents and features of hotel websites of 20 chain hotels and 16 freestanding hotel sites, in the US. They recorded 32 different features and placed them into four broad nonexclusive categories: promotion and marketing, service and information, interactivity and technology and management. Further, Ho (1997) focused on the content of the websites while analyzing and constructed a framework to evaluate websites from a value added customer's perspective. Ho (1997) develops four types of customer values: Time, Custom, Logistic and Sensational. The framework was illustrated as a three by a four matrix. Features were simply classified by their primary function into one of the twelve purpose-value categories. Scanlon, Schroeder, Snyder and Spool (1998) studied content, searching, links, navigation page layout, readability and graphics as key ingredients of a successful website. Rachman and Buchanan (1999a) also conducted a study on sixty tourism websites in New Zealand and the world focusing on content. The first part of the study bridges the gap by depicting what tourists, the tourism industry and tourism academics perceive as an effective tourism website. Next they establish what features, in terms of content, they perceive as important in an effective tourism website. An instrument for the survey was developed based on Ho's (1997) purpose-value evaluation framework. The framework was consisted of 59 features. The Web Based Survey revealed three elements of an effective tourism web site: content, content quality and web design. In the second part of their study, Rachman and Buchanan (1999b) calculated the expectation score for the 59 features. In the research report, they examine the gap between customers' expectations of the content of tourism websites and the delivery by some of the top tourism web sites.

Weeks and Crouch (1999) conducted a similar to Murphy's et al. study, to examine the contents of Australian-based hospitality and tourism websites. They modified the features that Murphy et al. took into 33 attributes, and then classified them into four categories. These attributes were then used to analyze 20 websites in six hospitality and tourism sectors. Further most interestingly, Choi and Hsu (2001) categorized websites features as product/service, place, price, promotion, packaging, people and communication. However, Wan (2002) studied the web site content of international tourist hotels and tour wholesalers in Taiwan. His evaluation system consisted of three general user criteria: user interface, variety of information and online reservation. Each website was evaluated by rating the overall excellence of user interface and, variety of information on a 5-point rating scale.

An information evaluation model to measure the performance of hotel websites was presented by Chung and Law (2003). The model consisted of five major hotel website dimensions- facilities information, customer contact information, reservation information, surrounding area information, and management of websites. The dimensions and their associated attributes were obtained and

modified from published articles in the hospitality and tourism literature. Zafiroopoulos et al. (2005) goes a step further to the direction of measuring and evaluating the information provided through the hotel web sites. They identified 66 information services as compared to 32 taken by Murphy et al and placed them into seven dimensions instead of the original five based on their thematic similarity as: Facilities information, Customer contact information, Reservation-price information, Surrounding area information, Management of the website (in terms of maintenance, administration and web site design), Company information and Communication. Baloglu & Peckan (2006) utilized content analyses to analyze the websites of the selected group (four and five star) of hotels in Turkey in terms of design characteristics (interactivity, navigation and functionality) and site marketing practices on the internet. The results of a study carried out by Law and Hsu (2006) highlighted five dimensions that were all perceived to be important by 304 international respondents. These five dimensions were: (1) reservations information, (2) facilities information, (3) contact information, (4) surrounding area information, and (5) website management. Hashim, Murphy, and Law (2007) focused on website design frameworks in their review of articles published from the 1990s to 2006. The authors extracted five dimensions of website quality based on the most researched online features of tourism and hospitality websites: information and process, value added, relationships, trust, and design and usability. Nusair and Kandampully (2007) identified six important dimensions that contribute to a successful web site: navigability, playfulness, information quality, trust, personalization and responsiveness. Suzana Markovic, Sanja Raspor, Tomislav Car, Jelena Komsic (2012) analyzed the websites of a selected group of hotels (three, four and five star) by applying content analysis by six dimensions (contact information, information about facilities, reservations and the surrounding area, as well as communication with customers and web-site functionality) and 22 characteristics.

Literature review about measuring the performance of hotel websites. Academic research has also identified a number of criteria used in evaluating websites. It is equally important to evaluate the performance of a website against desired requisites. Extensive literature regarding the same is studied to establish a framework that help in evaluating the performance of websites of ten renowned hotel chains in India.

Olsina, Godoy, Lafuente, & Rossi (1999) used QEM, the website quality evaluation method. Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Malhotra (2000) pointed out that perceived electronic service quality (e-SQ) could be represented by 11 dimensions. Barnes, Liu & Videgen (2001) developed the webQual for measuring the service quality. Madu & Madu (2002) proposed a model for e-quality. Morrison, Taylor, and Douglas (2004) reviewed the application of the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) method in tourism website evaluation studies, and proposed a modified BSC method for future tourism and hospitality website evaluation. The authors also predicted that benchmarking will be a major approach in future research in this area. A benchmarking approach combines user perceptions with website performance to

help owners identify the strengths and weaknesses of their own websites and in comparison with those of their competitors and the best practical examples in the industry. Furthermore Law and Chung (2005) developed a weighing model for contents of hotel websites. They used hotel websites' user opinions in order to rate hotel websites dimensions and attributes. Sue Abdinour-Helm and Barbara S. Chaparro (2007) introduce a Balanced Usability Checklist (BUC) approach to assess the usability of ten Palestinian hotel websites. The BUC is a modified version of the known checklist analysis technique of user interfaces.

The present study uses the modified Balanced Scorecard (BSC) Approach. BSC has emerged as the most prominent evaluation tool since the early 1990s (Morrison, Taylor, & Douglas, 2004). It was originally developed to circumvent the dominant role of one-dimensional performance indicators such as profit or any other forms of financial measures (Kaplan & Norton, 1996). BSC approach believes that the performance of an organization should be a multi-dimensional construct instead. The original BSC retains the financial perspective and includes three additional ones: (1) customer, (2) internal/business process, and (3) learning and growth (Kaplan & Norton, 1996). As the pioneer in using this method, Morrison, Taylor, Morrison, and Morrison (1999) evaluated the design and maintenance of a group of small Scottish hotels' websites by using technical, marketing, customer, and internal perspectives. The four perspectives were then specified into a set of critical success factors which represent criteria that a website must meet in order to be effective (Morrison et al., 2004). The same four perspectives were employed by Yuan et al. (2004) to evaluate the marketing effectiveness of small wineries' websites in a Mid-western U.S. state; and by Kim, Morrison, and Mills (2004) in examining the effectiveness of web based marketing efforts of major city convention centers in the U.S. These perspectives are modified with the more appropriate ones to better fit into this diversified hospitality industry. Ismail, Labropoulos, Mills, and Morrison (2002) replaced the internal with cultural perspective in examining the effectiveness of the European Union NTO websites in marketing their respective cultures. So and Morrison (2004) evaluated the Internet marketing effectiveness of East Asian NTO websites by using destination information instead of internal perspective.

OBJECTIVES

On the basis of the literature review, the following objectives are framed for the given model:

1. To record the information features given on the websites through in depth web search so as to create desired requisites for the target population to meet with and the content analysis of the websites of the ten renowned hotel chains in India.
2. To group these information features/services into dimensions based on their thematic similarity.
3. To evaluate the performance of the websites against the desired requisites.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sample

The target population for the given study is conveniently chosen from ten renowned hotel chains in India and the sample is the websites of ten hotels from the chosen ten renowned hotel chains in India. These are:

Method

TABLE – 1

No.	Hotel Chains	Hotel	URL Address (web address)
1.	Taj Hotels Resorts & Palaces	The Taj Mahal Palace & Tower, Mumbai	http://www.tajhotels.com/Luxury/Grand-Palaces-And-Iconic-Hotels/The-Taj-Mahal-Palace-Mumbai/Overview.html
2.	The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts	The Leela Palace Kempinski, Udaipur	http://www.theleela.com/locations/udaipur
3.	The Lalit Hotels	The Lalit, New Delhi	http://www.thelalit.com/the-lalit-new-delhi/overview
4.	Oberoi Hotels & Resorts	The Oberoi Rajvilas, Jaipur	http://www.oberoihotels.com/oberoi_rajvilas/
5.	The Ashok	The Ashok, New Delhi	http://www.theashok.com/
6.	ITC Welcomgroup Hotels, Palaces and Resorts	ITC Maurya	http://www.itchotels.in/hotels/itcmaurya.aspx
7.	Radisson Hotels	Radisson Blu Resort, Goa	http://www.radissonblu.com/resort-goa
8.	Le Méridien Hotels	Le Méridien, New Delhi	http://www.starwoodhotels.com/lemeridien/property/overview/index.html?propertyID=1831
9.	Hyatt Hotels & Resorts	Hyatt Regency, Delhi	http://delhi.regency.hyatt.com/en/hotel/home.html
10.	Hilton Hotels & Resorts	Hilton, New Delhi	http://www3.hilton.com/en/hotels/india/hilton-new-delhi-janakpuri-hotel-DELHJHI/index.html

The present study incorporates the modified BSC approach to evaluate the performance of sample websites. It is one of the most popular tools and was developed by Morrison, Taylor, Morrison and Morrison in 1999 based on of Kalpan and Norton's work. Morrison et al. (1999) ascertained four balanced perspectives for the comprehensive evaluation of the websites of small Scottish hotels: technical, customer, internal and marketing having 25 Critical Success Factors. This was the first tourism study that utilized BSC approach in web site evaluation. This approach was thereafter implemented in evaluating the websites of various hospitality and tourism businesses in modified versions to fit the specific needs of different industrial sectors or geographical regions. Feng et al. (2003) evaluated destination marketing organization (DMO) websites in China and US with perspectives like Marketing Strategies, web page design, marketing information and technical quality. So and Morrison (2004) also adopted modified BSC model in their study.

Douglas and Mills (2004); Kline, Morrison, and John (2004) also used modified approach in their studies with: Technical aspect, User Friendliness, Site attractiveness and Marketing effectiveness as balanced perspectives.

In the present study, we have adopted the same perspectives as proposed by Douglas and Mills (2004); Kline, Morrison, and John (2004):

1. Technical Aspect
2. User Friendliness
3. Site Attractiveness
4. Marketing Effectiveness

The set of 78 Critical Success factors is tailored based upon the extensive web search and previous scales with genuine modifications. The website evaluation form is a modified version of the forms developed by Mills and Morrison (as cited in Morrison et al., 2004) and by Yuan et al. (2004). The critical success factors are a compiled list of information services that are offered on the websites. Although, they outnumber those used by Murphy et al. (1996) and Morrison et al. (2004) and Yuan et al. (2004), many of them are similar to the previous studies. Owing to rapid growth in information and technology, this search tries to find and include as many information services as possible nowadays.

1. Technical Aspect Perspective

To evaluate the technical qualities of a website, objective measures like Net Mechanic (www.netmechanic.com) are easily available. It assesses the five criteria originally used by Morrison et al. (1999). A 5-point Likert scale with 5 being the best is used to rate these criteria. The Critical success factors under this perspective along with the technical rating scale are given as:

TABLE-2

Critical Success Factors	5-point Rating	4-point Rating	3-point Rating	2-point Rating	1-point Rating
Line Check	0 bad links	1 bad link	bad links	3 bad links	>3 bad links
HTML Check	0 errors	≥ 6 errors	≥ 12 errors	≥18 errors	> 18 errors
Browser Compatibility	0 problems	≥ 4 problems	≥8 problems	≥12problems	≥12 problems
Load Time	≥13seconds	≥24seconds	≥35seconds	≥46seconds	> 46seconds
Spell Check	0 mis-spellings	≥5%Mis-spellings	≥10%Mis-spellings	≥15%Mis-spellings	>15%Mis-spellings

Note. 5 items to be tested with a maximum of 25 raw points. The maximum weighted score is 25 points. The form is modified from the standardized website evaluation form developed by Mills and Morrison (as cited in Morrison, Taylor, & Douglas, 2004) and by Yuan, Morrison, Linton, Feng, & Jeon (2004).

2. User-friendliness Perspective

It comprises of two criterions: ease of contact and ease of navigation with 15 items under them. From here onwards, for all the three perspectives The Morrison et al. (1999) measurements scales are changed from Likert formats to Dichotomous yes/no questions to indicate the presence or absence of critical success factors since it

aids reducing the level of potential evaluator subjectivity.

TABLE-3

Critical Success Factors	Yes	No
Ease of Contact		
Telephone Number		
Mailing Address		
E-mail		
Fax Number		
Feed Back Form		
Fact Sheet		
FAQ		
Site Map/ Index		
Follow us		
Ease Of Navigation		
Clear & Effective Navigation Tools on each pages		
Availability of Home Button on all pages		
Limited Vertical Scrolling		
Limited Horizontal Scrolling		
Availability of a search engine for website content		

Note. 15 items to be tested with a maximum of 15 raw points. The maximum weighted score is 25 points. The form is modified from the standardized website evaluation form developed by Mills and Morrison (as cited in Morrison, Taylor, & Douglas, 2004) and by Yuan, Morrison, Linton, Feng, & Jeon (2004).

3. Site Attractiveness Perspective

An attractive website may help retaining the attention of the potential customers and can prove a harbinger for future business. Illegible text, poor colour combinations and cluttered pages make a website ineffective and lead to loss of interest of potential customers. It consists of 12 CSFs to be evaluated with yes or no answers on the basis of their presence or absence in the website.

TABLE-4

Critical Success Factors	Yes	No
Clear and Readable text		
Clear and Uncluttered pages		
Sufficient contrast between background and text		
Effective and esthetically appealing backgrounds		
Images reinforcing text content		
Use of color to improve the visual appeal of the site		
Effective use of web page space		
Hyperlinks Readability		
Good Quality pictures		
Audio		
Visual / Virtual Tour		
Photo Album		

Note. 12 items to be tested with a maximum of 12 raw points. The maximum weighted score is 25 points. The form is modified from the standardized website evaluation form developed by Mills and Morrison (as cited in Morrison, Taylor, & Douglas, 2004) and by Yuan, Morrison, Linton, Feng, & Jeon (2004).

4. Marketing Effectiveness Perspective

An effective website has to be informative, interactive with sound marketing strategies and online business transaction policies. It helps making the virtual tour more tangible to the customers. With 46 CSFs, these are also evaluated with yes/no responses.

Table - 5

Critical Success Factors	Yes	No
Facility Information		
Hotel Description		
Room Description		
Facilities & Service Description (Restaurants, wellness, sport, facilities, meetings etc.)		
Hotel Picture		
Room Picture		
Video Clips		
Reservation Information		
Online Reservation		
Room Rate		
Room Availability information		
Online payment		
Packages & promotion		
Globalization		
Multilingual		
Currency Converter		
Market Segmentation & Target Marketing		
Business travelers		
Families/children		
MICE participants		
Members special		
Group Promotions		
Others (medical tourist, travel agencies, eco-tourists, long-term guests, locals, govt. etc.)		
Branding and Company Information		
About us/Brand		
Logo		
Employment		
Surrounding Area Information		
General information about area		
Map		
Distances		
Accessibility/ transport		
Surrounding photos		
Weather		
Restaurants in Area		
Bars in Area		
Local activities & events		
Shopping		

E-Commerce

Reservation Mask on first page
 Instant Confirmation Provided
 Secure payment
 Sales policies

Communication

Newsletter
 Announcements
 Awards
 Press
 Recommendations / Guests speak

Management of Website

Last update
 Links to partners
 Help
 E-shop
 Website Feedback form

Note. 46 items to be tested with a maximum of 46 raw points. The maximum weighted score is 25 points. The form is modified from the standardized website evaluation form developed by Mills and Morrison (as cited in Morrison, Taylor, & Douglas, 2004) and by Yuan, Morrison, Linton, Feng, & Jeon (2004)

Each perspective, including the technical viewpoint, has weighted score of 25 points with a total weighted score of 100 points for the four perspectives combined.

Data analysis and result

The ten websites from the ten renowned hotels are given codes from 1 to 10 as in Table no. 6.

TABLE NO. 6 (Hotel code number)

Name of the Hotel	Hotel Code Number
The Taj Mahal Palace & Tower , Mumbai	01
The Leela Palace Kempinski, Udaipur	02
The Lalit, New Delhi	03
The Oberoi Rajvilas, Jaipur	04
The Ashok, New Delhi	05
ITC Maurya	06
Radisson Blu Resort, Goa	07
Le Méridien, New Delhi	08
Hyatt Regency, Delhi	09
Hilton, New Delhi	10

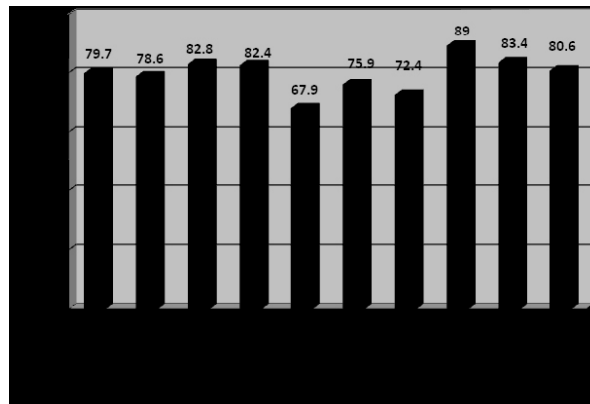
The weighted scores of the above mentioned ten hotels are found out after evaluating their websites for the given four perspectives in table no. 7.

TABLE NO. 7 (Weighted Score Results of the Website Evaluation)

Hotel Code with name	Technical Perspective 25 points	User-friendliness Perspective 25 points	Site Attractiveness Perspective 25 points	Marketing Effectiveness 25 points	Total 100 points
1. The Taj Mahal Palace & Tower , Mumbai	13	23.3	25	18.4	79.7

2. The Leela Palace Kempinski, Udaipur	15	23.3	20.8	19.5	78.6
3. The Lalit, New Delhi	16	23.3	22.9	20.6	82.8
4. The Oberoi Rajvilas, Jaipur	14	23.3	25	20.1	82.4
5. The Ashok, New Delhi	12	21.6	22.9	11.4	67.9
6. ITC Maurya	10	25	20.8	20.1	75.9
7. Radisson Blu Resort, Goa	11	23.3	20.8	17.3	72.4
8. Le Méridien, New Delhi	21	25	20.8	22.2	89
9. Hyatt Regency. Delhi	17	25	20.8	20.6	83.4
10. Hilton, New Delhi	12	25	20.8	22.8	80.6
MEAN	14.1	23.81	22.06	19.3	

FIGURE No. 1 (Graphic representation of total weighted score result of sample websites)



On an average, the ten websites performed the best in User Friendliness Perspective with a mean score of 23.81 out of maximum 25 points. ITC Maurya, Le Méridien, Hyatt Regency and Hilton score full which means their websites are highly customer oriented. The websites feature mailing address, fax number, phone address and e-mail etc to ease the contact as well easily navigated. The website of The Ashok scored the lowest in it and needs to add more features in order to fulfill the information needs of the customers. The feature "FAQ" is actually missing in some of the websites that results in deduction of score.

On Site Attractiveness Perspective, the websites performed relatively well with a mean score of 22.06. The websites of The Taj Mahal Palace & Tower and The Oberoi, Rajvilas scored full weighted score of 25 with clear text having uncluttered pages with appealing colorful backgrounds embellished with high quality pictures. Some of the websites do not have the features like "audio" and "visual/virtual tour" a need of today since visual tours help in decision making quite instantly giving

tangible feeling of the services offered by the hotel.

On Marketing Effectiveness Perspective, the mean score of ten websites is 19.3. The website of The Hilton performs best amongst all with mean weighted score of 22.8 and the website of The Ashok even cannot score 50% in it. Some of the websites are not multilingual and thus lack in attracting the global/ foreign clientele. These also lack in providing information about the surrounding area like information about restaurants in the area, bars in the area and shopping etc. is missing which is of utmost importance while buying decision is made by the potential customers.

The Technical Aspect Perspective is the weakest link with a mean score of 14.1. The sample websites of most of the hotels are not technically sound displaying the problems in loading, browser compatibility and bad links. The website of the Le Méridien score highest with weighted score of 21 points and the website of ITC Maurya lowest with less than 50% weighted score.

Overall, the website of the Le Méridien scored highest and thus evaluated as most effective followed by Hyatt Regency. The lowest on the scale of performance is the website of The Ashok that needs to improve a lot to be an effective marketing tool. The websites of ITC Maurya, Radisson Blu Resort Goa, Hilton New Delhi, The Ashok New Delhi and The Taj Mahal Palace & Tower, Mumbai are found to be technically weak and needed to improve technically. The websites of ITC Maurya, Le Méridien New Delhi, Hyatt Regency Delhi and Hilton New Delhi are embellished with all the features to facilitate ease of contact and easy navigation. The websites of The Taj Mahal Palace & Tower Mumbai and The Oberoi Rajvilas Jaipur have uncluttered clear pages with clear text and high quality images to appeal the customers. The websites of The Ashok New Delhi, The Taj Mahal Palace & Tower Mumbai and Radisson Blu Resort Goa lack in certain features on effectiveness in marketing and thus suggested to improve global presence and fulfill information needs of global customers.

CONCLUSION

With the intensive competition amongst the hospitality players on Indian land, it has become imperative for the hotels to realign the marketing strategies strengthening their online presence to reach the global customers. The time is ripe to evaluate the performance of the websites to ensure their effectiveness. The studies on evaluation of the websites in Indian hotel landscape are quite few and thus the present study may help the hotel management to improve the performance of their websites by incorporating all the suggested features and thus making their online presence stronger. It may also act as a framework for the future studies on the website evaluation in the hospitality industry. This study aims to evaluate the websites from ten renowned hotel chains in India in the business to Customer (B2C) framework. The modified balanced scorecard (BSC) approach is incorporated into the evaluation by taking into consideration four perspectives: technical, user friendly, marketing effectiveness, and site attractiveness. The set of 78 Critical Success factors is tailored based upon the extensive web search and previous scales with genuine

modifications and then website evaluation criteria representing these four perspectives is then used to examine the websites from ten renowned hotel chains. The majority of the websites from ten renowned hotel chains in India i.e. 8 on 10 score more than 75% on performance scale which asserts the presence of sufficient amount of features to be contributing towards website effectiveness. One website scores below seventy percent and needs improvement to get better result. The results of the study propose areas for website improvement so that the desired requisites are being met to achieve business goals. All hotels' websites are considered user-friendly and attractive. The technical perspective is identified as an area of improvement for most hotels alongside contemporary aspects of the marketing perspective, such as E-shopping, management of website and being multi-lingual to cater to global customers.

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Content Analysis of Tripadvisor Reviews on Restaurants: A Case Study of Macau

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Abstract

With the emergence of Web 2.0 and user-generated contents, the electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) effects have become gigantic. Tourism and hospitality practitioners have been keeping an eye on eWOM to understand their firm's current position and competitive advantages. This study explored TripAdvisor, a consumer rating and review website, which reflects the dining experience in restaurants in Macau. English language online consumer reviews from TripAdvisor were selected and examined by content analysis and taxonomy. Simple frequency counts on the number of positive, negative and neutral comments were performed. 614 online reviews of 22 restaurants were carefully read. In cases of uncertainty or doubts in the written texts, a second person helped examine the questionable texts from an independent view so as to reduce personal biases. Empirical results showed that the overall customer satisfaction on the dining experience in Macau was positive. Interestingly, the expensive restaurants in Macau indicated a higher percentage of negative comments than the less expensive restaurants did. The content analysis revealed untapped stories and generally provided insights to service industry practitioners. For consumers, despite Macau's high living costs, one could still find good restaurants at reasonable prices.

Keywords: restaurant, dining, TripAdvisor, Macau, content analysis

INTRODUCTION

The conduct of business in tourism and hospitality industries has changed globally with the emergence of information technologies and computer networks, especially with the availability of a wide range of Internet applications (Buhalis & Law, 2008). The use of the Internet has evolved to a stage in which social networking has become a norm among users and communication has become multi-directional and instant (Cormode & Krishnamurthy, 2008). This phenomenon constitutes the concept of social media or Web 2.0. Laudon and Laudon (2014) characterised Web 2.0 as

having four distinct features, namely, "interactivity, real-time user control, social participation (sharing) and user-generated content". Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) defined social media as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content", by which is translated into unprecedented new opportunities and challenges in the current business environment. Hence, social networking sites have redefined the way people spend their time on the Web, more importantly on how business people maintain their connection with business partners, employees, suppliers and customers (Laudon & Laudon, 2014).

Tourism is an information-intensive industry (Doolin, Burgess, & Cooper, 2002). In the context of tourism and hospitality, the use of travel blogs, consumer rating and review sites have gained much attention from researchers in identifying the effects of this trend on the tourism business environment (Leung, Law, van Hoof, & Buhalis, 2013). The emergence of Web 2.0 that started the prevalence of user-generated content (UGC) has significantly changed the travel behaviours of people. Many individuals nowadays share their travel or dining experiences in rich and diversified contents (e.g., texts, photos and videos) on social media sites. As a consequence, an increasing number of people rely heavily on UGC for their travel plans (Ayeh, Au, & Law, 2013a), which establishes a powerful and ever-growing customer knowledge base being shared among Internet users worldwide. We have entered the digital era of Web 2.0 or even Web 3.0 that is often associated with the term "big data". McAfee and Brynjolfsson (2012) did not believe that big data is simply another marketing catchphrase, and they distinguished the term from "data analysis" by three non-trivial ways: large volume, high velocity and wide variety of collected data.

The objectives of this study are threefold. First, the study intends to provide an environmental scanning of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) for restaurants in Macau as a comprehensive "health check", thereby providing a summary of the qualities that the restaurants possess and lack. Second, new possible themes that diners have suggested are aimed to be identified aside from the dimensions pre-classified in a given social media site receiving consumer recommendations. Finally, the findings will determine whether expensive restaurants generally perform a better job towards achieving customer satisfaction than inexpensive restaurants do.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism and hospitality belong to the guest servicing industry, which requires skilled labour force to provide reliable and quality services to guests in each encounter. Customers and service providers are therefore equally important and closely connected with each other. Satisfied customers can translate to strong customer loyalty that is exhibited by frequent visits and positive "word of mouth" to others, which help firms in increasing their profit. By contrast, Machleit and Mantel (2001) mentioned that dissatisfied guests cause a decline in customer loyalty and a

more likely negative image being spread by the word of mouth.

Customers often look for information and advice from their interpersonal relationships and word-of-mouth (WOM) channels because one cannot easily evaluate tourism-related products and services without engaging in first-hand experience (Litvin, Goldsmith, & Pan, 2008). Fortunately, consumers immediately use the ever-growing cyberspace to share their experiences, which may be accessed by other people who utilise computer tools to process and extract useful insights from a variety of sources on the Internet. This branch of study is known as netnography (Mkono, Markwell, & Wilson, 2013). Netnography is an effective way to exchange utility and reduce uncertainty and perceived risks for other people, specifically travellers (Fotis, Buhalis, & Rossides, 2012; Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2012). Netnography uses the Internet as a virtual fieldwork site, which can be used partly to complement or substitute face-to-face interviews or surveys (Mkono, 2012). Parra-López, Bulchand-Gidumal, Gutiérrez-Taño and Díaz-Armas (2011) concluded that functional utilities, altruism and trust in other people can become incentives for individuals to contribute in social media. The electronic commerce technologies have helped magnify the unprecedented effects of WOM that have become known as eWOM effects (Stringam & Gerdes, 2010; Racherla, Connolly, & Christodoulidou, 2013). The powers of social media and eWOM are illustrated in Figure 1. To maintain competitiveness in the market, firms in the tourism and hospitality industry should not disregard the influence of the "WOM generating machine". Big data can be characterised by one more V, in addition to the 3 Vs depicted by McAfee and Brynjolfsson (2012): volume, velocity, variety and veracity (N. Au, personal communication, January 27, 2014). Veracity refers to the uncertainty of data accuracy ("The Four V's of Big Data", n.d.). Given that business firms have no control over UGC, not only should service providers monitor online discussions regarding an individual firm and its competitors, but must also promptly respond to customer complaints and/or address service failures for future encounters (He, Zha, & Li, 2013). For example, Casa Flamenco, an Australian restaurant, was forced to close in 2008 because of the inappropriate email response of the management to a criticism of a customer (Pantelidis, 2010). Therefore, hospitality service providers, including restaurateurs, should be aware and understand the effects of eWOM.

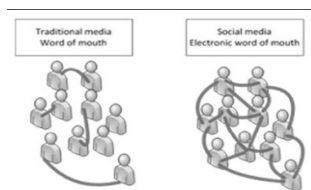


Figure 1:
Power of social media and eWOM

Numerous Web 2.0 e-commerce and m-commerce applications have been made available specifically for online consumer reviews. A few examples of Web 2.0 applications that enable consumers to rate and provide recommendations on tourism-related service providers include InsiderPages, PassportStamp, TravBuddy,

TripAdvisor, CouchSurfing and WAYN (Miguéns, Baggio, & Costa, 2008; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010; Ayeh, Au, & Law, 2013b). Regarding places to eat and dining experiences, Zagat, Yelp and Urbanspoon are currently the top three online platforms for restaurant ratings and diner reviews (Restaurant Website Reviews, 2014). The seamless integration between review sites and social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, hastens and renders the effects of eWOM as long-lasting.

TripAdvisor.com is claimed to be the largest site that provides candid consumer reviews, both in text form and photographs, on travel destinations, hotels and restaurants worldwide (TripAdvisor, 2014). Social media sites, meanwhile, do have limitations. Thus, consumer recommendations can be manipulated in social media sites to cite in favour of or against a particular service provider because of the anonymity of the online reviewers (O'Connor, 2008). Nevertheless, several tactics have been employed to prevent deceit in social media sites (Ott, Cardie, & Hancock, 2012). In addition, the authors had found that many online reviewers on TripAdvisor are not first-time reviewers but are long-time contributors of a large number of reviews. Therefore, the possibility of distortion of facts to influence public opinions is low. Furthermore, Ayeh, Au and Law (2013b) asserted the credibility and trustworthiness of TripAdvisor as a UGC platform. Based on the reports of the previously mentioned studies, this study uses TripAdvisor as the main secondary data source.

The concept of servicescape can be applied to any hospitality firm, such as a hotel, casino, restaurant, retail shop and spa parlour, where customers spend their time and money for hedonic reasons. In this study, servicescape is viewed from a restaurant setting, representing physical or built environment (Bitner, 1992). Besides the spatial layout and the fixtures and fittings, other dimensions, such as interior decoration, temperature, light, air quality, noise, music, crowdedness and cleanliness, are used to assess the overall consumer experience in a servicescape (Bitner, 1992; Su, 2011). In TripAdvisor, the four existing dimensions used to rate restaurants are food, service, value and atmosphere.

Previous studies that examined eWOM of Macau as a tourist destination are scarce, particularly those relayed by English-language media (Choi, Lehto, & Morrison, 2007). Law and Cheung (2010) extracted the perceptions of users from their blogs about Hong Kong as a perceived travel destination. Previous studies that examined the consumer reviews of TripAdvisor on destinations and hotels were mostly from the academia (e.g., García-Barriocanal, Sicilia, & Korfiatis, 2010; Lee, Law, & Murphy, 2011). Neutral comments (e.g., neutral adjectives) were highly observed, but were not classified or reported in previous studies. Therefore, this study attempts to extract neutral comments, in addition to positive and negative ones, to identify trends and patterns in reviews. Moreover, a number of restaurants had long been established in Macau, typically for more than 20 years without changes in ownership. Therefore, aside from the content analysis of online consumer reviews, the authors intend to gather opinions from local experts (e.g., a senior relative or an old-timer in Macau) regarding their personal perceptions on specific restaurants.

Determining WOM is important and can be used to validate the information provided on the Internet. This information is known as localised or indigenous knowledge that is important in maintaining competitive advantages regardless of its implicit and discrete nature (Maskell & Malmberg, 1999). Therefore, WOM adds value and uniqueness to this study.

METHODOLOGY

Data collection

This study uses secondary data and follows a content analysis approach. Consumer reviews, both texts and photos, from TripAdvisor.com on restaurants in Macau are carefully examined. Given the big data and the four V characteristics to determine in the reviews, a cut-off date is set in obtaining a snapshot of the consumers' recommendations, as required by this empirical study. On 1 March 2014, all TripAdvisor reviews on the restaurants in Macau were retrieved and grouped according to four price categories: (a) \$-priced: fast food or self-service, (b) \$\$-priced: casual or sit-down service, (c) \$\$\$-priced: formal dining and (d) \$\$\$\$-priced: most expensive or service for special occasions. All TripAdvisor reviews without price category were discarded. The collected reviews should reflect current and candid opinions of the diners. Several languages were used in the reviews, such as English, Chinese, Japanese, Portuguese and Russian. Non-English reviews were excluded because the authors felt more comfortable in reading and writing English language articles so as to avoid possible misinterpretation of the non-English ones. The price category requires user inputs or "cost per person (excluding drinks, tax or tip)" in TripAdvisor, during the writing of the review by the user.

DATA ANALYSIS

TripAdvisor uses a five-point scale (i.e., terrible, poor, average, very good and excellent) for restaurant ratings. This five-point scale applies to each of the four dimensions, namely, food, service, value and atmosphere. This study does not focus on the numerical ratings because such quantitative variables are defined and explicit. By contrast, this study explored the Internet virtual space in terms of people, situations, emotional feelings, processes and the interconnections among these elements (Maxwell, 2013). The authors read the consumer reviews prior to 1 March 2014, which is the cut-off date.

This study adopts the definition of a review as an unstructured, but complete text distributed into a series of complete sentences called comments by individual online reviewers. A full stop is "a point (.) that marks the end of a sentence..." ("Full stop [Def. 1]", n.d.). Therefore, individual comments are evident regardless of the lengths of the paragraphs. Each comment can be categorised as positive, negative and/or neutral. Each comment can be assigned to one or more categories with a specific attribute (see Figure 2). Neutral adjectives or descriptions are often associated with the fact that consumers may not have a strong feeling towards a

particular item being evaluated (Law & Cheung, 2010). Therefore, this study applies the definition of "neutrality" from Law and Cheung (2010). Relevant facts (e.g., "the pizza we ordered is big enough for the three of us to share" and "it has a lot of vegetables in the dish") are attributed to neutral comments. If a diner has an average rating to some qualities stated in a given comment (e.g., "the food tasted ok, but definitely did not have the 'wow factor' as commented by some other reviewers" and "the ambiance is romantic but the lights are too dark"), then the comment is considered a neutral one. By contrast, some comments can be mapped to more than one attribute. For example, the comment "the food served is consistently good and the prices are reasonable" is scored as "+1" in Positive Food and "+1" in Positive Value. Each attribute is tallied according to the guidelines listed in Table 1.

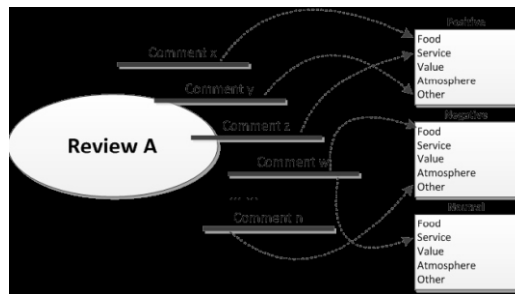


Figure 2: Taxonomy of consumer comments

Attribute	Sub-attributes	Rationale
Food	Meals, snacks, wines, desserts, variety of choices, portion size, safety, temperature, smell	No comprehensive items can be adopted to suit all comments
Service	Attitude, efficiency, helpfulness, host-guest interaction	(King, 1995)
Value	Prices on food and wine, comparative prices, discounts and compliments	(Haemoon, 2000)
Atmosphere	Ambiance, interior decoration, view, lights, music, TV, spatial layout, surrounding environment, special events, performers	(Bitner, 1992; Su, 2011)
Other	Unclassified, miscellaneous	(Law & Cheung, 2010)

This study also used NVivo 10 as a tool for analyses. NVivo is a computer-aided qualitative data analysis software program that enables a researcher to search, count or index specific or similar words across multiple text documents (Cavana, Delahaye, & Sekaran, 2001; Veal, 2011). The software package comes with some basic *Query* functions in which *Text Search* and *Word Frequency* can be performed (NVivo, 2012). The analytical tools can help expedite the review process to determine which major themes or topics have been repeatedly opined by online reviewers. Such themes can indicate useful patterns of user comments, such as the qualities of a restaurant that diners look for and discuss the most. The newly found themes can become useful knowledge for restaurateurs.

VALIDITY CHECKS

While the content analysis is subjective, the authors invite a person (bilingual in English and Chinese languages and a master's degree holder) to proofread comments with high degrees of uncertainty on the lexical meaning or to clarify on a questionable mood of an individual consumer. The participation of another person can help reduce individual bias. In addition, the second person can randomly pick a sample of comments for cross-checking. When a story (i.e., comment) about a restaurant is deemed unbelievable, the authors use a Macau-based restaurant review website (e.g., FoodIdea, OpenRice) to better understand the situation by reviewing discussions. In addition, the authors may consult with a family member or a friend for their candid opinions on a particular restaurant. Indigenous knowledge (from local people) is often useful to verify the trustworthiness of some stories told online. All these methods can help ensure accuracy in reporting and increase the reliability of this study.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results of this study that examined the dining experience in restaurants of Macau, as revealed in TripAdvisor, are reported in the following sequence: (a) frequency counting of positive, negative and neutral comments, (b) fast food, self-service, (c) casual, sit-down service, (d) formal dining and (e) most expensive, special occasions. Uncategorised themes were observed and categorised as "Other".

614 online reviews of 22 restaurants were analysed following the taxonomic review process in Figure 2 and the guidelines in Table 1. Both frequency counts and percentages are shown for clarity. The collected data represented the recent and relevant consumer recommendations for restaurants in Macau. The complete summary is listed in Table 2. Overall, positive comments on Macau's restaurants greatly outnumbered the neutral and negative comments combined in all four price categories.

Table 2: Summary of simple frequency counts

(Remark: Some percentages do not add to 100% because of rounding-off errors)
New possible themes were identified. New themes that were repeatedly opined include the following: location, business hours, tipping and service charges, brand name and early booking, all of which were beyond the pre-determined dimensions used in TripAdvisor. Moreover, well-travelled consumers tended to make comparisons on two or more dining experiences, usually under the same brand name but across different countries or cities. Furthermore, two notable owners were

Categories	Positive Comments		Negative Comments		Neutral Comments	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
\$	208	82%	31	12%	16	6%
Food	93	90%	8	8%	2	2%
Service	48	98%	1	2%	0	0%
Value	14	74%	5	26%	0	0%
Atmosphere	30	97%	1	3%	0	0%

Other	23	43%	16	30%	14	26%
\$\$	652	75%	58	7%	161	18%
Food	339	79%	21	5%	71	16%
Service	123	84%	10	7%	13	9%
Value	61	65%	9	10%	24	25%
Atmosphere	116	83%	7	5%	17	12%
Other	13	22%	11	18%	36	60%
\$\$\$	390	82%	35	7%	51	11%
Food	155	86%	18	10%	7	4%
Service	100	88%	8	7%	6	5%
Value	21	46%	8	17%	17	37%
Atmosphere	70	93%	0	0%	5	7%
Other	44	72%	1	2%	16	26%
\$\$\$\$	580	69%	119	14%	141	17%
Food	279	81%	29	8%	37	11%
Service	142	71%	39	20%	19	10%
Value	41	36%	22	19%	50	44%
Atmosphere	88	81%	12	11%	9	8%
Other	30	41%	17	23%	26	36%

encountered in this study. Their personalities and management styles were extremely different. Direct comments on restaurant owners' charisma and personalities were not expected, and thus, as a result, they were also identified as a new theme. Therefore, the two restaurants were chosen for the comparison (see Table 3).

Table 3: Comparison between two restaurants owned by two notable owners

	XYZ (pseudonym)	O Santos
Cuisine	Portuguese	Portuguese
Years of establishment	More than 20 years	More than 20 years
Style	Family-style	Family-style
Location	Near city centre	At a town centre of an outlying island
Food uniqueness	Authentic	Authentic
Attitude of owner	Friendly to acquaintances, civil to other customers	Warm and friendly to all customers

On November 2013, a Macau reviewer wrote the following comment:

I went to XYZ after a long absence. Nothing has changed, for the better or for the worse. The food is still good, the portions are still big, the place is still shabby, the.....waiter still has no manners at all and business is still good - nevertheless.

An old-timer in Macau verbally commented, "That restaurant gets too expensive and the boss is self-important" (J. Leão, personal communication, May 3, 2014). XYZ restaurant obviously has its own speciality and winning formulas as well as a group of customers who remain loyal and repeatedly visit. By contrast, Mr Santos, the owner of O Santos, has become a semi-public figure because of his popularity and exposure in social media sites.

CONCLUSION

Implications

This empirical study found that Macau's restaurants generally received a high percentage of positive comments in the four traditional dimensions: food, service, value and atmosphere. When it comes to the uncategorised dimension, the percentage of negative and neutral comments became much higher. In order to provide higher customer satisfaction in this competitive industry, restaurateurs need to find ways to uncover what has been said from those newly identified dimensions and to respond strategically to remedy some of the deficiencies. This study also found that expensive restaurants in Macau did not yield high customer satisfaction. Small cafes in Macau, however, often yielded better results in terms of the percentage of positive comments. Product quality, uniqueness and the knowledgeable, passionate and amicable qualities of the restaurateur were often the "good surprises" expressed in the consumer comments on the small cafes, and such qualities are often the keys to success in the competitive market.

The comparison between the two Portuguese restaurants and their owners impose an interesting question. Do the charisma and management style of individual restaurateurs contribute to differences in business results? Or, whether remembering and following the old rule – "food is king" (Pantelidis, 2010) – makes it sufficient to run a successful restaurant requires further investigation, with the aid of direct observations and interviews.

The GDP per capita of Macau is one of the highest in the world ("The World Bank", 2014). Thus, good restaurants with good value for money can be found in Macau, which is great news for value-savvy customers, comprising both local residents and tourists. High-end restaurants do not readily yield high customer satisfaction because well-travelled customers are already exposed to diverse food qualities and prices offered from other places in the world, which become their bases for comparison. Nevertheless, some smaller restaurants are still popular for providing good food and good services at reasonable prices.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH POSSIBILITIES

The review process is manual and mechanical. Future studies may explore the use of a computer program to parse massive online consumer reviews in an efficient manner. This automatic text parsing capability can convert a small-scale research project to a full-scale one.

Human counting errors may have occurred during the review process. Moreover, the interpretations of some sentences may have been highly subjective, resulting in the difficulty in distinguishing between positive and neutral or between negative and neutral. In addition, non-English reviews were excluded. TripAdvisor reviews in Asian languages, such as Chinese and Japanese, can potentially provide more useful insights to the overall analysis. For non-English reviews, the built-in Google Translate function in TripAdvisor.com may be useful in translating the original text

to the English language for content analysis. Moreover, the extraction of data did not identify any Chinese/Cantonese restaurant under the four price categories.

In the future, online English comments on Chinese cuisine restaurants in Macau can be included for a more comprehensive study. For further studies related to social media and Macau, two related areas can be explored, namely, (a) the perceived destination image of Macau as revealed by TripAdvisor and (b) content analysis on user-generated photographs and videos of Macau.

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Comparative content analysis of visual images on shopping festival websites: The case of Dubai Shopping Festival and Grand Kerala Shopping Festival

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Abstract

Shopping festivals have been developed to cultivate a destination image by becoming a point of reference for tourists. This study proposes to augment the understanding of the use of images of shopping festivals in building the destination image, in an online environment. Websites of two shopping festivals- Dubai Shopping Festival and Grand Kerala Shopping Festival were content analyzed in terms of images. The findings suggest that while the Dubai Shopping Festival website projects an integrated image to visitors, the Grand Kerala Shopping Festival projects only destination attributes. The study will be of interest to Destination Marketing Organisations who seek to promote shopping festivals.

Keywords: Destination image, Destination marketing, Online marketing, Shopping festival

INTRODUCTION

The choice of a destination available to tourists worldwide increases every year. It is in light of this fact; an effective destination 'positioning' strategy becomes necessary. A crucial element of this positioning process is the creation and management of a distinctive and appealing destination image. The tourism industry is information intensive and the interactive nature of the internet can be used by the Destination Marketing Organisations (DMO) in projecting a destination image (Govers, Go & Kumar, 2007).

A destination image is an overall impression of a place (Li, Pan, Zhang & Smith, 2009) and is defined as "an attitudinal concept consisting of the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a tourist holds of a destination" (Crompton, 1979). It is also understood as a multidimensional construct encompassing the cognitive and affective dimensions (Lawson & Band-Bovy, 1977). The cognitive component

comprises of the beliefs and knowledge of the physical attributes of a destination, and the affective component denotes the affective quality of the feelings towards the attributes and the surrounding environments (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). A destination image plays an important role in understanding brands and branding strategies, destination preference, visit intention (Cai, 2002). A destination image should be based on destination identity. Tourism products have been used to create identities and place authenticity (Cohen 1988). These products and the way they are communicated should be in line with the destination identity (Govers et al., 2007).

Shopping Festivals have come to be promoted as tourism products by the DMO, as they attract tourists and contribute to the local economy. There are presently 18 shopping festivals being organised by various destinations around the world. A few examples are Dubai Shopping Festival (DSF), Riyadh Festival for Shopping and Leisure, Qatar Summer Wonders, The Great Singapore Sale, Ankara Shopping Festival, Cannes Shopping Festival, Sharjah Spring Promotion, Magnificent Mile Shopping Festival (Chicago), Grand Kerala Shopping Festival (GKSF), Jaipur Shopping Festival, Amazing Thailand Grand Sale, Istanbul Shopping Festival and 1 Malaysia Year End Sale. The shopping festivals are actively promoted by DMO's using the internet, with the aim of positioning the destinations as shopping destinations.

Tourism is an information intensive activity (Gretzel, Yuan & Fesenmaier, 2000) and it is possible to argue that the importance of ICTs in the tourism industry (eTourism) is due to the purchase process (Werthner & Klein, 1999). However, the rise of the Internet as an information channel creates new opportunities for promotion and marketing strategies in the tourism industry (Buhalis & Law, 2008). The Internet has drastically transformed the distribution and marketing of tourism products. The aim of this research is to compare the websites of two shopping festivals- DSF and GKSF for their image representations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Destination image influences a tourist's decision process and travel behavior (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; Gallarza, Saura & Garcia, 2002; Rezende-Parker, Morrison & Ismail, 2003). It is understood as "a compilation of beliefs and impressions based on information processing from a variety of sources over time, resulting in an internally accepted mental construct representing attributes and benefits sought of a product/ destination (Crompton, 1979; Gartner, 1994; Gallarza et al., 2002; Choi, Lehto & Morrison, 2007). According to Echtner and Ritchie (1993), "holistic and unique images are particularly important in determining how a particular destination is categorized (stereotype holistic impressions) and differentiated (unique attractions, auras) in the minds of the targeted markets."

Destination images have been classified as being organic and induced (Gunn, 1988). Organic images are formed from unbiased sources and induced images arise from destination area itself. A destination image is formed by interrelated components:

cognitive, affective and conative (Gartner, 1994). Echtner and Ritchie (1991, 1993) proposed a three dimensional continuum of destination image; functionalpsychological, attributesholistic, and commonunique.

The Internet has become an important medium in tourism marketing (O'Connor & Murphy, 2004; Oh, Kim & Shin, 2004). Various stakeholders such as hotels (Scharlr, Wöber & Bauer, 2003; Baloglu & Pekcan, 2006) airlines (Chu, 2001) travel agencies (Özturan & Roney, 2004), convention and visitors bureaus (Yuan, Gretzel & Fesenmaier, 2003) and other destination marketing organizations (Doolin, Burgess & Cooper, 2002) use the internet as a promotion medium, as the internet provides more comprehensive and richer content compared with conventional promotional agents (Govers & Go, 2003; Stepchenkova & Morrison, 2006). Studies have also shown that government tourism websites tend to place greater emphasis on a destination's image (Govers & Go, 2004; Choi et al., 2007). Websites also influence the attitudes towards products (Lee, Gretzel & Law, 2010). In the wake of the abundance of online information available to tourists, websites can be used to create attitudes resistant to change (Lee & Gretzel, 2012). Gretzel and Fesenmaier (2003) argue that, in order to improve future tourism marketing strategies, sensory tourism information should be communicated, either through new emerging technologies such as virtual tours (possibly incorporating the development of sensors for taste, smell, and touch) or using traditional forms such as metaphors and narratives. Narratives about places are the basis for creating destination image and are enhanced by photographic material.

RESEARCH CONTEXT

GRAND KERALA SHOPPING FESTIVAL

Since declaring tourism as an industry in 1986, Kerala has successfully established itself as a tourism brand on the international stage. In 1986 the number of foreign tourist arrivals was around 50,000 and the foreign exchange earnings were just \$ 2,644,410. The year 2012 saw those figures rise to 793,000 foreign tourist arrivals and foreign exchange earnings of Rs. 4,548 cr. Kerala has been named by National Geographic Traveler Magazine as one of the top ten paradises of the world and one of the fifty must see destinations of a lifetime (McKibben, 1999). Backwater tourism and Ayurveda gave the Kerala tourism industry international recognition. The state expects foreign tourist arrivals to grow by 15% annually to reach 2.6 million foreign tourist arrivals by the year 2021. Domestic tourist arrivals were around 10.7 million in 2012 but the Kerala tourism department anticipates this figure to grow by 7% annually over the next decade which will result in 18 million domestic tourists visiting Kerala in 2021 (Kerala Tourism Policy, 2011). The Kerala government envisages a very aggressive strategy to advance the growth of tourism related activities in the state. It is in furtherance of this mission that they conceived the Grand Kerala Shopping Festival is an annual shopping event in Kerala. The festival is conducted by Tourism Department in co-ordination with the Industries &

Commerce Department, Finance Department and Local Self Government Department. The Kerala Government, through the GKSF, intends to transform the State into a hub for international shopping experience and promote "Shopping Tourism" in the state.

GKSF which first started in December 2007 lasts for a period of 45 days with an aim to promote and develop commerce, trade and industrial sector of Kerala using the brand value of Kerala Tourism. During this period stores and shops registered under the GKSF offer wide range of discounts, 100% Value Added Tax refunds to tourists from outside the state etc. Along with the guaranteed shopping experience, shoppers are provided with gift coupons for a fixed worth of purchase entering them into weekly and mega lucky draws.

The Government aims to utilize the growth in the tourism sector to develop the state as an international trade and tourism destination. As compared to shopping festivals being held in other countries, the GKSF converts the entire state of Kerala into a giant shopping mall, incorporating not just major players, but also the small and medium scale industries.

The seventh edition of the GKSF which began on December 22, 2013 aims to have more than 1,00,000 participants from a wide variety of sectors such as jewellery, electronic goods, textiles, consumer durables, automobiles, hotels, restaurants and shopping malls. The aim of the festival is to make Kerala an international shopping destination in the coming years on the lines of shopping festivals in Dubai and Singapore and thereby attract tourists in increasing numbers to the state.

DUBAI SHOPPING FESTIVAL

DSF is organised by the DMO the Dubai Events & Promotions Establishments (DEPE), an agency of the Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing, Government of Dubai. DSF as a month-long annual festival was flagged off in 1996 with a view to revitalize the retail sector, but has since been promoted as a tourist attraction. The 19th edition of DSF began on January 2, 2014. The festival aims at providing entertainment along with shopping and raffle promotions.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS

This is a descriptive study. The primary data was collected by manual observation of images from the official websites of the shopping festivals, GKSF and DSF. The websites considered for the purpose of data collection were: <https://www.shoppingfestival.in> and www.mydsf.ae respectively.

A total of 1602 usable images were downloaded from the websites. A maximum number of three links deep from the websites' homepages was downloaded to hard disk, following only links within the same website. The images for the GKSF however were drawn from the link to the Kerala Tourism website provided on the shopping festival website. Content analysis of motif was performed at three levels as suggested by Sternberg (1997): first, identification of the actual objects (setting up

what is staged); second, identifying the arrangement (which objects are shown together, or clustering); and third identifying the contextualization (or the surrounding context).

In the first instance, all the motifs appearing in every image were listed. Then, with each image being a case, for each object a separate dichotomous variable was created in SPSS to indicate if the specific object appeared in the picture or not (0 = no, 1 = yes). This allowed for measurement of the mean and frequency. The arrangements were then identified in the context of the focal theme, which they represented, based on the researcher's interpretation.

FINDINGS

Table 1: Summary of Content Analysis of Images- DSF

Motif	Frequency (% of Images in which Motif appears)	Arrangement (Average No. of Motifs in Images that include this Motif)	Contextualization Context in which Motifs appear
Officials	8.7	0.087	Shopping Festival - Stakeholder
Event	5.1	0.051	Shopping Festival -Event
Intl Cuisine	0.8	0.008	Attraction
Local Dance	0.3	0.003	Culture
Shopping Venue	4.8	0.048	Shopping - Environment
Shoppers	7.9	0.079	Shopping - Experience
Products	10.7	0.107	Shopping - Products
Local people	6	0.060	Folk
Restaurant	23.1	0.231	Hospitality
Souks	2.7	0.027	Heritage
Hotel Interior	8.8	0.068	Hospitality
Camels	3	0.030	Wildlife
Desert	0.8	0.008	Nature
Conference	2	0.020	Hospitality
Spa	0.2	0.002	Leisure/Recreation
Discotheque	2.4	0.024	Leisure/Recreation
Places to visit	3.4	0.034	Attractions
Hotel staff	30.5	0.305	Hospitality
Limousine	0.4	0.004	Leisure/Recreation
Family	0.7	0.007	Fraternity
Tourist/ Visitor	18.7	0.187	Experience
Souvenirs	20.3	0.204	Shopping - Products

Dhow	1.2	0.012	Attractions
Museum	4.4	0.044	Heritage
Local Buildings	6	0.060	Landscape
Sea	2.9	0.029	Beach
Garden	4.3	0.043	Landscape
Karao ke	0.1	0.001	Leisure/Recreation
Skiing	3.3	0.033	Adventure Sports
Indoor sports	0.1	0.001	Sports
Swimming pool	0.2	0.020	Leisure/Recreation
Outdoor sports	0.8	0.008	Sports
City	3.3	0.033	Landscape
Retailers	18.2	0.182	Shopping Festival - Stakeholder
Game zone(Malls)	1.2	0.012	Leisure/Recreation
Sale	5.5	0.055	Shopping Festival – Promotions
Aquarium	33.8	0.038	Attractions
Heritage buildings	2.4	0.024	Heritage
Horse Racing	1.1	0.011	Leisure/Recreation
Water slides	1.7	0.017	Attractions
Golf course	1.4	0.014	Leisure/Recreation
Raffle	0.6	0.006	Shopping Festival - Promotions
Sky diving	0.3	0.003	Adventure Sports
Café	1.1	0.011	Leisure/Recreation
Water sports	2.1	0.021	Sports
Sea	0.2	0.002	Beach
Dates	0.3	0.003	Culture
Falcon	0.4	0.004	Wildlife
Local Spice	0.4	0.004	Culture
Local food	1.2	0.012	Culture
Yatch	8.4	0.084	Leisure/Recreation
Play area	0.6	0.006	Leisure/Recreation
4x4	0.2	0.002	Attractions
Quad bike	0.5	0.005	Attractions
Big Bus	0.1	0.000	Attractions
Park	0.7	0.007	Landscape
Metro	1	0.010	Transportation
Metro station	1.6	0.016	Transportation
Marathon	1.2	0.012	Sports

Winners	1.2	0.012	Shopping Festival – Experience
Formula 1	1.6	0.016	Leisure/Recreation
Arts exhibition	0.1	0.001	Leisure/Recreation
Cinema	1.4	0.014	Leisure/Recreation
Dolphin	0.9	0.000	Attractions
Camel rides	0.9	0.000	Attractions
Hair styling	0.9	0.009	Fashion
Indoor Rock Climbing	0.6	0.006	Adventure Sports
City View	0.8	0.000	Landscape
Mosque	0.1	0.008	Culture
Sky Scraper	1.5	0.015	Landscape
SF Street lighting	0.2	0.002	Shopping Festival- Atmosphere
Handicrafts	3.5	0.049	Art/Craft
Palm Trees	1.9	0.021	Nature
Sunset	3.8	0.039	Nature
Hotel Exterior	2.1	0.021	Amenities
Skyline	3.9	0.039	Landscape
Fire works	0.1	0.001	Shopping Festival- Atmosphere

Table 2: Summary of Content Analysis of Images- GKSF

Motif	Frequency (% of Images in which Motif appears)	Arrangement (Average No. of Motifs in Images that include this Motif)	Contextualization Context in which Motifs appear
Officials	1.5	0.015	Shopping Festival - Stakeholder
Temple Festival, Boat race	13.5	0.135	Destination- Event
Houseboat/ Kettuvellam	11.3	0.113	Amenities, Lifestyle
Fishing	0.5	0.005	Lifestyle
Chinese Fishing net	1.5	0.012	Lifestyle
Backwaters	16.5	0.015	Nature
Ayurvedic products	23	0.165	Wellness
Local Dance	4.8	0.230	Culture
Local people	23.3	0.048	Folk
Fauna	5.5	0.233	Wildlife

Daily Life	10.8	0.055	Lifestyle
Places to visit	0.7	0.018	Attractions
Cruise Liner	0.5	0.007	Leisure/ Recreation
Tourist/ Visitor	4.5	0.005	Experience
Museum	3	0.045	Heritage
Village	0.2	0.030	Lifestyle
Sea	4.8	0.002	Beach
Heritage buildings	1.2	0.000	Heritage
Para Gliding	1.7	0.012	Adventure sports
Water sports		0.017	Sports
City Street	13.8	0.013	Landscape
Church, Mosque, Temple, Synagogue	7.3	0.002	Culture
Coconut trees	6.3	0.073	Nature
Sunset	1.2	0.063	Nature
Hotel Exterior	1.3	0.012	Amenities

Table 1 and 2 lists the results of the content analysis according to motifs, arrangement and contextualization of the images. The DSF website primarily focused on Destination attributes of Hospitality (Hotel staff- 30.5%, Restaurant- 23.1%) and Attraction (aquarium- 33.8%). Tourists appeared in 18.7% of the images, emphasizing on the experiential nature of the shopping festival/destination. In terms of the images on shopping festival, the prime focus was on Souvenirs (20.3%), Retailers (18.2%), Products (10.7%), Officials (8.7%) and Shoppers (7.9%).

The GKSF website focused on promoting the destination, rather than the shopping festival itself. This is in part due to the linking of the shopping festival website with the Kerala Tourism website. In terms of the shopping festival, images pertaining to only the officials (1.5%) were noted. The other images focused on the different destination attributes- wellness (23%), Folk (23.3%), Nature (Backwater-16.5%), Destination Events (13.5%) and Amenities and lifestyle (Houseboat-11.3%).

CONCLUSION

A destination's identity is reflected in its tourism product and the way it is communicated (Gretzel & Fesenmaier, 2003). Results indicate that the DSF website aims at promoting Dubai as a shopping destination, while also promoting culture and heritage of the destination. It thus presents an integrated image of the destination, that of a shopping destination emphasizing on its traditions, yet providing state-of-the-art amenities and a holistic experience to its visitors. GSKF, contrary to DSF emphasizes only on the destination attributes. It should redesign the content available on the website so that visitors seeking images are not redirected

to the tourism website where they will be taken away from the theme of shopping. In seeking to promote itself as a shopping destination in India, the DMO should focus more on shopping festival attributes like products, retailers and souvenirs.

With tourists having greater access to information and with increasing destination options, it is imperative to create Websites which would help tourists learn about the products and destination. Tourism marketers should help tourists form positive attitude about the products and the destination. The findings of this study will help tourism marketers promoting shopping festivals in designing their websites.

In a highly competitive tourism marketplace, DMOs continue to develop strategies to craft a unique identity that is appealing to the tourist. Shopping festivals enable DMOs to use that tourism product to create an additional point of reference for tourists seeking to form an image of the destination. The successful execution of such efforts by the DMO will depend on its ability to portray the destination from a holistic perspective.

This study considered only content analysis of images. Future research can include analyzing texts and websites of other shopping festivals to be able to benchmark the best practices in the industry. Other induced image channels such as tour operators, shopping festival brochures, and advertisements can be further analyzed about their role in destination image.

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Smart Tourism Challenges

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Abstract

This paper defines smart tourism as tourism supported by integrated efforts at a destination to find innovative ways to collect and aggregate/harness data derived from physical infrastructure, social connections, government/organizational sources and human bodies/minds in combination with the use of advanced technologies to transform that data into enhanced experiences and business value-propositions with a clear focus on efficiency, sustainability and enriched experiences during the trip. It delineates smart tourism from general e-tourism and describes the experience smart tourists are expected to have at smart destinations. The paper then discusses a series of challenges currently neglected in the practical smart tourism agendas and the academic literature.

Keywords: smart tourism, e-tourism, tourism experience, privacy, infrastructure, digital ecosystem, digital footprint

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INTRODUCTION

There is increasing evidence of a technological shift in tourism that has been coined "smart tourism". Especially in Asia but also in Europe, smart tourism has become a buzzword and a strategic priority for tourism development. Destinations like China, Spain and South Korea are investing heavily in smart tourism-related projects. Suddenly everything has become "smart", which raises definitional questions and calls for better conceptualization of the phenomenon. In particular, the question of if and how smart tourism differs from the concept of e-tourism is an important one to answer. Further, discussions of smart tourism have been highly optimistic and often utopian. A critical look at challenges associated with smart tourism is therefore warranted.

Based on discussions held during a workshop session at the ENTER 2015 conference on Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism in Lugano on February 6, 2015, this paper offers a definition of smart tourism, tries to delineate it clearly from e-tourism, and provides insights on the challenges identified by e-tourism/smart tourism experts. It therefore seeks to make an important contribution to the growing academic literature on smart tourism by providing theoretical foundations and also hopes to guide policy development and smart tourism investments.

DEFINING SMART TOURISM

Smart tourism is a phenomenon firmly grounded in technology. Therefore, the first step in attempting to define it is to describe smart technology. Smart technology is a summary term for specific technologies and technology-driven phenomena that provide data and connectivity in ways that were not possible before. Sensor technology lies at the heart of smart technology but ubiquitous wi-fi, near-field communication (NFC), smart phones/mobile connectivity, radio-frequency-identification (RFID) and sophisticated datawarehouses and data mining algorithms are also considered vital to creating a smart technology infrastructure. According to Washburn et al. (2010), smart technology encompasses a variety of smart computing technologies that integrate hardware, software, and network technologies to provide real-time awareness of the real world and advanced analytics to help people make more intelligent decisions about alternatives, as well as actions that will optimize business processes and business performances. Höjer and Wangel (2015) argue that it is not so much the individual technological advances but rather the interconnection, synchronization and concerted use of different technologies that constitutes smartness.

In many ways, smart technology depends on the foundations laid by Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 technologies. A lot of the information that makes tourism "smart" stems from interactions supported by social media and takes advantage of cloud computing that emerged with Web 2.0. To some extent, one can argue that smart tourism is a direct extension of e-Tourism, as far as the underlying technologies are concerned. A main difference lies in the fact that smart technology allows for new levels of connectivity, including connections between physical objects. Smart technology realizes the vision of ambient intelligence and ubiquitous computing. Implementing the Internet of Things (IoT) is a tangible goal for smart tourism projects. Thus, integrating Web infrastructure with physical infrastructure is a defining characteristic for smart tourism. In this aspect it marks a clear departure from e-tourism, which was focused on connecting businesses with consumers and consumers with consumers through the Web, harvesting information, making information available and searchable, as well as facilitating electronic transactions. E-tourism is about digital connections; smart tourism is about connecting the physical with the digital.

Another element of smart tourism is the smart destination. Its meaning is directly derived from the literature on smart cities. Lopez de Avila (2015, n.p.) defines the smart tourism destination as:

"an innovative tourist destination, built on an infrastructure of state-of-the-art technology guaranteeing the sustainable development of tourist areas, accessible to everyone, which facilitates the visitor's interaction with and integration into his or her surroundings, increases the quality of the experience at the destination, and improves residents' quality of life".

Efficiency and sustainability are critical drivers of the smart city movement. Big data and open data, sensors embedded in city infrastructure like public transport and utilities, free wi-fi and mobile connectivity are central to developing technological applications within smart city frameworks. The smart destination is an extension of the smart city in that it also includes the touristic infrastructure, e.g. attractions, tour busses, etc.

Gretzel, Werthner, Koo and Lamsfus (2015) further argue that smart business networks form an integral part of the smart tourism system. Together with the destination and the smart technology infrastructure, they form a smart tourism ecosystem. Smart tourists that use their personal technologies to tap into the resources of this smart tourism ecosystem and also actively contribute data through their movements, queries and content uploads are also included as key species in the ecosystem, among other players such as government, residents and media. Gretzel et al. (2015) define the smart tourism ecosystem as a tourism system that takes advantage of smart technology in creating, managing and delivering intelligent touristic services/experiences and is characterized by intensive information sharing and value co-creation. Collecting, processing and exchanging tourism-relevant data is a core function within the smart tourism ecosystem (Zhang, 2012).

Taking all the above into account, Gretzel, Sigala, Xiang and Koo (2015:8) define smart tourism as *tourism supported by integrated efforts at a destination to find innovative ways to collect and aggregate/harness data derived from physical infrastructure, social connections, government/organizational sources and human bodies/minds in combination with the use of advanced technologies to transform that data into enhanced experiences and business value-propositions with a clear focus on efficiency, sustainability and enriched experiences during the trip.*

SMART TOURISM EXPERIENCES

The shared purpose of all actors in a smart tourism ecosystem is the availability of enhanced/enriched, high-value, meaningful and sustainable tourism experiences (Buhalis & Amaranggana, 2014). Smart tourism experiences are achieved through personalization, context-awareness and real-time monitoring (Buhalis & Amaranggana, 2015). Neuhofer, Buhalis and Ladkin (2015) identify information aggregation, ubiquitous connectedness and real-time synchronization as the major

drivers of smart tourism experiences. Gretzel (2014) describes smart tourism experiences as having a technological base in that they are enhanced through smart technology (coupled with wi-fi/mobile connectivity) and big data. These two basic components allow for context-driven recommendations that add value to the experience. Ultimately, however, the smart tourism experience is about meaning that is co-created through the interaction with smart technology and the wider smart tourism ecosystem, predominantly while traveling (Figure 1). In this respect the smart tourism experience can be distinguished from the e-tourism experience, which is more focused on value creation and the sharing of meaningful experiences rather than value/meaning co-creation and also supports the pre- and post-trip phases better than the actual experiences at the destination.

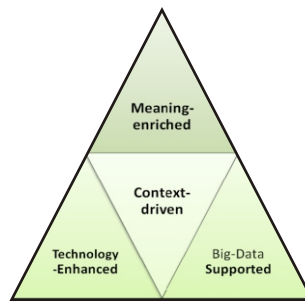


Figure 1. Dimensions of the Smart Tourism Experience (adapted from Gretzel, 2014)

SMART TOURISM CHALLENGES

The discussions at the workshop resulted in a series of challenges identified as critical to the future realization of smart tourism. One of the most important issues discussed was the fact that the smart tourism experience is the pinnacle of an extensive technological pyramid consisting of services derived from applications, which depend on software and hardware and access to communication networks/the cloud. It depends on tourists having smart devices that can run these applications in order to deliver smart services. This digital ecosystem is further highly dependent on access to power. It is not only the smart city that has to think about the electric grid or individual power sources that have to support the functioning of the system but a smart destination also has to ensure its smart tourists have the battery power necessary to be able to actually engage with the smart tourism destination through their personal devices. The importance of battery power in the smart tourism ecosystem is evidenced by the city of Barcelona now offering USB ports for charging mobile phones in its bus shelters to support its smart tourism development efforts. In light of the sustainability goal, this becomes an especially tricky problem to tackle.

Another issue in the context of reliance on technology is that there will be a digital gap or maybe even digital exclusion and the question of what kind of experience the tourist without the necessary devices will have at the smart tourism destination has

to be answered. Some destinations like Korea try to make smart phones and mobile access widely and cheaply available to close the gap. On the other hand, it also has to be discussed whether all tourists necessarily want to have a smart tourism experience and what options they have to experience a destination outside of the smart tourism realm. Traveling outside of the network has become very difficult (Gretzel, 2010) and smart tourism makes it even more difficult to unplug and enjoy travel without digital devices. Besides looking at the extremes of non-access or the desire to escape technology, the question of whether a smart tourism ecosystem will/should accommodate different levels of technology use is a valid one.

Digital exclusion not only applies to consumers but also tourism providers. The smart tourism infostructure is complex and requires knowledge and investment. Smart city projects are funded by governments but to what extent they will also support a broader smart tourism industry development is questionable. With the question of investment also comes the question of control and responsibility for the infostructure and the data. This is tightly connected to trust and privacy concerns that are undoubtedly high for smart tourism. Much of smart tourism depends on tourists willingly providing data in return for context-awareness that enhances their tourism experiences. The digital footprint of a smart tourist is huge and data comes at a cost. Data management and sharing have to be institutionalised, which can be hard within a fragmented industry like tourism that is mostly based on micro-businesses. Tourism enterprises that are already lagging behind digital developments might fall even farther behind when smart tourism is implemented at their destinations. Necessary knowledge/technology transfer and training are currently not discussed in the context of smart tourism.

The smart tourism literature uncritically assumes an automatically enhanced tourism experience (Neuhofer et al., 2015). What is currently not talked about is the issue of potential cognitive overload and the effort required to navigate the smart destination landscape. Not all tourists have the skill or the will to constantly interact with information. Businesses will have to compete intensively for the scarce attention of the smart tourist. Further, being present in the moment and having an authentic experience might become difficult for smart tourists. However, the focus on co-creation and meaningful experiences simultaneously suggests that smart tourists will have a high motivation to process the information.

While the value that tourists derive from smart tourism experiences lies at the centre of smart tourism projects, it is not clear how tourism businesses will be able to monetize smart tourism. Being a mostly government-driven agenda, smart tourism business models have not been clearly articulated. Indeed, they are often not even mentioned. E-Tourism business models are built on facilitating transactions, providing web services and translating information into value propositions. Smart tourism requires physical investments and data sharing or harnessing open data while offering free access to apps and wi-fi. Mobile service providers are currently still benefiting from the need of tourists to connect while at a destination but with increasing availability of free wi-fi and ever more free apps and services available the

e-tourism business models become increasingly irrelevant. One of the opportunities for business value creation is big data but beyond the advertising models of Google and Facebook we are currently lacking viable alternatives.

CONCLUSION

Smart tourism is different from e-tourism but depends greatly on the digital infrastructure built by e-tourism. It adds to it a pervasive mobile connectivity and bridges the digital with the physical to create a new infostructure that spans across an entire destination. It takes co-creation and personalization of tourism experiences to a new level and actively tries to achieve efficiency and sustainability.

Smart tourism is on the political agenda of several destinations around the world and with ever cheaper sensor technology and advances in big data analytics promises to become a reality in many more tourism destinations. The above discussion aimed at outlining the practical challenges that come with such smart tourism developments and the great need for theoretical conceptualizations, critical analysis and empirical research to ensure that smart tourism actually translates into meaningful experiences for smart tourists and value creation for business networks embedded in the local communities.

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Evolving maturity of Malaysian Regional Tourism Organization websites: A longitudinal study using the extended model of Internet commerce adoption

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to study the evolving maturity of Malaysian Regional Tourism Organisations' (RTO) websites by using the extended Model of Internet Commerce Adoption (eMICA) developed by Burgess and Cooper (2000). The study compared the interactivity, functionality and features used in RTO Websites over a five year period from 2010 to 2015. This is a longitudinal study using passive primary data collected through structured observation of the websites. The results indicate the growing maturity of the RTO websites from low to moderate interactivity in 2010 to moderate to high interactivity in 2015. This study provides a way to assess the development of destination-wide eTourism in Malaysia by measuring the evolving maturity of its RTO websites.

Keywords: Malaysian tourism, Regional tourism organizations, website maturity, website interactivity

INTRODUCTION

Tourism and technology have become inextricably linked and are changing the way tourists gather travel and tourism information, and purchase tourism products. The tourism industry is among the pioneers to use the Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). These technologies enhance tourism distribution to an electronic marketplace where easy access to information and ubiquity is achieved and thus the interactivity of principals and consumers is enhanced (Buhalis, 1994). A primary result of interactivity is that firms have to move from addressing mass markets to addressing segments of one (Wind & Mahajan, 2001). Interactivity also allows for availability of information on demand, reciprocity in the exchange of information, customisation of content and real-time feedback (Häubl & Trifts, 2000). A resulting consequence is that firms need to recognise that marketing has

become customer-centric and that building strong relationships through effective customer management is key. In order to satisfy tourism demand and survive in the long term there is no choice but to incorporate technology and enhance the interactivity with the marketplace (Rach, 1997; WTO, 1998). The indications are that, over the years, tourism websites are constantly being made more interactive (WTO Business Council, 1999; Gretzel, Yuan, & Fesenmaier, 2000; Doolin, Burgess & Cooper, 2002; Burgess, Cooper, Alcock & Uppala, 2004. Anandkumar, 2007; Park & Gretzel, 2007; Lin, Zhou & Guo, 2009).

The purpose of this research is to compare the Malaysian Regional Tourism Organisations' (RTO) use of the Web through their websites over a five year period from 2010 to 2015. The approach involves applying an Internet commerce adoption metric developed by Burgess and Cooper (2000), the extended Model of Internet Commerce Adoption (eMICA). The findings of the study contribute to a better understanding of the evolving maturity of the RTO websites in terms of interactivity, functionality and features used in RTO Websites.

CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

The Internet environment has an interactive nature facilitating many-way communications between businesses and consumers. This is commonly mentioned as a major opportunity that enhances the value and quality of the relationships between these parties. While one-way messages that characterize broadcast communication usually produce very little timely and meaningful feedback, the interactive environment hosted by the Internet creates a continuous circle of communication and immediate response opportunity (Alba *et al.*, 1997; Deighton, 1996). Moving from simply broadcasting information to letting consumers interact with the website offers a unique customer experience. This experience is greatly enhanced when the websites offer interactivity (Gretzel *et al.*, 2000; Park & Gretzel, 2007).

In general, tourism products (for example, holiday packages) engage a higher level of involvement, intangibility and higher level of differentiation than other tangible consumer goods and therefore, are more easily sold through the Web (Bonn *et al.*, 1998). Marcussen (1999) suggested that services like tourism are ideal for selling over the internet since there are no transportation costs. The ease of description and commodity-like nature of many travel products (that is, airline seats or hotel rooms) also favour the development of electronic commerce (Lewis and Semeijn, 1998). Additionally, the structural elements of the industry also support a shift towards a more electronic means of carrying out transactions. Whereas other industries have held on to traditional processes, in the tourism industry the adoption of Internet commerce has been swift and comprehensive to such an extent that the structure of the industry is changing (Lewis and Semeijn, 1998; Gratzner and Winiwarter, 2003). As information is the life blood of tourism, ITs provide both opportunities and challenges for the industry (Buhalis, 1998).

In the Malaysian tourism scenario, Regional Tourism Organisations (RTOs) play a leading role. They are geographically based destination marketing organisations (DMOs) that form an important layer between the Federal government and the local tourism industry, potentially providing a coordinated marketing effort and acting as a portal for visitor access to tourism operators and service providers (Doolin, Burgess & Cooper, 2002). Malaysia has 16 RTOs comprising of 13 states and 3 Federal territories. They act as a bridge between tourism operators, national tourism corporation and the local and central governments. RTOs are also responsible for destination marketing - the promotion of their regions to potential domestic and international visitors. They vary widely in size, structure, and the scope of activities they undertake. RTOs are largely funded by the state governments. RTO websites are frequented by tourists for official, objective and credible information about the destination. The content of RTO websites is particularly important because it directly influences the perceived image of the destination and creates a virtual experience for the consumer. Among the many characteristics discussed earlier, interactivity in RTO websites can enhance the customer on-site experience. This research attempts to assess the evolving maturity of the RTO websites by evaluating the website interactivity over a span of time.

EXTENDED MODEL OF INTERNET COMMERCE ADOPTION

Commercial website development typically begins simply and evolves over time with the addition of more functionality and complexity as firms gain experience with Internet technologies (Poon & Swatman, 1999; Van Slyke, 2000). The eMICA model developed by Burgess and Cooper (2000) is based on this concept. The eMICA model consists of three stages, incorporating three levels of business process Web-based promotion, provision of information and services, and transaction processing. The three levels of business processes are similar to those proposed by Ho (1997) and Liu *et al.* (1997). The stages of development provide a roadmap that indicates where a business or industry sector is in its development of Internet commerce applications.

In order to accommodate the wide range of Internet commerce development evidenced in industries such as tourism, eMICA incorporates a number of additional layers of complexity, ranging from very simple to highly sophisticated, within the identified main stages of the model. The eMICA model is summarised in Table 1. In order to accommodate the widespread use of Web 2.0 features (such as sharing, bookmarking and social network support), the eMICA model has been adapted to include them in high interactivity layer in Stage 2.

Table 1. The extended model of Internet commerce adoption (eMICA)	
eMICA stages	Examples of functionality
Stage 1 – Promotion	
Layer 1 – Basic information	Company details such as name and address
Layer 2 – Rich information	Online contact details, company activities

Stage 2 – Provision	
Layer 1 – Low interactivity	Basic product catalogue, online enquiry form
Layer 2 – Medium interactivity	Customer support, value-added features
Layer 3 – High interactivity	Discussion forum, newsletters, updates, Web 2.0 features such as sharing and bookmarking.
Stage 3 – Processing	Facilitate secure online transactions

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Despite the fact that online tourism and travel sales are now a substantial proportion of total sales in one of the world's largest industries, few studies have focused on the intermediaries such as RTOs. The study seeks to extend the earlier work of Anandkumar, Kumar and Jeyakumar (2010), in order to study the evolution of Malaysian RTO websites, providing a longitudinal assessment of website maturity through adoption and use of Web technologies by RTOs over a five year period from 2010 to 2015. The main research questions are: How can the RTO websites be categorized based on their measures of maturity? How have the RTO websites evolved in terms of website maturity over a span of time?

This research has certain limitations. First of all, it is specific to place (Malaysia) and time (2010 Q2 and 2015 Q2). Secondly, the consistency of the RTO websites in different languages and across different browsers was not studied. All the observations were made using Google Chrome browser. The consistency of the websites across browsers (for example, Explorer, Firefox or Opera) was not studied. Also, the site content in English language alone was taken up for observation. Hence the generalizations may not be relevant to non-English sites. Thirdly, this study used interactivity as the chief criterion to measure the relative maturity of a website. Criteria that contribute to e-commerce website effectiveness such as quality of content might have been ignored in the process. Finally, the researcher's subjectivity in data observation and interpretation might have introduced data error. However, precautions were taken to address these limitations. For example, the observation for data collection was done independently by the authors and then compared to ensure commonality.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This is a descriptive, longitudinal study using passive primary data collected through structured observation method. It measures and compares the maturity of RTO websites over a span of time by using the eMICA model to identify the interactive features on the RTO websites and assess their degree of interactivity. The objects of observation were the websites of RTOs identified through a census. The inclusion criteria implied that only the official websites of the State Tourism Departments were considered for this study. Sub-regional or City-specific or Event-specific or Special interest sites were excluded from the study.

A list of the RTOs was obtained from the Government of Malaysia's Ministry of

Tourism website (<http://www.tourismmalaysia.gov.my>) and the specific RTO official homepages were identified through a Google search. Each RTO's URL link was verified and the 16 websites were evaluated. For five RTOs, their plug-in sites at the Malaysian tourism's e-portal (www.tourism.gov.my) were considered since they did not have an independent domain name or website. Each site was examined in detail and the various functions performed by the site were noted. To record the data collected through observation method, a structured data entry table was designed based on the eMICA model. Each cell in the table represents a dichotomous scale measurement describing the presence or the absence of a particular indicator. The indicators across all the sites were then grouped according to their level of interactivity and sophistication. This resulted in 14 levels of functionality, from basic to full e-commerce support, as listed below:

- Level-1: Email (online) contact details
- Level-2: Images
- Level-3: Description of regional tourism features (things to do/ places to see)
- Level-4: Systematic links to further info (for example, links to accommodation, travel, activities and so on)
- Level-5: Multiple value-added features (such as facts, maps, itineraries, photo gallery)
- Level-6: List of accommodation, attractions, activities, events with contact info
- Level-7: Web-based enquiry or order form
- Level-8: Interactive value-added features (such as downloadable materials, interactive maps, special offers, guest books)
- Level-9: Online customer support (for example, FAQs, site map, site search engine)
- Level-10: Searchable databases for accommodation, attractions, activities and events
- Level-11: Online bookings for accommodation, tours and travel
- Level-12: Advanced value-added features (such as multi-language support, multimedia, email updates and so on)
- Level-13: Web 2.0 features (such as information sharing, book marking, social network support and so on)
- Level-14: Facilitate secure online transactions

Research on the efficacy of websites is extensive. However, specifics of website effectiveness such as technical design and performance are outside the purview of this study. Observation method was chosen to gather passive primary data for this research. Observational studies can provide rich data and insights into the nature of the phenomena observed. The data obtained through observation of events as they normally occur are generally more reliable and free from respondent bias (Sekaran, 2003). The RTO websites were observed using the browser Google Chrome. Some of the observed websites had multiple language translations of the websites. Only the English language content on a website was observed for the research purpose. The

RTO websites were observed over 2015 Q2. Data pertaining to 2010 Q2 was drawn from Anandkumar, Kumar and Jeyakumar (2010) for the purpose of comparison and to assess the evolving maturity of RTO websites.

FINDINGS

About 16 websites representing the 16 RTOs of Malaysia were observed for this study. Each RTO website was assigned an appropriate stage and layer in the eMICA model based on the level of development of the website. The resulting data set was checked against the previous study done by Anandkumar, Kumar and Jeykumar (2010). A website needed to display functionality up to at least level 4 to be classified as Stage 2 of eMICA. Websites reaching level 8 functionality were classified as Stage 2, Layer 2, and those reaching level 11 functionality were classified as Stage 2, Layer 3. To be classified as Stage 3 of eMICA, a website required functionality at level 14. The results of this study are shown in Table 2, together with the equivalent figures from the previous study of Anandkumar, Kumar and Jeyakumar (2010). The 2010 data indicated that 19 percent of Malaysian RTO websites were in the '*promotion*' stage and 81 percent in the '*provision*' stage. None of the Malaysian RTO websites qualified to be in the '*processing*' stage that represents the highest level of interactivity. The 2015 data indicated that none of the Malaysian RTO websites were in the '*promotion*' or '*processing*' stages and all of them were in the '*provision*' stage.

Table 2. Longitudinal results of the Malaysian RTO websites

Stages of eMICA	2010		2015	
	Number of sites	% of total sites	Number of sites	% of total sites
Stage I				
Layer 1	0	3	0	19
Layer 2	0	0	0	0
Stage II				
Layer 1	4	4	5	25
Layer 2	25	31	0	5
Layer 3	11	0	31	69
Stage III	0	0	0	0
Total	16	100	16	100

The data indicated that all Malaysian RTO websites have matured to Stage 2 of eMICA, and incorporated the standard functional attributes of the first stage of development, such as email contact details, the use of photographic images, and a description of regional tourism features. However, the level of functionality and sophistication varied greatly across Layers 2 and 3 comprising this second stage of development, as discussed below. At the same time, none of the Malaysian RTO websites had matured to Stage 3, with the capability of offering secure online transactions.

The major differentiation in the Malaysian RTO websites lay among the three Layers within Stage 2 of the eMICA model. While 2010 data showed RTO websites classified across all the three Layers, 2015 data indicated that all the RTO websites had progressed to either Layer 2 or 3. At Layer 2 of Stage 2, the value-added tourism features became increasingly interactive, and included electronic postcards, interactive maps, downloadable materials, special offers and guest books/testimonials. Websites at this layer incorporated some form of online customer support, such as FAQs, a site map or an internal site search engine. User interaction also included the use of Web-based enquiry or order forms. Information on accommodation, attractions, activities, dining, shopping, and events was provided via searchable databases, with searches available by type and/or location within the region. As websites progressed to Layer 3 of Stage 2, Web 2.0 features such as blogs, RSS (Rich Site Summary), information sharing, posting of user-generated content, book marking and social media connectivity (through outgoing links) were incorporated in the RTO website. The popular social media platforms were found to be Facebook, Google+, Instagram, Pinterest, Youtube, Twitter and Weibo.

DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The Malaysian RTOs generally displayed low to moderate interactivity in 2010 but moderate to high interactivity in 2015. Stage 3 indicating very high interactivity was missing in both measurements. This is consistent with the role of RTOs in providing comprehensive destination marketing for geographic regions in which many local tourism operators lack an Internet presence.

None of the observed RTO websites displayed interactivity at Stage 3 level. Perhaps, as Burgess and Cooper (2000) note, this is not an unusual finding, given that the organisations in this industry sector are in the business of promoting regions through the provision of value-added information and services. This logic may be applicable in a setting where the RTOs are neither marketers nor service providers themselves. Further adoption of Internet commerce is likely to depend on the future role taken by RTOs.

A longitudinal comparison of the results of the Malaysian RTO website evaluations indicate a website maturity towards moderate interactivity. The Malaysian RTOs demonstrate the highest level (69 percent) of interactivity in Layer 3 of Stage 2. This is explained by their interest in social media presence through popular services such as social networks, content (video/photo) sharing sites, blogging/micro-blogging sites and RSS.

About five RTOs were found to have plug-in sites in the DMO website. In order to provide a more fulfilling on-site experience, the RTOs need to have their standalone interactive websites. Besides offering rich region-specific content, the outgoing social links can also be harnessed to have a regional focus.

CONCLUSION

The outcome of this longitudinal study is a useful confirmation of the time spanning, staged approach to development of websites proposed by the eMICA. Together with the levels of functionality of tourism websites identified in this study, the eMICA model offers a useful tool for individual organisations to evaluate and monitor over time their website maturity. As regions compete for the tourist dollar, RTO websites provide an information gateway to the searching and discerning tourist and it is the mature RTO websites that hold an edge.

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Inclusive tourism through website accessibility for the visually impaired tourists: An assessment of Indian Regional Tourism Organization websites

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Abstract

This research presents a case for inclusive tourism by focusing on the niche segment of visually impaired tourists who have the desire to travel, the money to spend and technology to assist. The purpose of this research is to assess the websites of the Indian Regional Tourism Organizations (RTO) for potential accessibility issues confronting visually impaired tourists. This descriptive study assessed the accessibility of the official RTO websites of all the Indian States using passive primary data collected by using the Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool (WAVE), provided by WebAIM. All the RTOs were found to have accessibility errors on their websites. This study provides a categorization of accessibility issues in terms of the seriousness of the impediments they pose so that a systematic redressal can be done to resolve those issues.

Keywords: Website accessibility, inclusive tourism, visually impaired tourists, accessible web design

INTRODUCTION

The recent developments in the economic conditions and market growth have paved way for tourism industry to explore more opportunities around the world. The Internet technology has broken the barrier of geography while helping tourism enterprises to have a global reach. With increasing awareness about special customer groups such as the differently abled and the industry-wide 'inclusive' practices, tourism service-providers and tourist attractions offer physically 'accessible' premises to cater to different groups of differently abled tourists. However, information accessibility, especially on their websites for the visually impaired tourists, needs to be assessed.

A study by Kumar and Maniraja (2012), while highlighting the tourism potential among the visually impaired tourist segment, indicated the minimal role of visually impaired tourists in travel decision-making for want of information. The growth of assistive technologies and communication systems such as screen readers and non-visual browsers has offered greater support to this special group as indicated

by the integration of the Internet-based activities in their routine. However, they experience difficulty in accessing tourism and travel related information online. The Web is an important do-it-yourself tool for people with special needs, since they can access information by themselves and thereby reduce their dependency on others. But if the online information is not compatible for access through assistive technologies, it can leave a visually impaired tourist annoyed at wasted time and effort, to abandon a task or ask for help. Few hospitality and travel industry websites are geared for the vision impaired (Williams, Rattray, & Grimes, 2006). User disabilities are not the first consideration when businesses select and develop multimedia and web-based materials.

When the niche segment of visually impaired tourists have the desire to travel, money to spend and technology to assist, the tourism enterprises ought to provide accessible information on their websites. This paper assesses the accessibility of the Indian Regional Tourism Organization (RTO) websites and provides a useful categorization of accessibility issues on these websites.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism is an economic activity of global and yet, personal significance. Brown and Chalmers (2003) have highlighted that tourism research has predominantly focused on the effects of tourism while insufficient attention has been paid to the experience and practices of the tourist. Fodness and Murray (1997) commented that detailed knowledge of the basis of actual tourist behaviour is lacking. In the context of this particular research, related literature is quite meagre.

But they have highlighted how attention to website accessibility to visually impaired tourists has not been provided, as concluded by Williams et. al. (2006).

An accessible website is defined as one that ensures that all of its pages can be used effectively by all persons using that website. For the visually impaired, particularly those defined as legally blind, accessibility means that the page should be easily read by their screen-reading software. The screen-reader converts the text on the website to either speech output, using a text-to-speech engine, or to a Braille display (O'Brien, Winograd & Norman, 2005).

Studies by Hospitality Technology magazine, for instance, found that none of the restaurant websites evaluated met all the criteria for legal compliance to U.S. Section 508 guidelines for people with disabilities (Cobanoglu, 2004, 2005). Problems that visually impaired tourists encounter with tourism websites are too many graphics, excessive Macromedia flash formats, unexplained text links, annoying pop-ups, and reservation forms that are incompatible with their screen-reader programs (Mills, Han & Clay, 2008). But these websites do not offer a way to disable these unfriendly features to get to the underlying information offered by the site. Many web designers inadvertently place barriers to persons with disabilities simply by using the latest web design technologies. Although they may be providing an appealing site for some people, they are unaware of the implications such technology poses to other individuals.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this research is to assess the Indian RTO websites for potential accessibility issues confronting visually impaired tourists. This study attempts to categorize the accessibility issues in terms of the seriousness of the impediments they pose.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This is a descriptive study to assess the website accessibility of the RTOs using passive primary data collected by using the Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool (WAVE), provided by Web AIM. It brings to light the different website accessibility issues faced by visually-impaired people. WAVE is a web accessibility tool that can greatly assist in the evaluation of web content. Rather than providing a complex technical report, WAVE shows the original web page with embedded icons and indicators that reveal the accessibility of that page. These accessibility assessment icons are observed and collected as passive primary data. Observational studies can provide rich data and insights into the nature of the phenomena observed. The data obtained through observation of events as they normally occur are generally more reliable and free from respondent bias (Sekaran, 2003). WAVE is developed and made available as a free community service by Web AIM.

A total of 36 RTO websites (including 29 States and 7 Union Territories) were considered for the study. Each site was examined in detail by posting its Uniform Resource Locator (URL) in the WAVE tool. The WAVE tool provides an output consisting of the accessibility issues related to a particular URL and these issues were classified as Errors, Alerts and Accessibility features (WAVE, 2015) based on the severity of the issues.

- All RED icons indicate accessibility ERRORS. Their presence will almost certainly cause accessibility issues.
- All YELLOW icons indicate ALERTS. They may or may not be accessibility issues, but typically indicate an area where accessibility is often an issue or where it may be made better. They should each be checked for possible issues.
- All GREEN icons indicate ACCESSIBILITY FEATURES that the author should check for accuracy.

In the Errors, Features, and Alerts View, WAVE first inserts a summary report of the errors found in the page, along with any icons that apply to the page itself. Figure 1 shows a sample summary report consisting of the total accessibility errors.

Uh oh! WAVE has detected 7 accessibility errors

The following are present in the head section or apply to this page in general:

Figure 1. Summary report consisting of total accessibility errors

The summary is useful for reporting purposes, but the most useful feedback occurs below this area, in the main part of the WAVE report. In the main part of the errors, features, and alerts view, WAVE inserts informative, color-coded icons and commentary alongside the webpage content. These icons and commentary

highlight the accessibility issues on the webpage and provide guidance to customer interface designers and developers. In the screenshot below (Figure 2), red and yellow icons in the context of the web page, represent accessibility errors and alerts, respectively. (Wave, 2015)

WAVE
Tool Bar

Summary
Report

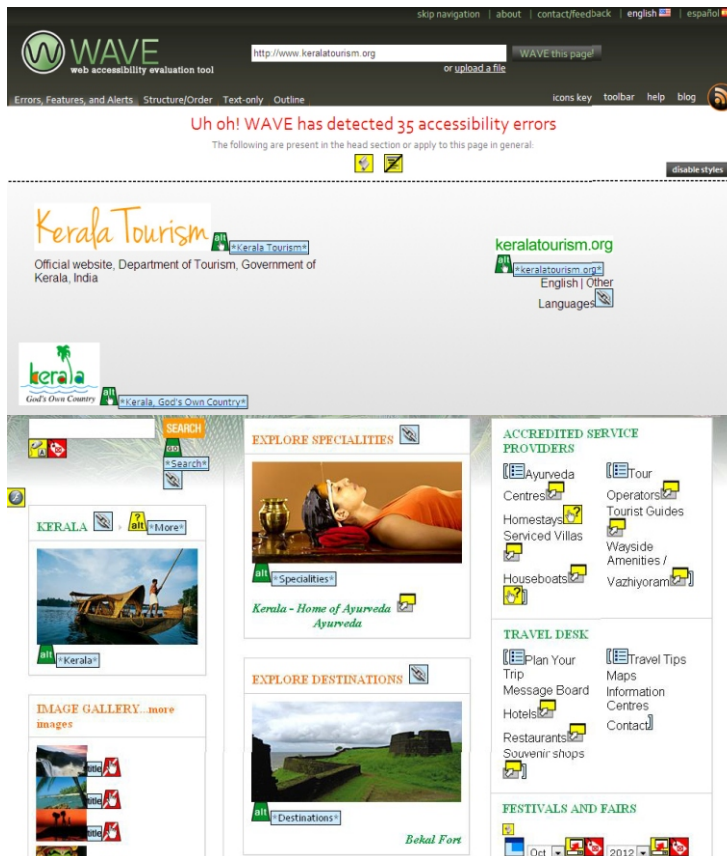


Figure 2. Screen shot of webpage representing errors, alerts, accessibility features.

Web accessibility analysis tools are many and of varied levels of sophistication. Some are capable of analyzing dynamic content (using AJAX applications) and sift through the entire website while others are less sophisticated to the extent of analyzing static content on a specific webpage. While several tools exist for website accessibility assessment, WAVE was chosen for its simplicity, free use, suitability to study bank websites, visual appeal using embedded accessibility indicators, conformance to Section 508 or Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) versions 1.0 and 2.0 (W3C, 1999, 2008), and the flexibility it provides by facilitating subjective evaluation by experts through exposing many kinds of accessibility errors in the content, as well as possible errors, accessibility features, semantic elements, and structural elements. When checking web accessibility,

automated tools are never enough. People who are not web accessibility experts can also benefit from WAVE by referring to the summary report which WAVE displays after processing the page. This report summarizes the number of errors, possible errors, and so on. A quick glance at the Errors, Features, and Alerts view of the report can also be informative, because the icons are colour coded.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Table-1 shows the number of errors, alerts and accessibility features identified in the Indian RTO websites through WAVE tool. The Errors detected through this evaluation is categorised below into three different aspects based on the nature of the error for discussion.

- Errors represent the presence of those issues which will almost certainly hamper accessibility of the website by a visually impaired customer.
- Alerts represent the presence of those issues which may or may not hamper accessibility, but typically indicate an area where accessibility is often an issue or where it may be made better. They should each be checked for possible impact.
- Accessibility Features are those issues for which the author should check for accuracy.

Table 1. Assessment of accessibility issues in Indian RTO Websites

State	URL	Errors	Alerts	Features
Andhra Pradesh	http://www.aptourism.in	9	56	31
Tamilnadu	http://www.tamilnadutourism.org/	5	24	20
Kerala	http://www.keralatourism.org/	40	40	23
Karnataka	http://www.karnatakaturism.org/	28	19	4
Arunachal Pradesh	http://www.arunachaltourism.com/	93	10	0
Assam	http://www.assamtourism.org/	75	7	0
Meghayala	http://www.meghalayatourism.org/	11	5	0
Mizoram	http://tourism.mizoram.gov.in/	8	4	12
Manipur	http://tourismmanipur.nic.in/	19	21	12
Tripura	http://tripuratourism.nic.in/	6	6	0
Nagaland	http://tourismnagaland.com/	102	4	0
Sikkim	http://www.sikkimtourism.gov.in	29	34	15
West Bengal	http://www.westbengaltourism.gov.in/	32	21	79
Bihar	http://www.bstdd.bih.nic.in/	43	20	1
Jharkhand	http://www.jharkhandtourism.in/	2	1	0
Uttar Pradesh	http://www.up-tourism.com/	34	9	1
Rajasthan	http://www.rajasthantourism.gov.in/	4	3	5
Uttarakhand	http://uttarakhandtourism.gov.in/	12	28	20

Punjab	http://www.punjabtourism.gov.in/	3	2	1
Haryana	http://www.haryanatourism.gov.in/	22	34	14
Himachal Pradesh	http://www.himachaltourism.gov.in/	87	97	10
Jammu & Kashmir	http://www.jktourism.org	54	128	36
Gujarat	http://www.gujarattourism.com/	9	43	27
Madhya Pradesh	http://www.mptourism.com	1	4	1
Maharashtra	http://www.maharashtratourism.gov.in/	0	3	0
Chhattisgarh	http://www.chhattisgarhtourism.net/	6	10	17
Odisha	http://www.orissatourism.gov.in	22	29	2
Goa	http://www.goatourism.gov.in/	30	47	14
Telangana	http://www.telanganatourism.gov.in/	35	29	19
Union Territory	URL	Errors	Alerts	Features
Andaman & Nicobar	http://www.andamans.gov.in/	11	9	14
Puducherry	http://www.pondytourism.in	29	3	0
Lakshadweep	http://www.lakshadweeptourism.com/	16	9	5
Chandigarh	http://www.chandigarhtourism.gov.in/	1	1	0
Diu & Daman	http://www.diutourism.co.in/	4	4	0
Delhi	http://www.delhitourism.gov.in	12	36	22
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	http://www.dddnhtourism.com/	1	12	1

a) Accessibility Errors:

Among the 36 RTO websites considered for the study, Maharashtra RTO website offers zero errors of accessibility and is the most visually impaired-friendly website. Besides, 14 state tourism websites showed only a single digit errors. The Wave detected Nagaland's RTO website with highest number of errors as it reported 102 errors. Similarly Arunachal Pradesh tourism website and Himachal Pradesh's site also showed a very high number of accessibility errors when compared other websites as the WAVE detected 93 and 87 errors respectively. The above Errors detected in the RTO websites represent the presence of those issues which will almost certainly hamper accessibility of the website for a visually impaired people.

b) Accessibility Alerts:

RTO website of Jammu & Kashmir had the highest number of accessibility alerts at 128. It is interesting to observe that the Andhra Pradesh's Website reveal one of the highest accessibility alerts but they displayed one of the sites with lowest errors. RTO websites of Chandigarh and Jharkhand had the least number of accessibility alerts. The alerts suggested by the WAVE assessment represent the presence of those issues which may or may not hamper accessibility, but typically indicate an area where accessibility is often an issue or where it may be made better. The Alerts are tolerable and they may or may not be accessibility issues, but typically indicate an area where accessibility is often an issue or where it may be made better. They should each be checked for possible issues. They should also be checked for possible impact.

c) Accessibility Features:

The RTO websites were also evaluated by the WAVE for the Accessibility Features which are issues related to accuracy. This is also critical as the tourism boards need to

be sure about the information presented in the websites in terms of accuracy and correctness. About 10 RTO websites (including that of Maharashtra) were found to have 'Nil' accessibility features, while West Bengal tourism site posed the major concern as it had the higher number of accuracy concern with 79 accessibility features highlighted by the WAVE. This particular issue might not be considered as serious as the errors and alerts but it still carries significant impact on the tourism information consumption of the visually impaired tourists. It is important to note that the visually impaired tourists make decisions based on the information perceived through texts as they cannot perceive from images and pictures, which makes it more critical for the RTOs to give equal importance to the accessibility feature which talks about the accuracy concerns.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to ensure accessibility of the websites of the RTOs to VI tourist, the RTOs should comply with the following:

- **Appropriate alternative text:** Appropriate alternative text must be used in place of images, image links, image maps, and image buttons.
- **Form labels:** Websites must have descriptive and informative form labels. They must ensure that all necessary information for completing that form element is available within the label.
- **Tables pose special problems** because of their multidimensional nature, with layout providing meaning to the content. Screen readers may skip empty cells in tables without warning (Amtmann, Johnson & Cook, 2002). Every Table should have a clear and informative header.
- **Logical heading structure** is to be ensured by ordering all the headings in a logical way. Descriptive and informative page titles are necessary.
- **Assistive Technology Compatibility:** Visually impaired tourists use screen readers or other assistive technologies to access content through various senses or to modify content to be best perceivable to them. Therefore the RTO websites should be compatible with these assistive technologies.
- **Periodic reviews** of their websites must be made for accessibility by the visually impaired. All the accessibility features should be periodically checked for accuracy.

CONCLUSION

Studies like this one can provide valuable information that can lead to improvements in guidelines for accessible web design by identifying specific problems. These studies can also provide meaningful information to engineers of assistive technologies so that these technologies may become better suited to anticipate changes in the web (Hackett, Parmanto & Zeng, 2005). There is a possibility that a RTO ebsite's accessibility errors keep changing as the RTO updates its website frequently. Therefore a dynamic monitoring and assessment would be more helpful. This study is limited by the constraints of assessing static content and

homepage content only. Nevertheless, this study exposes the serious threat to inclusive tourism by highlighting the RTO website accessibility issues faced by visually impaired tourists. It also offers technical and operational recommendations for greater compliance to make the RTO websites accessible and friendly to visually-impaired tourists, thereby making inclusive tourism an online reality.

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Marketing utility of Tripadvisor for Hotels: An importance-performance analysis

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Abstract

The impact of consumer-generated content (CGC) such as electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) and online travel reviews on consumer behaviour in travel and tourism has been assessed by many researchers. While such CGC can be useful in marketing decision making, its utility for marketers remains an under-researched area. The purpose of this study is to assess the gap between hotel marketing managers' perceived importance and actual use/performance of CGC available in the form of hotel reviews found on Tripadvisor. This is an empirical study using primary data collected from the marketing managers of hotels. This study identifies the gap between the perceived importance and actual use/performance of CGC by marketing managers. This will help the hotel marketing managers to use CGC to finetune their product and service offerings and also act upon customer feedback and suggestions.

Keywords: Consumer-generated content (CGC), hotel reviews, Tripadvisor, importance-performance matrix

INTRODUCTION

Consumers are using electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) more and more to share opinions and experiences about products and services (Rezabakhsh et al., 2006; Mendes, Tan & Mills, 2012). We can find a great deal of content on the Internet about entertainment and providing reviews on products and services such as books, restaurants, and hotels (George & Scerri, 2007). User-generated Content (UGC) is an electronic communication phenomenon enabled by Web 2.0, the second generation of Web-based services, which allows people to collaborate and share information online (Cox et al., 2009). Because of the experiential nature of tourism products for which previous quality cannot be ascertained, WOM and, more recently, eWOM are much relied on by potential tourists in forming images (Gretzel, Yoo & Purifoy, 2007; Pan et al., 2007; Cox et al., 2009). Consequently, UGC serves as an information source for potential tourists (Ye et al., 2009).

One area of extraordinary Internet innovation has been in user generated content and peer-to-peer applications variously known as Web 2.0 (O'Reilly, 2007). There has been a steady rise in the usage of social websites such as YouTube,

Facebook and Twitter. In these sites, content is uploaded directly by users on to the website. Blogs provide primarily text information but increasingly video and audio files are uploaded. These blogs provide personal thoughts and commentaries on say a specific destination, personal travel stories and details of trips, and are often frequently updated and displayed in chronological order. Blogs tend to be interactive and readers post comments (Cobanoglu, 2006; Kelleher & Miller, 2006; Ellion, 2007; Hepburn, 2007; Pan et al., 2007).

Specific tourism sites such as Tripadvisor.com and Travelpod.com enable consumers to exchange information, opinions and recommendations about destinations, tourism products and services, with diaries of travel experiences and ratings of a particular product or hotel. Other public travel blog sites specialising in hosting individual travel blogs include Travelblog.org, Travelpod.com, Travelpost.com, Yourtraveljournal.com and so on. These virtual communities have been in existence since the late 1990s (Lueg, 2001; Schwabe & Prestipino, 2006) and some studies have investigated the role and impact of such communities as useful tourist information providers (Dellaert, 2000; Wang et al., 2002; Schwabe & Prestipino, 2006; Laboy & Torchio, 2007; Pan et al., 2007; Mack et al., 2008)). In addition, well-known travel guides provide web space to publish travel stories, for example, lonelyplanet.com and community.roughguides.com. Other Web 2.0 developments include RSS (Rich Site Summary) feeds (media and content syndication), web forums, message boards, podcasting and vlogs (online videos).

CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

The Internet has evolved from a push marketing standard to one where sharing data and disseminating information has become a norm (O'Connor, 2010). Specially, content elaborated by consumers themselves, has augmented credibility in the perception of consumers as an unbiased and trustful input into the decision-making process (Sweeney et al., 2008).

The term UGC or CGC are commonly used to highlight the pivotal role that individual consumers have in submitting, reviewing and responding to online content (Gretzel, 2006, 2007). Another common term used to describe the rapidly growing number of pages that contain user-generated content in various formats is 'social networking' (Hepburn, 2007). In marketing terms, UGC sites are effectively a form of 'consumer to consumer marketing' (Buhler, 2006). Essentially they provide a form of word-of-mouth marketing, whereby somebody who has an opinion about a product or service shares their views, beliefs and experiences with other people (Ahuja, Michels, Walker & Weissbuch, 2007). Fernando (2007) also refers to UGC as 'social media' being the polar opposite to traditional forms of media and marketing, whereby content is generated by the 'consumer' rather than by the 'marketer'. Nowadays, online consumer experience and product comments, reviews and ratings are emerging marketing phenomenon that are impacting and playing an increasingly important role in purchasing decisions (Chen and Xie, 2010). Consumers consider traveller recommendations on social media and travel

web sites to be more credible and further, these recommendations influence actual purchasing decisions (Cannizzaro et al., 2007). Most of the third party travel intermediaries such as Expedia, Orbitz, Travelocity, and others permit users to post comments, write a short review of the hotel and provide an evaluative numerical rating on the worldwide web (Stringam and Gerdes Jr, 2010). Diffusion and adoption of the World Wide Web (WWW) has brought numerous benefits including new more effective and efficient channels of communication, disseminating information and conducting businesses online (Puri, 2007). One of its crucial benefits has been the astonishing access to information it offers to consumers (Bellman et al., 2006). This phenomenon has resulted in the public airing of guest reviews, rating and comments. The explosion of the Internet websites that let consumer post reviews makes these consumer reviews and comments available to an unlimited number of audience (Stringam and Gerdes, 2010).

According to the Pew Internet and American Life Project (2005), exploring for travel-related content and information has become one of the most common online activities. Many people use online travel referrals for their travel planning (Bonn et al., 1999). It is reported that, more than 5 million travellers visit Virtualtourist.com to search for travel reviews and tips (Gretzel et al., 2007); about 30 million people visit Tripadvisor to utilize other travellers' reviews every month (Yoo et al., 2007).

Travel organizations and businesses such as hotels have used Social media as an important communication platform (Akehurst, 2009) and considered UGC as a priceless information resource. In fact, while these businesses do not have any control over what social media users do or what kind of travel information and experiences they upload on their social media sites, they have recognized that these shared travel experiences play a role in influencing potential travellers' decision making (Xiang and Gretzel, 2010). More importantly, negative postings by travellers provide hotels with a chance to improve their service quality. Therefore, travel organizations have encouraged consumers to participate in online review websites and share travel experiences on their social websites as well. Besides, on their own websites, Hotels directly or indirectly place reviews that enhance their reputation and rating (Jurca & Faltings, 2009). Smyth, Wu & Greene (2010) identified two aspects in the use of UGC by businesses: service providers are motivated to improve their services in order to avoid negative comment that can reach a wide audience and they are informed about what should be changed in order to improve their service.

Research by Gretzel, et al. (2007) indicates that reviews posted on such social sites are less credible than those posted on dedicated review site of the commercial interests of the site. The most prominent stand-alone user-generated review site within travel community is undoubtedly TripAdvisor. Further, Xiang and Gretzel (2010) state that social media sites feature prominently in travel search results. They found that Tripadvisor.com was the most prominent site in this regard.

While the impact of reviews on consumers has received a lot of research attention, there has been less research on the reaction from the hotel industry. In that

context, this paper is a useful addition to the literature.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For this research a total of 34 hotels were considered based on the hotels represented in Tripadvisor Pondicherry website. A feedback survey questionnaire was administered to the hotel marketing managers to understand the importance and performance of the hotels by the use of the hotel review web sites. The survey was conducted in Puducherry during the month of December 2014.

A systematic approach to mapping expectations helps managers to know better what aspects of a service best define its quality (Sharma and Chowdhary, 2012). One such measurement technique is the importance-performance analysis which emerged from the work of Martilla and James (1977). It has been widely used in tourism and travel research (Yüksel and Yüksel, 2001; Chaudhary and Aggarwal, 2012).

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Hotels' importance rating and the performance rating mean values for the fifteen variables used as input for the importance-performance matrix are presented in Table 1 and Figure 1. These variables were chosen for the study to find out the importance and performance of hotel review web sites.

Table 1. Importance- Performance Means

No.	Attributes Mean	Importance (X)	Mean Performance (Y)
1	We have used Tripadvisor as a Hotel marketing Tool	1.7	1.79
2	Through Tripadvisor, we have got new customers who were unreachable earlier	1.73	2.18
3	We have got direct customer booking through Tripadvisor	1.94	2.18
4	We have offered special promotional deals through Tripadvisor	1.94	2.57
5	We have benefitted from positive reviews on Tripadvisor for our Hotel	1.5	1.94
6	We have been adversely affected by negative reviews on Tripadvisor for our Hotel	2.6	2.76
7	We track out Hotel's online reputation on Tripadvisor	2.15	2.15
8	We use Tripadvisor to control online damage to our brand due to negative reviews	2.19	2.56
9	We use Tripadvisor to clarify and present out position to unfair reviews from guests	2.4	2.19
10	We have understood our guests' expectations through Tripadvisor content	1.88	1.93
11	We have identified instances of service failure at our Hotel through Tripadvisor content	2.6	2.21
12	We have got improvement ideas for our Hotel from Tripadvisor content	2.3	2.18
13	We use Tripadvisor to respond to all the reviews Posted by our guests	1.88	2.06

14	We use Tripadvisor to win back lost good will with guests who have negative reviews	2.03	2.3
15	We use Tripadvisor to thank all the guests who have posted positive reviews	1.8	1.8
Total Sum		30.64	32.8
Grand Mean		2.04	2.19

High P E R F O R M A N C E Low	OVER KILL (Variables 4,14)	KEEP IT UP (Variables 6,8,11)
	LOW PRIORITY (Variables 1,2,3,5,10,13,15)	CONCENTRATE HERE (Variables 7,9,12)
Low IMPORTANCE High		

Figure 1: Performance Importance Matrix

SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

It has been revealed from the study that the hotels are performing well in some areas like they have controlled damage through Tripadvisor by replying to the negative reviews posted by the customers. They have also identified instances of service failure to their Hotel through Tripadvisor content. There are certain areas (as shown in Figure 1) where the hoteliers are to concentrate such as the need to focus for the maintaining their reputation, clarify the unfair reviews posted by the customers and get the ideas from Tripadvisor to improve their quality of service. There are also certain areas such as offering special promotion as well as winning back the negative reviewed customer where the hotels are over killing by focusing much in these areas. But the most surprising thing is that the hotels are ignoring large areas where they need to focus. Those areas are using Tripadvisor as a Hotel marketing Tool, focusing new customers who were unreachable earlier, direct customer booking through Tripadvisor, getting benefit from positive reviews on Tripadvisor, understanding guests' expectations from Tripadvisor content, to respond to all the reviews Posted by the guests, and to thank all the guests who have posted positive reviews.

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- Ethics and sport
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- Green events
- Green tourism
- History of modern sport
- Hospitality education
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- Hotel and restaurant management
- Innovations in leisure/hospitality marketing
- Leisure recreation and sports
- Leisure/hospitality marketing promotional programs
- Leisure/hospitality product development
- Leisure/hospitality product management
- Medical tourism
- Meeting, incentives, convention and exhibition
- MICE marketing and management
- Movie and drama tourism
- Ontology of sport
- Research in leisure/hospitality marketing
- Service quality management in hotel and restaurant
- Shopping tourism
- Sociology of food studies and food security
- Sport and celebrities
- Sport and communities
- Sport and place
- Sport and popular culture
- Sport and social identity
- Sport for development
- Sport tourism
- Sports fandom
- Sports management
- Sports marketing
- The politics of sport
- Tourism and the environment

- Tourism economic and forecasting
- Tourism policy
- Tourism sustainability
- Travel and tourism
- Trends in MICE

Abstract/Paper submission due

October 1, 2015

Notification of acceptance/rejection

3 weeks after submission

Early registration deadline for ALL (authors and non-authors)

November 10, 2015

Upload final version of manuscript due

November 25, 2015

Authors registration deadline for papers to be included in the program and proceedings

November 25, 2015

Tentative conference program announcement

December 1, 2015

Conference Registration Fee

Early Registration	Before November 10, 2015	US\$400
Regular Registration	After November 10, 2015	US\$450

1. No matter your submission is single-authored or multi-authored, if you would like to have your accepted submission published in the conference proceedings, you have to pay registration fee US\$400 for each submission before November 10, 2015 or US\$450 after November 10, 2015.
2. In case your submission is multi-authored and more than one author would like to participate in the conference, each participant needs to register and pay the registration fee separately.
3. Every registered participant will get a copy of conference proceedings in CD-ROM format and admission to all conference sessions.

Cancellation Policy

All cancellations and refund requests must be made in writing to the Registration Secretariat (htsm.conf@gmail.com). For cancellations postmarked on or before 23:59 (GMT+8), November 10, 2015, 75% of the registration fee will be refunded. For cancellations after 23:59 (GMT+8), November 10, 2015, no fees will be refunded.

Style Guide for Submitting Papers to International Conference

First Author Name^a, Second Author Name^a and Third Author Name^{b}*

^aDepartment of Paper Submission, XYZ University,

My Street, My City, MyCountry

^bInstitute of Business Media, Main University,

The Street, The City, TheCountry

**Corresponding Author: email@example.com*

ABSTRACT

*The guide aims to tell you the submission format for the Proceedings of International Conference. All submissions must be submitted on-line via the conference management system by the due date. **The review decision** notifications with an acceptance or rejection email will be sent to the corresponding author in two weeks after submission. After receiving the review result, the authors are encouraged to prepare the final camera-ready paper before the deadline shown in the website. Other information can also be found on the official conference website. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us. We look forward to your participation.*

***Keyword:** Submission Format, Style Guide.*

1. Introduction

No matter you submit an abstract paper or a full-length paper, there are two points described in the following subsections for your notice.

1.1 Title

Type the title in bold type, single-spaced, and centered across the top of the first page, in 14 point Times New Roman, as illustrated above.

1.2 Authors

The author(s), affiliation(s), mailing address(es), and email address(es) should be single spaced and centered on the line below the title, in 12 point Times New Roman, as illustrated above. One line space should be used to separate author(s) from the paper title. As shown in the top lines of this page, please do not add titles (i.e., Dr., Professor, Dean, etc.) before the author name(s).

2. Abstract Paper

If you submit an abstract paper, there are four parts for your abstract. They are Paper Title, Author Information, Abstract with keywords, and Main Description for your

Research. When you choose submitting abstract only rather than full paper, the maximal length is two pages. The paper size should be A4 (i.e. 21.0 centimeters [8.27 inches] by 29.69 centimeters [11.69 inches]) and the margins should be set to Word's default: top and bottom 2.54 centimeters (1.00 inches), right and left 3.17 centimeters (1.25 inches). Papers that deviate from these instructions may not be published.

3. Full Paper

If you submit a full-length paper, the maximal length is 35 pages including references, figures and tables.

3.1 Heading

Headings should be in bold type, in 12 point Times New Roman. First-level headings should be centered, as illustrated above. Second-level headings should be flush left with initial caps. Do not use headings other than these two types. At least one line space should separate headings from the preceding text.

3.2 Abstract

Beginning with the centered heading ABSTRACT, an abstract of approximately 150-300 words is used to introduce and summarize the research, in 12 point Times New Roman.

3.3 Main text, tables and figures

All body paragraphs should begin flush left (no paragraph indent) and right justified, single-space the body of the paper, and use 12 point Times New Roman throughout. Figures and tables should be placed as close as possible to where they are cited. All tables and figures should be embedded into the file and sized appropriately. All photographs should be sampled at 300 dpi (dots per inch). Keep in mind that web graphics are typically sampled at 72 dpi. Photographs must be properly sized and positioned in the body of the paper.

3.4 Page Size

The paper size should be A4 (i.e. 21.0 centimeters [8.27 inches] by 29.69 centimeters [11.69 inches]) and the margins should be set to Word's default: top and bottom 2.54 centimeters (1.00 inches), right and left 3.17 centimeters (1.25 inches). Papers that deviate from these instructions may not be published.

4. Conclusion

In this section, two subsections are included.

4.1 Length Requirements

For a full paper, each paper including in the Proceedings of International Conference would not exceed 25 pages. Otherwise, a charge of US \$5.00 for each

additional page will be imposed. For author who chooses to submit abstract only rather than full paper, the maximal length is two pages.

4.2 Citation

The Proceedings follows the reference format of Academy of Management Journal. This format is available at the AMJ's website.

REFERENCES

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APPENDIX

The appendix should immediately follow the references.

THE INAUGURAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON TOURISM AND LEISURE STUDIES

*Honolulu, Hawaii, USA
University of Hawaii at Manoa
22-23 April 2016*

Proposals for paper presentations, workshops, posters, or colloquia are invited for the Inaugural International Conference on Tourism and Leisure Studies being held at the University of Hawaii at Manoa in Honolulu, Hawaii, USA, from 22-23 April 2016. We welcome proposals from a variety of disciplines and perspectives that will contribute to the conference discourse. We also encourage faculty and research students to submit joint proposals for paper presentations, workshops, focused discussions, posters, or colloquia.

2016 CONFERENCE SPECIAL FOCUS:

“The Sustainability of Tourism and Leisure”

The Inaugural International Conference on Tourism and Leisure Studies will aim to define some of the key questions for the Tourism and Leisure knowledge community. On one hand: are 'sustainability' and 'tourism' mutually exclusive concepts and practices? How do we balance the economic sustainability of local or national tourism industries with principles of ecological and cultural sustainability? On the other: leisure time is being squeezed by the demands of work life, and digital media is destabilizing the once clear division of work from play. How do these forces demand a shift in how we understand the concept and practice of leisure? In these times of unprecedented social, economic, and environmental change, the conference will attempt to map an agenda that addresses fundamental questions about the spaces and practices of leisure and tourism and explore sustainable courses of action for the leisure and tourism industries.

CONFERENCE THEMES:

Proposals are invited that address tourism and leisure through one of the following categories:

Theme 1: Changing Dimensions of Contemporary Tourism

Theme 2: Changing Dimensions of Contemporary Leisure

Theme 3: Tourism and Leisure Industries

Theme 4: Critical Issues in Tourism and Leisure Studies

2016 Special Focus: "The Sustainability of Tourism and Leisure"

Presenters may also choose to submit written papers for publication in the fully refereed *The Journal of Tourism and Leisure Studies*. If you are unable to attend the conference, you may still become a member of the community and submit your article for peer review and possible publication, upload an online presentation, and enjoy subscriber access to the journal.

Proposals for in-person presentations should be submitted by 22 MARCH 2016 (title and short abstract). Proposals submitted after this day will be accommodated in non-themed sessions at the conference or are eligible for community membership registrations (no attendance at conference required with community membership presentations).

For more information on submitting your proposal and registering for the conference visit:

<http://tourismandleisurestudies.com/Honolulu-2016>

Enquiries: conferencedirector@commongroundpublishing.com

Web address: <http://tourismandleisurestudies.com/Honolulu-2016>

Sponsored by: Tourism and Leisure Studies / Common Ground Publishing

Third International Conference on Emerging Research Paradigms in Business and Social Science

24th to 26th November 2015

Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Venue: Park Hyatt Dubai Creek dubai.park.hyatt.com

Conference Website: www.mdx.ac/conference

SUBMISSION DEADLINE SEPTEMBER 15, 2015

Middlesex University Dubai takes great pleasure in announcing the Third International Conference on Emerging Research Paradigms in Business and Social Sciences (ERPSS-2015). For the nearly 200 delegates representing about 100 international academic institutions the First (2011) and Second (2013) International Conference on ERPSS provided a forum for inter-disciplinary dialogue and forms of scholastic communication that transcended disciplinary and subject-specific boundaries.

In the Third International Conference ERPSS 2015 we seek to explore "What's Next?". The world faces incredibly complex changes that shape our collective futures. We live in a time of increased mobility and connectedness, as forces of globalization and technological change are redefining the economic, social, political, and physical systems of the world. Inevitably, ideas and knowledge are transcending their traditional disciplinary and geographic boundaries. While this transformation offers increasing opportunities for innovation, it also contributes to increasingly complex global and local challenges that must be met with increasing attention to a more sustainable future.

The eight tracks of the ERPSS 2015 Conference are:

- 1) Accounting, Finance and Economics
- 2) Contemporary Psychology
- 3) Education Training and Development
- 4) Information and Communication Technology
- 5) International Law and International Relations
- 6) Management and Marketing
- 7) Media, Journalism, and Communication
- 8) Tourism and Hospitality

Through these tracks the conference intention is to bring together perspectives from multiple disciplinary and epistemological perspectives. The design of the conference will provide wider opportunities for dialogue than conferences with narrower scopes. Additionally, this year we are launching the "Research Matters" visual paper

session, which offers delegates an opportunity to engage more in-depth with presenters. We also invite delegates to submit proposals for Organised Symposium around a specific topic.

Please review the guidelines for submission carefully when preparing your submission <http://www.mdx.ac/conference-2/submission-and-registration/>

Regular Submission: September 15, 2015

Normal Registration: October 31 2015

Late Registration: After October 31

Student Registration: 31st October 2015

Full Paper Submission (Optional): 31st October 2015

All extended abstracts will be included in the book of proceedings, and full papers will be included in the electronic conference proceedings. Additionally, selected papers will be invited to submit for consideration in one of the four planned journal special issues.

Conference Email: erpbss2015@mdx.ac

Conference Website: www.mdx.ac/conference

Seminar Proceedings

State level Workshop on Handicrafts and Artisans

Centre for Mountain Tourism and Hospitality Studies

HNB Garhwal Central University, Srinagar Garhwal

19th and 20th March, 2015

A state level workshop on handicrafts and artisans for tourism promotion was organized at Centre for Mountain Tourism and Hospitality Studies (CMTHS) on 19th and 20th March, 2015. The convener and advisor of the workshop were Dr. Sarvesh Uniyal and Prof. S.C. Bagri respectively and was attended by the stakeholders of the industry with the purpose of listening to the grievances of the local artisans and providing them a platform to meet the experts and help them in the marketing and promotion of their products, thus helping them to cater to a large profitable audience.

The Objectives of the workshop were as follows:

1. To revive the rural arts of Uttarakhand.
2. To identify the present sources of income of the people involved in handicraft and handloom industries of Uttarakhand.
3. To increase the symbiosis between the tourism industry and Uttarakhand's handicraft and handloom manufacturers.
4. To encourage the sales of handicraft and handloom products in the various tourist destinations of Uttarakhand.
5. To help the agencies in the advertising and promotion of Uttarakhand's handicrafts and handloom products.
6. To do a detailed research on the success models of other Indian states and present them to the government of Uttarakhand for the development of local handicraft and handloom industry.
7. To provide a common platform to the stakeholders of handicraft and handloom industry for addressing their grievances.

Inaugural Session

Prof. J. L. Kaul, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, HNB Garhwal University presided over the function while Mrs. Sonika, I.A.S, C.D.O Pauri, Govt of Uttarakhand, Shri. B. D. Singh, C.E.O, Badri-Kedar Temple Committee, were invited as Guest of Honours to grace the occasion. Prof. Bagri, Coordinator, Department of Business Management, Prof. S. K. Gupta, Dean, School of Management and Prof. D. S. Negi, OSD to V.C were also present at the workshop.

Vice-Chancellor HNB Garhwal University, Prof. J.L. Kaul, 2nd from Left on the dais gracing the inaugural session

The inaugural session started with the lightening of the lamp by the guests on the dais. Prof. S.C Bagri, Co-coordinator, Department of Business Management gave



the welcome address. He gave a brief introduction of the theme to the audience. Prof. Bagri appreciated Dr.Sarvesh Uniyal for taking the initiative to conduct this workshop. He also made it a point that the tourism industry is spreading at length and breadth of the country and is providing employment opportunities directly and indirectly to millions of people. He said that the tourists spend 27% of their total budget on shopping but handicrafts products have less market share in it due to lack of marketing facilities. He suggested that handicrafts products must find its place in the global market using the information technology and e-commerce tools and emphasized on the need to organize shopping festivals to promote local hand made products, thus increasing their market share. Policy makers of the state were urged to make an action plan to demonstrate the hidden art and crafts of Uttarakhand on a global level.



Prof. S. C. Bagri, addressing the gathering

Shri. B. D. Singh, C.E.O, Badri-Kedar Temple Committee, made an important observation that nearly 70, 60,000 people are depended on the tourism sector in Uttarakhand through 88 professions. He urged HNB Garhwal University to

develop strategies to promote tourism in Uttarakhand and help in adding value to the products and services provided. He finally concluded his speech by suggesting the department to propose Research and Development proposals, thus generating high turnover in the business of tourism. Mrs. Sonika, I.A.S expressed her concern about the falling revenues through tourism in the state after the flash floods of 2013 and she expressed a hope that this workshop would come out with suggestions to improve the situation. She emphasized the need of proper human resource training to promote hospitality industry in the state.

Prof. J. L. Kaul, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, HN BGU originally from the state of Jammu and Kashmir said that he felt at home when he visited the handicrafts exhibition held in CMTHS. He compared the tourism industry of Kashmir with Uttarakhand and said that Kashmiri handicrafts are world famous while Uttarakhand's handicrafts could not reach that place due to lack of value addition efforts by the administration. He discussed on the issues of infrastructure development, employment generation and marketing strategies for promotion of tourism in the state. He emphasized the development of value added products and services to encourage tourist spending in the region. Promotion of local products and services through online portals was also an important aspect of his speech. He appealed to all the stakeholders, including administration, academicians, local public to cooperate with each other for the development of tourism industry in Uttarakhand. Prof. Kaul gave the slogan of “**Explore, Excel and Earn**”. Prof. S. k. Gupta, Dean School of Management closed the session by proposing vote of thanks. He emphasized that mere revenue generation is not important but employment generation is more important. He thanked the department for this endeavour.



Handicrafts of Uttarakhand state were exhibited by the department with invited artisans during the workshop

Technical Sessions

The inaugural session was succeeded by a presentation from Ms. Sarika Samdani, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Kilmora brand promoted by *Kumaon Gramin Udyog* (KGU) run by Central Himalayan Rural Action Group

(Chirag) since 1996. She started the presentation with a brief historical background of the Kilmora brand and shared that the organization works to promote local products for the sustainable development of the community. KGU runs decentralized knitting groups in different villages of Kumaon region and helps in providing supplementary income to the local women. The products are locally produced and packaged for retail consumption. Proper training is given to the local community and thus helping in checking out migration from the villages of the region. Corporate social responsibility of the organization includes building hospitals and schools in the region. She spoke of the business model of the organization and discussed its strength and weaknesses in the state. The presentation was followed by a constructive discussion among the participants on the various issues which are paralyzing the local handicraft industry. Participants stressed on the need to design a common strategy for the marketing and promotion of local handicrafts and handloom products. The session was further enunciated by Mr. Durpal Chauhan from *Ghoomigo*, who gave his views on the problem of non availability of raw material in Uttarakhand. He spoke of the possibility of introducing online selling model for the promotion of handicrafts native to the state.

The presentation was followed by brain storming session, chaired by Mr. Ganesh Khugshal, Advisor, *SwajalPariyojana*, Pauri Garhwal. Marketing and promotion of the local handicraft and handloom products and designing a common strategy in Uttarakhand were the topics for discussion. Mr. Girish Kandwal, who specializes in designing articles from *Ram Bans* spoke of the need of introducing district authorities to the usefulness of *Ram Bans* and urging them to take steps in marketing and promotion of locally manufactured products. Lack of interest from the government agencies in showcasing and fostering faith in the local artisans was also discussed.



Ms. Sarika Samdani, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Kilmora in discussion with the participants of the workshop

The next speaker in the session was Mr. Kailash Bhatt, who specializes in designing indigenous Uttarakhand costumes. He succinctly described the rich history of Uttarakhand and the heritage of local costumes of the state. Key point of his

deliberation was the need to introduce the concept of souvenirs to protect the local handicrafts and handloom industry. These souvenirs can be sold as mascots of the state.

Mr. Patamber Molpha from *Mana* village, Badrinath enlightened the audience with the status quo of handloom industry in the state. The local artisans are in a state of apathy and are incurring significant losses. Shortage of raw material, lack of retail outlets and co-operation crisis among local people were the prominent factors to his dismay. He suggested measures like developing co-operative societies and shopkeeper guilds for protecting the interests of local artisans and entrepreneurs.

Mr. Kalyan Singh Rawat, convener of *Maiti* was the next speaker in the session and he deliberated on the need to rejuvenate the local art, craft and cuisine of Uttarakhand. He discussed the case of *Gaucharmela*, which has lost its local fervour due to the lack of local participation in promoting the products of the region. He emphasized the need to promote the local products for the upliftment of the community. He urged the stakeholders of the industry to work as a cohesive unit.



The brain storming session in progress with industry stakeholders

The second day's session was commenced by Dr. Sanjay Mahar, Assistant Professor, Department of Tourism, State Government Degree College, Narendra nagar, Tehri Garhwal, who gave a presentation on the scenario of Indian handicraft and handloom industry. He briefly discussed the size and dimensions of handicraft and handloom industry and the diverse indigenous products manufactured by them. He elucidated with the descriptions of handicraft and handloom products and the stiff competition faced by them in today's era of information technology and globalization. He also discussed some successful handicraft organizations across the country.

The presentation was followed by a session of brain storming, which was chaired by

Mr. Durpal Chauhan from *Ghoomigo*. Challenges faced by the handicraft and handloom industry of Uttarakhand were discussed in this session. The participants echoed the need of promoting locally manufactured products using local flavour. Mr. Girish Kandwal highlighted the importance of providing vocational training to the local artisans from industry experts and thus uplifting the local community. He also discussed that there is an increase in demand of handicraft products in western countries and this segment should also be explored. The local products should be designed in a way that it can be marketed easily by the marketing agencies. He requested the planning authorities to help the industry in marketing their products.

Mr. Durpal Chauhan highlighted the importance of tourism for the economy of Uttarakhand in his speech. He spoke of inducing holistic approach in tourism and the importance of experiences in defining tourism. He was concerned about the lack of promotional activities from the government in spreading awareness among the tourists. He emphasized the need of designing brochures and catalogues to disseminate authentic information of the products to the visiting guests in the state. Mr. Chauhan stressed the importance of designing souvenirs, which will not only attract the tourists visiting the state, but will also rekindle a sense of belongingness among the huge diasporas of Uttarakhand. . He urged the policy makers to follow the footsteps of Rajasthan and Kerala in promoting tourism in Uttarakhand.

Dr. Sarvesh Uniyal, Director of the workshop discussed with the participants about the problem of regularization of prices of the products and the need to develop an understanding of prices among the marketers and producers. Dr. Rakesh Dhodi, Assistant Professor, CMTHS spoke of the importance of making a consortium of local artisans with common brand name as a solution to the discussed problems.

The valedictory function started with welcome note by Dr. Sanjay Mahar, co-organizer of the conference. The state level workshop concluded with much fanfare on the promise of developing a healthy business environment for the handicraft and handloom industry in Uttarakhand. The workshop helped in highlighting the importance of tourism for the economy of Uttarakhand and the role it can play in bridging the gap between the artisans and the policy makers of the state. Dr. Rakesh Dhodi concluded the workshop by thanking the participants and organizers. He assured that the proceedings of the workshop will be discussed with the concerned authorities for policy making to take care of the interests of the stakeholders of Uttarakhand's handicraft and handloom sector.

The final outcomes of the workshop that were put forward by various renowned personalities were as follows:

- Uttarakhand government need to revive the local handicrafts and handloom products for the development of tourism.
- Marketing concepts must be utilized for the promotion of handicraft and

handloom products.

- The importance of value addition in products and services must be taught to the local artisans.
- Usage of technology must be encouraged for better marketing and promotion of local products.
- Branding and publicity measures should be incorporated in the state's policy to provide a better market to the artisans.
- The state government needs to attract the *yatra* tourist traffic to the local art and culture by building avenues along the *yatra* highways.
- The government agencies need to work in unison to tap the budding souvenir market.
- Encouragement of cohesive development and integration among the stakeholders for the sustainable upliftment of the local community.
- Steps should be taken to encourage cooperative model of business for community involvement.
- The university should provide a platform to the local artisans to showcase their artefacts in the premises by signing a MoU between the University and local artisans.
- Cooperative societies and shopkeeper guilds need to be developed for better projection.
- The trade marking of products should be encouraged to provide them with authenticity and uniqueness.
- New avenues like CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) can also be explored. Corporate companies can be involved in the upliftment of the community by providing training to the local people.
- Online portals can also be used to provide better visibility to the local products.
- Local artisans and government agencies need to design brochures, catalogues and emphasize on disseminating authentic information of the products to the visiting tourists.
- Local artisans should design the products according to the needs of the market and potential consumers.
- The diversity of the state should be publicized across mediums and Uttarakhand should be promoted as round the year tourism destination.

For further information, please contact, Prakash Rout, Research Scholar, pcrorissa@gmail.com and Vaihav Bhatt, Research Scholar, vaibhav_bhatt1985@yahoo.co.in, Centre for Mountain Tourism and Hospitality Studies, HNB Garhwal University (A Central University)

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