The influence of consumer-generated electronic word-of-mouth on travelers' intention for online hotel booking: A study at Phuket in Thailand

[1] Varughese Kizhakkacharuvil John, [2] Saowapa Thumapun
[1] Associate Professor in Management, [2] Graduate, MS in Management Program
[1][2] Graduate School of Advanced Technology Management (GSATM), Assumption University, Bangkok, Thailand
[2] vjohn@au.edu, [1] varughese.kjohn@gmail.com

Abstract: - The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of seven attributes of consumer-generated electronic word-of-mouth on Thai and foreign leisure travelers' intention for online hotel booking. The sample data were collected from Amanpuri Resort, located in Phuket, Thailand. The sampling method that was employed in this study was non-probability sampling, and the sample size (N = 110) was calculated by using Green's formula for unknown population. A self-administered questionnaire, consisting of 4 sections, was manually distributed to participants prior to their departure from the hotel. Seven attributes of consumer-generated electronic word-of-mouth and intention for online hotel booking were measured using a 5-point interval scale. Descriptive statistical analysis such as frequency distribution, means, and standard deviation, were used to describe respondents' demographic characteristics. Multiple linear regression analysis was used to test the relationship between seven attributes of consumer-generated electronic word-of-mouth and intention for online hotel booking. There is high degree of positive correlation (R = 0.88) between 'intention for online hotel booking' and hotel reviews by 'electronic word of mouth'. The predictor variables have an explanatory power of 77.4 (R^2) percent on the predicted variable 'Intention for online hotel booking'. The F-value (7, 102) 101.67 is significant at less than 1 percent level and hence the model is proved as significant for the data collected for the study. Thus, the hypotheses testing revealed that the seven attributes of consumer-generated electronic word-of-mouth have an influence on Thai and foreign leisure travelers' intention for online hotel booking.

Keywords: E-WOM, Hotel booking, Online reviews, Purchase intention, User-generated.

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of Internet applications for the tourism and hospitality industry has led to enormous amounts of consumer-generated electronic word-of-mouth on different travel related facilities (Ye, Law, & Gu, 2009). The influence of consumer-generated electronic word-of-mouth is directly applicable to tourism and hospitality, as Pan, MacLaurin, and Crotts (2007) stated that consumer-generated electronic word-of-mouth about travel destinations, hotels, and services is a valid source of information for travelers. This is because most services and products offered by the hospitality industry are experience goods, which means that its quality is only known after the service has been consumed (Litvin, Goldsmith, & Pan, 2008). A key insight deduced from previous studies is that the influence of consumer-generated electronic word-of-mouth is particularly significant for experience goods (Klein, 1998), as their quality is often unknown before consumption and consumers have to rely on word-of-mouth and consumer-

generated electronic word-of-mouth to make inferences about such goods. Yoo, Lee, and Gretzel (2007) found that about 30 million people visit Trip Advisor to utilize other travelers' reviews every month, with reports indicating that potential visitors attribute more than 50 million consumer-generated electronic word-of-mouth and opinions on nearly half a million business hotels, attractions, and other hospitality businesses worldwide (Vasquez, 2012). Furthermore, a report from Milan (2007) published in Travelindustrywire.com stated that consumer-generated electronic word-of-mouth has a strong impact on the consumer decision-making process, as 84 percent among potential travelers were influenced by reviews when making their travel reservations.

From a customer's perspective, word-of-mouth additionally affects their judgment to purchase (Brown, Broderick, & Lee, 2007); therefore, customers predominantly trust word-of-mouth as a neutral source of information (Litvin et al., 2008). A study conducted by Gretzel (2007) on a sample of Trip Advisor users confirms the importance of consumer-generated electronic word-of-

mouth during the phase of travel planning, especially in deciding where to stay. According to Gretzel and Yoo (2008), 75 percent of travelers have considered comments of other consumers as an information source when planning their trips for pleasure. Additionally, Goldenberg, Libai, and Muller (2001) highlighted that a consumer's decision-making process is strongly influenced by consumer-generated electronic word-of-mouth. Ye, Law, Gu, and Chen (2011) studied the impacts of consumer-generated electronic word-of-mouth on hotel online bookings and found that travel reviews have a remarkable impact on online room sales. Gretzel and Yoo (2008) additionally claimed that travel related reviews are usually well perceived as they seemingly produce an up-to-date, enjoyable, and reliable source of information than reviews posted by travel service suppliers. Vermeulen and Seegers (2009) revealed that positive consumer-generated electronic word-of-mouth improves the perception of hotels among potential consumers. It is typically understood that user-generated travel experience has either negative or positive effects on the reputation of hotels, and can consequently either increase or decrease the amount of potential consumers (Sparks & Browning, 2011; Sparks, Perkins, & Buckley, 2013).

2. RESEARCH PROBLEM

Consumer information sharing within the web setting has been a preferred analysis space in recent years (M. K. O. Lee, Cheung, Lim, & Sia, 2006; Rafaeli & Raban, 2005). Current studies mostly focused on the factors driving consumers to share information, but very little attention was paid to the factor that drives consumers to use online consumer reviews for their purchasing decisions. The substantial growth in online social networks has vastly expanded the potential impact of consumer-generated electronic word-of-mouth on consumer purchasing decision, and it has become strongly influential reference points for consumers to establish their decision-making process to purchase. This research study seeks to identify how the seven attributes of consumer-generated electronic word-of-mouth influence Thai and foreign leisure travellers' intention for online hotel booking. The study is based on a conceptual framework of a previous study conducted by Xinyuan, Law, and Wang (2015), which proved that positive relationships exist between usefulness, reviewer expertise, timeliness, volume and comprehensiveness, and respondents' intention to purchase a hotel room.

In this study, the influence of the seven attributes of consumer-generated electronic word-of-mouth (usefulness of online reviews, reviewer expertise, timeliness of online

reviews, volume of online reviews, positive online reviews, negative online reviews, and comprehensiveness of online reviews) on Thai and foreign leisure travelers' intention for online hotel booking in Thailand was examined. The results of this study can assist online website review operators and hoteliers to attain a clear comprehension of the impact of consumer-generated electronic word-of-mouth and discover the factors influencing travelers' intention for online hotel booking.

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The objective of the study was to identify the influence of seven attributes of consumer-generated electronic word-of-mouth (usefulness of online reviews, reviewer expertise, timeliness of online reviews, volume of online reviews, positive online reviews, negative online reviews, and comprehensiveness of online reviews) on Thai and foreign leisure travelers' intention for online hotel booking.

4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

This research contributes to the body of knowledge on the importance of consumer-generated electronic word-of-mouth on travelers' intention for online hotel booking. To date, there are not many studies that have investigated this topic in the Thai hospitality industry, and it therefore makes a significant contribution towards the understanding of the impact of consumer-generated electronic word-of-mouth on travelers' intention for online hotel booking. The outcome of this research would first of all help hotel managers to understand customers' perception towards electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) and how it motivates Thai and foreign leisure travelers towards online hotel booking. This research focuses on seven attributes of consumer-generated electronic word-of-mouth and intention for online hotel booking; as such, managers of hotels would be able to develop reviews system according to consumer's perception which in turn would lead to an increase in intention for online hotel booking. Secondly, consumers would also benefit from a reliable and developed review system and online booking system to anticipate customers' preferences. Lastly, this research would be beneficial to other researchers who are interested in studying the relationships between electronic word-of-mouth and online booking.

5. SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

The study explored the perception of consumers who have stayed at Amanpuri Resort, Phuket, Thailand. Both Thai and foreign leisure travelers were included in the scope of the study. The study primarily aimed to

investigate how the seven attributes of consumer-generated electronic word-of-mouth influenced the intention for online hotel booking. A convenience sampling of leisure travelers with no limitation on gender, education, and occupation was used. The period of the study was from October 2017 to April 2018.

6. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to the report from 2017 Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index, the World Economic Forum places Thailand as the 34th country overall and the 3rd country in South-East Asia (after Singapore and Malaysia) out of 136 countries surveyed. Between 2018 and 2020, hotel occupancy is expected to be 66%-70% on average, as annual tourism performance is forecasted to show 8%-10% incremental increase in international arrivals and 5%-7% increase in the number of tourists domestically (Travel Trends, 2019). This is a very positive outlook for overall hospitality and tourism industry in Thailand, when compared to other destinations within the same region. According to a forecast made by the Asia Development Bank the economic growth, from 2017 to 2020, in ASEAN countries by 5.7% due to greater levels of exportation. As the ASEAN economy strongly develops, together with positive improvement in relationships among ASEAN countries, this will definitely enhance the number of ASEAN tourist arrivals to Thailand. The above analysis is in line with forecasts reported by the World Travel and Tourism Council. The finding reveals that there is a predicted 6.7% annual growth in the Thai tourism industry over the next decade. The hospitality sector will be in a better position due to its future growth prospect and more convenient transportation system, both domestically and internationally.

Consumer-generated word-of-mouth is a consumer-dominated channel of marketing communication where the sender is independent of the market. It is therefore perceived to be more reliable, credible, and trustworthy by consumers compared to company-initiated communications (Schiffman & Kanuk, 1995). Traditional communications theory considers word-of-mouth as having a powerful influence on behaviour, especially on consumers' information search, evaluation, and subsequent decision making (Money, Gilly, & Graham, 1998; Silverman, 2001). It provides information concerning product performance and the social and psychological consequences of the purchase decision (Cox, 1963). Internet and technology of Web 2.0 have offered an online platform, which facilitates accessibility to information aggregation from individuals. Park and Lee (2009) advised that online reviews have an impact on consumers to the

point that they trust that the feedback could enable their purchase decision-making process. Consumers normally rely on the usefulness of online reviews as a primary marker to gauge product and service quality (Willemsen, Neijens, Bronner, & Ridder, 2011). Most importantly, the technology of Web 2.0 has introduced an online platform that facilitates information aggregation from a vast cluster of dissimilar individuals. Thus, the usefulness of online reviews is primarily advised as an efficient indicator of consumers' intention to follow a review (Cheung Christy, 2008; Park & Lee, 2009). Several studies have revealed that usefulness of online reviews could affect the prevalence of usage as well (Gretzel, 2007).

The information available on online platforms are provided by anonymous individuals, this attribute represents another distinctive feature of online reviews (M. K. O. Lee et al., 2006). Most importantly, in the context of online communication, travellers who share personal opinions online tend to seek travel information from other travellers who engage in similar activities (Akehurst, 2008). However, it is challenging for information seekers to evaluate the knowledge and competency of a reviewer because of limited access to personal attributes and background. (Cheung, Lee, & Rabjohn, 2008) found that reviewer expertise positively influences consumer booking intention.

Timeliness of online review is important and it pertains to "whether information is at present, well-timed, and up-to-date." (Cheung et al., 2008). Regardless of its importance, timeliness is typically neglected in studies related to electronic user-generated reviews (Ives, Olson, & Baroudi, 1983). Madu and Madu (2002) stated that a website must be constantly up-to-date in order to provide value-added insight to end-users. Its impact may be even stronger if opinions are labelled as "spotlight reviews". This is because these reviews appear at the top of the comment page before other reviews (Cheung et al., 2008). From consumers' point of view, the average helpfulness of reviews declines as time elapses (Liu, 2006). Similarly, Jindal and Liu (2008) found out that the more recent the product review, the more user attention it will receive; particularly in the e-commerce environment.

The volume of online reviews is another critical facet of word-of-mouth. It is a tool to measure the quantity of overall interactive messages (Liu, 2006). Any discrepancies in volume of consumer-generated online reviews represent a proof that hotels are not all treated equitably. Similarly, it is understandable that online communication is also not treated symmetrically, and has been regarded as a key antecedent of the word-of-mouth effect (Bone, 1995). In online settings, volume of

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consumer-generated opinions is the number of comments provided by reviewers about a particular product or service (Davis & Khazanchi, 2008). Several studies have discovered that volume correlates significantly with consumer behaviours, such as customer-initiated contacts with manufacturers (Bowman & Narayandas, 2001) and market performance in terms of sales (Amblee & Bui, 2007), with increases in customer awareness potentially effecting this occurrence. From a consumer's point of view, some awareness has to be established, especially before purchasing a product about which they have limited knowledge. In the digital community, larger volumes of online comments (negative or positive) tend to appeal to information seekers and then raise product awareness (Davis & Khazanchi, 2008). Furthermore, these consumer-generated reviews also signify the levels of agreement among consumers.

It is arguable that positive online reviews are more credible. Levin and Gaeth (1988) presented consumers with descriptions of ground beef framed either as 75% lean or 25% fat and showed that the product was more likely to be favourably evaluated when described as the former. The outcome of antecedent research studies on the effect of message valence are erratic. According to Maheswaran and Meyers-Levy (1990) series of studies, some findings indicated that positively framed messages are more trustworthy, whereas others suggested the opposite. The lack of consistency may be attributed to the degree to which consumers are involved in detailed message processing. Westbrook (1987) revealed that both positive and negative information can influence consumers' loyalty, product evaluation, and purchasing decision; therefore, it would be more logical to examine the impacts of negative and positive reviews.

Negative online reviews are predominantly produced as a reaction to dissatisfaction. It can be damaging to businesses by causing an adverse effect on overall perception (Zhao, Wang, Guo, & Law, 2015). The action of spreading negative written feedback could be even more damaging than simply complaining, which is mostly invisible (Zhao et al., 2015). On the other hand, positive reviews mainly emphasize on extolling a company's quality orientation, for example, making recommendations to others (Yeon Hong & Yang, 2009). Negative messages are more diagnostic as they imply inferior quality of products, while positive information is more likely to be associated with high, average, and even low-quality products (Wu, 2013). Message content is a key focus during a decision-making process, and as such, consumers tend to place weight on negative information when evaluating products (Mizerski, 1982; Richins, 1983;

Weinberger & Dillon, 1980). Moreover, negative details escalate faster than positive information, as irritated customers are more likely to inform relatives and friends about their negative experiences than positive ones (Richins, 1983). When the proportion of negative consumer-generated online comments rises, consumers' attitude towards the product would become unfavourable (M. K. O. Lee et al., 2006).

Internet messaging platforms contain disparate types of messages ranging from simple recommendations with several evaluative key points to more complex comments and factual information. This is associated to comprehensiveness, which is a measure of how detailed and complete the messages are (Cheung et al., 2008). In unfamiliar circumstances, detailed explanation and specific knowledge are crucial in order to proceed further (Money et al., 1998). Money et al. (1998) also suggested that individual reference is the most efficient source of thorough information, and this statement emphasizes the importance of word-of-mouth. Referring to a study conducted by Gremler, Gwinner, and Brown (2001), comprehensive and detailed knowledge involves a connection between information seekers and reviewers to a certain extent. So, in uncertain online circumstances, a primary indicator for consumers to consider whether to purchase a product could potentially be the comprehensiveness of online reviews. Antecedent studies have consistently testified a relationship between consumer behaviour and the comprehensiveness of online reviews. Sullivan (1999) noticed that the more comprehensive the online information is, the more varied the end user categories are and it is closely associated with the likelihood of user acquisition and retention. The comprehensiveness of online reviews is therefore the most effective component of user-generated posting (Cheung et al., 2008). This is because it indicates the willingness of consumers to accept and adopt the given information, as well as the factors encouraging adoption (Cheung et al., 2008).

Behavioural intention is another variable of the study. Behavioural intention refers to a possibility that a consumer will react to a specific service or product (Dodds, Monroe, & Grewal, 1991). It is a fundamental indicator of actual purchasing behaviour. The importance of behavioural intention, and particularly booking intention, has been examined empirically in tourism and the hospitality industry (Bai, Law, & Wen, 2008; Sparks & Browning, 2011). For online hotel reservation, purchase intention occurs when a consumer has a desire to reserve an accommodation using the hotel's website, as opposed to other channels. According to Ajzen and Fishbein (2000),

the intention for online hotel booking is defined as the degree to which a consumer is willing and intends to perform specified purchasing behaviour or become involved in purchase transactions. In this current study, the intention for online hotel booking is defined as the intention of a consumer make an online booking for a hotel room (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2000).

7. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework for this research was developed based on the studies of Xinyuan et al. (2015).
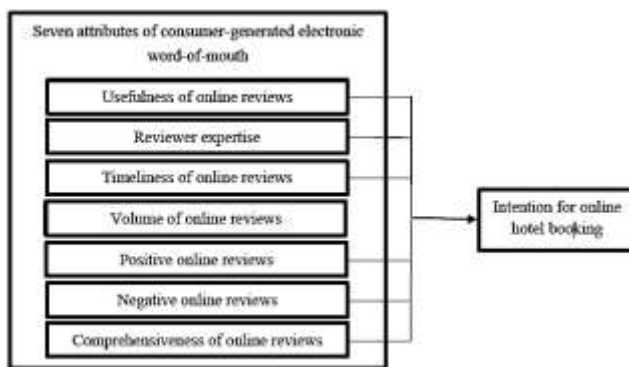

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

This research study sought to identify how seven attributes of consumer-generated electronic word-of-mouth influence Thai and foreign leisure travellers' intention for online hotel booking. Based on the above conceptual framework and previous study conducted by Xinyuan et al. (2015), this concept model testifies positive relationships between usefulness, reviewer expertise, timeliness, volume, and comprehensiveness and respondents' intention to purchase a hotel room. A significantly negative relationship between negative online reviews and intention to purchase a hotel room was also identified, whereas the influence from positive review upon intention to purchase a hotel room was not statistically significant.

8. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The study of Xinyuan et al. (2015) has established the relationship between the seven attributes of consumer-generated electronic word-of-mouth, such as, usefulness of online reviews, reviewer expertise, timeliness of online reviews, volume of online reviews, positive online reviews, negative online reviews, and comprehensiveness of online reviews with intention for online hotel booking. Hence, they hypotheses of the study are

H0: There is no significant influence of the seven attributes of consumer-generated electronic word-of-mouth (usefulness of online reviews, reviewer expertise, timeliness of online reviews, volume of online reviews, positive online reviews, negative online reviews, and comprehensiveness of online reviews) on leisure travelers' intention for online hotel booking.

Ha: There is significant influence of the seven attributes of consumer-generated electronic word-of-mouth (usefulness of online reviews, reviewer expertise, timeliness of online reviews, volume of online reviews, positive online reviews, negative online reviews, and comprehensiveness of online reviews) on leisure travelers' intention for online hotel booking.

9. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Usefulness of online reviews is defined as "the degree to which consumers believe that online reviews would facilitate their purchase decision-making process" (Park & Lee, 2009).

Reviewer expertise refers to "the degree to which the audience feels that the source is capable of making correct and valid assertions" (Bristor, 1990).

Timeliness of online reviews refers to "whether the messages are current, timely, and up-to-date. Even though its importance is known and generally agreed upon, timeliness is frequently ignored in online review research" (Cheung et al., 2008).

Volume of online reviews is "the total number of interactive messages which review hotels. Normally, reviews do not treat hotels equally so they support the readers to make decisions easier" (Liu, 2006)

Positive online reviews are "generally recognized as a valuable vehicle for promoting a firm's products and services" (Gremler et al., 2001)

Negative online reviews are "mainly generated as a response to dissatisfaction and can be harmful to business retailers and manufacturers by having an adverse effect on business"(Charlett, Garland, & Marr, 1995).

Comprehensiveness of online review is "the complex review which is a measure of how detailed and complete the messages are" (Cheung et al., 2008).

Intention for online hotel booking is "the degree to which a consumer is willing and intends to perform specified purchasing behavior or become involved in purchase transactions" (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2000). In this study, intention for online hotel booking is defined as the intention of a consumer to book a room in a hotel.

10. POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The target population was composed of Thai and foreign leisure travelers in Thailand who read consumer-generated electronic word-of-mouth prior to booking hotel

room online, which was based on consumer-generated electronic word-of-mouth. The size of the population was unknown at the time of the survey. The sample of this research were Thai and foreign leisure travelers in Thailand who read consumer-generated electronic word-of-mouth prior to booking Amanpuri Resort, Phuket online and stayed at Amanpuri Resort, Phuket between October 2017 and April 2018.

The sample size was calculated according to Green (1991) formula for calculating minimum sample size. The formula was based on a specific type of statistical analysis employed in this study: multiple linear regression. Green (1991) stipulated that the minimum sample size should be based on the number of independent variables. In this study, the number of independent variables was 7, as per the attributes of consumer-generated electronic word-of-mouth.

The formula is $N \geq 50 + 8m$, where 'N' is the minimum sample size and 'm' is the number of independent variables. Hence, the minimum sample size for the study is

$$N \geq 50 + 8 \ (m)$$

$$N \geq 50 + 8(7)$$

$$N \geq 50 + 56$$

$$N \geq 106$$

Thus, a minimum of 106 sample units were required in this study to ensure that the sample is representative of the population (Green, 1991).

11. DATA COLLECTION AND RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

This study employs a non-probability sampling technique called purposive-sampling. Self-administered offline questionnaires were distributed to the target population prior to departure from the hotel. The questionnaire items were grouped by the construct it was intended to measure. All items were measured on a five-point Likert scale in terms of agreement levels. The researcher distributed 200 sets of questionnaires to Thai and foreign leisure travelers who stayed at Amanpuri Resort in Phuket, Thailand, and out of that 110 observations were found to be complete and valid for data analysis. 90 sets of questionnaires were rejected because respondents did not pass screening criteria.

12. PRE-TEST

The internal consistency of the items towards each variable was tested by a pilot study and reliability check. Cronbach's Alpha is often used to test the reliability of the questionnaire items related to the variables in the research. The recommended Cronbach's Alpha score is 0.6 (Zikmund, Carr, Griffin, Babin, & Carr, 2013).

In this research, respondents were chosen for pre-test from the same population. Thirty Thai and foreign leisure travelers in Thailand who read consumer-generated electronic word-of-mouth prior to booking a hotel room online and stayed at Amanpuri Resort, Phuket during October 2017 were chosen for the pre-test to confirm a decent reliability level of the questionnaire. The results from all variables are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Reliability Score (N = 30)

Variable	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Usefulness of online reviews	5	0.966
Reviewer expertise	5	0.815
Timeliness of online reviews	3	0.835
Volume of online reviews	4	0.757
Positive online reviews	3	0.818
Negative online reviews	3	0.758
Comprehensiveness of online	3	0.724
Intention for online hotel booking	3	0.718

It can be seen from Table 1 that the Cronbach's Alpha of all the items were above 0.6, hence it can be concluded that the items in the questionnaire had an acceptable level of internal consistency with the respective variables.

13. DATA PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS

There were 8 variables in this study and each of them had a separate set of questions. There were 31 questions used to measure the variables of the study. Seven attributes of consumer-generated electronic word-of-mouth and intention for online hotel booking were measured using a 5-point Likert scale: '1' (strongly disagree), '2' (disagree), '3' (neutral), '4' (agree), and '5' (strongly agree).

Descriptive statistical analysis, specifically frequency distribution, means, and standard deviations, were applied to describe respondents' demographic characteristics. Multiple regression analysis was used to test the relationship between seven attributes of consumer-generated electronic word-of-mouth and intention for online hotel booking.

14. SUMMARY STATISTIC

The demographic profile (Table 2) of the sample indicates that majority are female travelers (54%) than the male travelers (46%) and the majority are in the age group of 45 years or above (64%). It signifies that leisure trips are enjoyed mostly by upper middle aged and aged people in Thailand. The ratio between married and single is almost the same in the sample. The monthly income is above THB 50,000 for the majority (79%) in the sample and majority have a Bachelor degree (67%) and the rest have Master or Doctoral degree. And more interestingly the vast majority (97%) are working at managerial or above managerial level.

Table 2: Distribution of Sample Profile (n=110)

Sl. No.	Variable	Items	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Gender	Male	51	46.4
		Female	59	53.6
2.	Age (years)	25-34	7	6.3
		35-44	33	30.0
		45-54	41	37.3
		55-64	17	15.5
		65 or above	12	10.9
3.	Marital status	Single	56	50.9
		Married	54	49.1
4.	Monthly Income (THB)	40,001-50,000	23	20.9
		50,001-60,000	26	23.6
		Above 60,000	61	55.5
5.	Education	Bachelor degree	74	67.2
		Master degree	28	25.5
		Doctoral degree	8	7.3
6.	Employment status	Staff	3	2.7
		Manager	56	50.9
		Above managerial level	51	46.4

Table 3: Distribution of Hotel Booking experience (n=110)

Sl. No.	Variable	Items	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Hotel room online booking frequency	For almost every trip	74	67.3
		For about every other trip	36	32.7
2.	Hotel preference	Luxury hotel	59	53.7
		Chain hotel	34	30.9
		Time share/Vacation rentals	14	12.7
		Economy hotel	3	2.7
3.	Use of e-WOM	For almost every hotel booked	87	79.1
		For about every other hotel booked	23	20.9
4.	Time spent on reading e-WOM (in minutes)	11-20	73	66.4
		6-10	30	27.3
		5	7	6.3
5.	Valence of online reviews	Positive reviews	88	80.0
		Negative reviews	22	20.0
6.	Type of e-WOM	Reviews about service	45	40.9
		Reviews about price	38	34.5
		Reviews about facilities	18	16.4
		Reviews about location	9	8.2
7.	Generation of e-WOM	For most trips	54	49.2
		For every trip	37	33.6
		Only for one or two trips	15	13.6
		Never	4	3.6

The second part of the questionnaire consists of questions relating to the booking experience of the travelers which are tabulated as frequency scores and percentages in Table 3. It indicates that 67 percent do online booking of their hotel for every trip and 53 percent

book in a luxury hotel. This is a significant indicator of the digital literacy of the travelers and also their attitude towards a comfortable stay during their trip. Moreover, 79 percent of the travelers in the sample use electronic word of mouth for almost every trip and the time spent for reading the reviews and comments would be 11 to 20 minute for 66 percent in the sample and 80 percent review the positive comments about the hotel. About 75 percent of the travelers in the sample are concerned about the reviews on services of the hotel and the price of the room. Lastly, the vast majority of the travelers (83%) has the habit of generating an electronic word of mouth after every or almost every trip. These are indicators, pima facie, that e-WOM has an implication in setting a hotel booking for a traveler's trip.

The third part of the Questionnaire consisted of the items used to measure each variable identified in study. The eight variables are measured by 29 items altogether and they are measure in a 5-point interval scale. The interpretation of mean scores of the variables which were measured in the five-point scale continuum is calculated in a range of the score as given here: 1.00-1.80 = strongly disagree, 1.81-2.60 = disagree, 2.61-3.40 = neutral, 3.41-4.20 = agree, and 4.21-5.00 = strongly agree (Zikmund et al., 2013). The summary statistic of the variables are given in Table 3. The independent variables used for the survey are 'Usefulness of online review', 'Reviewer expertise', 'Timeliness of online review', 'Volume of online reviews', 'Positive online reviews', 'Negative online reviews', and 'Comprehensiveness of online reviews'. The dependent variable is 'Intention for online hotel booking'.

Table 4: Summary statistic of the Variables (n=110)

Sl. No.	Variable	Items	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1.	Usefulness of online reviews (IV)	1. Review contents are relevant to products.	4.42	0.496	Strongly agree
		2. Review contents are genuine.	4.15	0.496	Agree
		3. Review contents are reliable.	4.52	0.502	Strongly agree
		4. Review contents are neutral.	3.87	0.607	Agree
		5. Online reviews are useful.	4.53	0.502	Strongly agree
		Average	**4.30**	**0.249**	**Strongly agree**
2.	Reviewer expertise (IV)	1. Reviewers have hotel-related knowledge.	3.84	0.773	Agree
		2. Reviewers are people of some prominence	3.37	0.504	Neutral
		3. Reviewers have a good credit record	4.07	0.673	Agree
		4. Reviewers are experienced web users (e.g. senior members, forum master, etc.)	3.68	0.703	Agree
		5. Posting negative reviews requires more professionalism in reviewers	3.98	0.754	Agree
		Average	**3.79**	**0.300**	**Agree**
3.	Timeliness of online review (IV)	1. Instantly posted reviews are important.	3.85	0.744	Agree
		2. Recently posted reviews are important.	4.08	0.706	Agree
		3. Most recent reviews can reflect the up-to-date	4.18	0.732	Agree

		information of products/services.	4.04	0.384	Agree
		Average			
4.	Volume of online reviews (IV)	1. I pay more attention to hotels that have a larger volume of online reviews.	4.05	0.752	Agree
		2. Volume of online reviews relates to the attention a hotel gets.	4.25	0.722	Strongly agree
		3. Larger volumes of online reviews reflect that many people are interested in a hotel.	4.19	0.613	Agree
		4. Larger volumes of online reviews mean more equally distributed negative and positive reviews.	3.28	0.890	Neutral
		Average	3.95	0.376	Agree
5.	Positive online reviews (IV)	1. I pay more attention to positive reviews.	3.91	0.873	Agree
		2. Positive reviews are more valuable.	3.52	1.107	Agree
		3. I pay more attention to hotels which have larger volumes of positive review	4.35	0.478	Strongly agree
		Average	3.92	0.473	Agree
6.	Negative online reviews (IV)	1. The volume of negative reviews is important.	4.49	0.502	Strongly agree
		2. An abundance of positive reviews will make you dislike a hotel.	2.43	0.913	Disagree
		3. Negative reviews will terminate your booking intentions.	4.31	0.660	Strongly agree
		Average	3.74	0.393	Agree
7.	Comprehensiveness of online reviews (IV)	1. Summarized reviews are as valuable as detailed ones.	3.42	0.898	Agree
		2. Detailed reviews would attract more attentions.	3.52	0.946	Agree
		3. Detailed reviews are more valuable.	3.45	1.089	Agree
		Average	3.46	0.532	Agree
8.	Intention for online hotel booking (DV)	1. The likelihood of booking this hotel is high.	4.32	0.557	Strongly agree
		2. The probability that I would consider booking this hotel is high.	4.32	0.468	Strongly agree
		3. My willingness to book this hotel is high.	4.25	0.666	Strongly agree
		Average	4.29	0.340	Strongly agree

Among the seven independent variables the level of agreement among the respondents is highest for the variable 'Usefulness of online reviews' (Mean = 4.3 and SD = 0.249). Therefore, all the respondents feel that online contents are genuine, relevant, reliable, neutral, and useful for their purchase intention of online hotel booking. This is followed by the variable 'Timeliness of online reviews' which has got a mean value of 4.04 with SD 0.3, indicating that all the respondents agree to the opinion that the reviews must be recent, current and the latest for making a purchase intention of online hotel booking. The variable in the third place is 'Volume of online reviews' which has got a mean value of 3.95 with SD 0.376 indicating that almost all the respondents agree to the opinion that larger volume of online reviews about a hotel give them more confidence towards purchase intention thorough online hotel booking. This is followed by the 'Positive online reviews' which has got a mean value of 3.92 with SD 0.473, indicating that all the respondents agree to the opinion that they pay more attention for positive reviews, positive reviews are more valuable, and

larger the positive review for a hotel the better for them to have a purchase intention through online hotel booking. 'Reviewer expertise' is the in the fifth position which has got a mean value of 3.79 with SD 0.3, indicating that reviewers expertise and knowledge in hotel booking have a level of impact on the decision making for the online booking of a hotel. 'Negative online reviews' is in the sixth place with a mean value of 3.74 and SD 0.393, indicating that all of the respondents have the opinion that negative reviews are also an important factor in making decision on online hotel booking. The last agreement level is for the variable 'comprehensiveness of online reviews' (Mean= 3.46, and SD = 0.532) indicating that all of the respondents have the opinion that summarized reviews are as valuable as detailed reviews for the online booking of a hotel for their travel trip.

15. REGRESSION ANALYSIS

The following hypotheses were formulated for the study-

H0: There is no significant influence of the seven attributes of consumer-generated electronic word-of-mouth on leisure travelers' intention for online hotel booking.

Ha: There is significant influence of the seven attributes of consumer-generated electronic word-of-mouth leisure travelers' intention for online hotel booking.

Table 5 - Multiple Linear Regression Model

R .880				Adj. R sq .741	
R sq .774				SE of estimate .333	
F (7,102) 101.67				Sig.F.000	
Res. SS 1.31				Res. MS .111	

Purchase Intention (DV)	Unstandardized Coeff.		Standardized Coeff.	t-value	p-value
	B	S.E.	Beta		
(Constant)	4.511	0.906		1.980	0.259
Usefulness of online reviews	0.435	0.132	0.470	6.191	0.000
Reviewer expertise	0.313	0.108	0.313	4.855	0.000
Timeliness of online reviews	0.448	0.085	0.467	6.743	0.000
Volume of online reviews	0.323	0.087	0.365	5.915	0.000
Positive online reviews	0.310	0.073	0.314	5.342	0.000
Negative online reviews	-0.292	0.084	-0.211	4.086	0.000
Comprehensiveness of online reviews	0.455	0.062	0.487	7.900	0.000

The results of the multiple linear regression analysis are given in Table 5. There is high degree of positive correlation (R = 0.88) between 'intention for online hotel booking' and hotel reviews by 'electronic word of mouth'. The predictor variables have an explanatory power of 77.4 (R2) percent on the predicted variable 'Intention for online hotel booking'. The F-value (7, 102) 101.67 is significant at less than 1 percent level and hence the model is proved as significant for the data collected for the study. All the beta coefficients are positive except 'Negative online reviews' which is negative as expected for the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The beta-value of 'Comprehensiveness of online reviews'

(0.487) is computed as the most powerful followed by 'Usefulness of online reviews' (0.470), 'Timeliness of online reviews' (0.467), 'Volume of online reviews' (0.365), 'Positive online reviews' (0.314), 'Reviewer expertise' (0.313), and 'Negative online reviews' (-0.211).

16. DISCUSSION

Based on the hotel booking experience of 110 respondents that participated in this study, in terms of leisure trips, most respondents booked a hotel room online for almost every trip (67.3%), and the majority of them (53.6%) preferred to stay in luxury hotels for these trips. In addition, respondents read consumer-generated electronic word-of-mouth prior to booking a hotel room for a leisure trip. For almost every hotel booked (79.1%), respondents usually spent 11-20 minutes reading consumer-generated electronic word-of-mouth before booking a hotel room (66.4%). Moreover, respondents paid more attention to positive online reviews (80%) than to negative online reviews (20%). In terms of types of consumer-generated electronic word-of-mouth, respondents felt that reviews about the service of the hotel (40.9%) was more important than reviews about price, facilities, and location. Lastly, after a leisure trip, 49.1% of respondents wrote consumer generated electronic word-of-mouth of the hotel. The reasons behind the above outcome are that respondents of this research study prefer to stay at a luxury hotel for leisure trips. As a result, they would expect to receive exceptional service from hotel service providers. In this case, online reviews, particularly positive online reviews, from other customers are very important. Practically, this is a useful piece of information as it guides hoteliers to be more proactive in managing how consumer-generated electronic word-of-mouth appears on social media platforms. Negative online reviews must be dealt with carefully and professionally in order to prevent disappointment and dissatisfaction from potential future reviewers.

The outcome of the study shows that the seven attributes of consumer-generated electronic word-of-mouth (usefulness of online reviews, reviewer expertise, timeliness of online reviews, volume of online reviews, positive online reviews, negative online reviews, and comprehensiveness of online reviews) had an influence on Thai and foreign leisure travelers' intention for online hotel booking. Moreover, every variable (usefulness of online reviews, reviewer expertise, timeliness of online reviews, volume of online reviews, positive online reviews, and comprehensiveness of online reviews) had a positive influence over intention for online hotel booking, except negative online reviews which had negative influence on intention for online hotel booking.

Findings from this study were consistent with previous research. Vermeulen and Seegers (2009) and M. Lee, Jeong, and Lee (2017) supported that positive and negative reviews have an influence on consumers' intention to make a hotel reservation. Xinyuan et al. (2015) also found out that there were positive casual relationships between usefulness of online reviews, reviewer expertise, timeliness of online reviews, volume of online reviews, comprehensiveness of online reviews and respondents' online booking intentions. In addition, results from the study conducted by Memarzadeh, Blum, and Adams (2015) reinforced that behavioral intention was positively affected by both positive and negative e-comments.

Therefore, in order to increase levels of intention for online hotel booking, it is important for hoteliers to fully understand and positively take advantage of the seven attributes of consumer-generated electronic word-of-mouth (usefulness of online reviews, reviewer expertise, timeliness of online reviews, volume of online reviews, positive online reviews, negative online reviews, and comprehensiveness of online reviews) for further improvement.

17. LIMITATION OF THE RESEARCH

There are two main areas of limitation in this study. Firstly is the variables used to measure the intention for online hotel booking, which are only based on the seven attributes of consumer-generated electronic word-of-mouth. In fact, there are other factors that could potentially have a significant influence on intention for online hotel booking such as hotel credibility (Cheung et al., 2008), and personal attitude (Wang, 2015).

The second limitation is the data collection period. This study started the information collecting process from 2017 and carried over to 2018 to complete the statistical analysis. In reality, the intention of consumers towards an online booking for a particular hotel may change in the future due to various reasons and factors; therefore, the results of this study are limited due to its time specificity.

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