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Abstract

The pace of technology advancement is faster than ever before. The key to success is when the business focuses on online service technology, particularly online travel agencies (OTA) that enable easier and convenient room reservation. However, most of the recent technology acceptance studies have failed to address the consumers' psychological traits or general belief towards the new adoption of certain systems. In Malaysia, the application of OTA has not been empirically measured to any great extent, where the implementation of this type of reservation system is still in the early stage. It is therefore important to gain an in-depth understanding of the system by examining technology readiness as the psychographic factor and the technology acceptance on customers' OTA experiences. A survey questionnaire among customers, who have used OTA has been undertaken with a total of 453 respondents where all the data were found usable. The survey was conducted at Kuala Lumpur International Airport 2 (KLIA2). The results from descriptive analysis revealed that most of the respondents believed technologies can enhance and improve flexibility, efficiency, and control over their daily lives. The outcome also indicated that the respondents are not pioneers in using and owning new technologies. Their main concern is the security of using new technology especially if it involves monetary and personal identity in the transaction. The knowledge of customers' readiness and acceptance will be beneficial to identify possible adopters and users of the technology-based offering.

Keywords: Hotel, Online Travel Agencies, Technology Readiness, Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology

Introduction

Online Travel Agencies

People now live in the age where they constantly need to travel. They need a place to rest and sleep if they are traveling for more than one day. There are numerous types of lodging all over the world to accommodate them. As a result, the hotel sector has become so competitive and there is also an increase in demand as more travelers checking in to their establishment. According to Hospitalitynet (2016), United States (US) accommodation demand increased by 1.6 percent throughout the first half of 2016 compared to the same period in 2015. The rise of millennial traveler has also created new trends that forced hotel sector to venture into new types of business, technology and hotel marketing. The millennials travel more often than other generations and spend roughly $200 billion US dollars a year (Travel Pulse, 2016). Technology advancement has vastly improved compared to the previous years. This phenomenon deviates the expectation of both hotel guests and the hotels on how the latter conduct their business. According to MDG Advertising (2016), hotels business that venture in technology will receive the most number of reservations in 2016. The key to this success is when the business focuses on online service technology, particularly online booking website that enables all types of hotel services to be extended to customers. The Internet is tremendously vital to Millennials. Since they are the majority compared to other generations in terms of traveling, their demand on personalized and customized service are crucial to the company they choose.

According to Buhalis (2003), over the last decade, travel and tourism arena had accomplished dramatic growth of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). It also had an erratic impact on the hotel sector (Law, 2009). Travel and tourism sector had the highest volume of the online transaction as early as 2004 (Werthner and Ricci, 2004). According to Marcussen (2008), in terms of revenue generated through online channels, online hotel reservation is the second largest sales item after airline booking. According to Buhalis (2003), some hotels are reluctant to adopt new technologies, despite the marketing and sales can significantly improve resulting from ICT development in the hospitality domain (Schegg, Stangl, Fux, and Inversini, 2013). The opportunities offered by the Internet are greatly significant towards modern tourist (Buhalis and Law, 2008) as tourists are able to find precise information on the Internet (Xiang, Wober, and Fesenmaier, 2008), compare details with other hotels (Inversini and Buhalis, 2009), and consequently making their reservation online (Vermeulen and Seegers, 2009).

The online hotel website has given the travelers control over their travel planning. It is a perfect medium for the hotel sector to provide a quick and easy way to book travel arrangements. The Internet has become the reservation instrument of choice to 57 percent travelers throughout the world (Statisticbrain, 2015). Thus, many companies move to the online world to cater to the global Internet population. As other businesses move to the online world, the hotels need to use the Internet to attract new customers. Advancement in information technology (IT) has changed the ways hotel sector operates. By nature, hotel sector is not technology oriented, nonetheless the increasing demand from sophisticated customer and characteristic of the sector have made the managers and hotel sector to utilize IT to meet the present and future business needs. Moreover, Olsen and Connolly (2000) suggested that information technology is the greatest dynamic forces that alter how

hotel strategize and it would keep on changing the way the sector conducts their business in the future.

Traditionally, hotels use their reservation department or travel agencies to locate their customers (Law and Wong, 2010). The advancement of technology especially the Internet has led to the development of Online Travel Agencies (OTAs) that provide online hotel room booking services. Most companies in the hotel sector have revamped their distribution strategy dramatically because of the rapid change. According to Hu, Kandampully, and Juwaheer (2009), the sector has accepted OTAs since it helps them to reach their customer effectively. To sell rooms, most hotels have set up their own websites as a platform for direct booking through the Internet. They also worked together with OTAs to sell their rooms, so that they can reach a wider range of customer besides maximizing their revenue (Qi, Law and Buhalis, 2013).

According to Bitner, Ostrom, and Meuter (2002), the main benefits to hotels on effectively applying OTA are to reduce operational cost, ensure guest loyalty and satisfaction, and to enter new markets. Hotel personnel can concentrate on aspects of the service delivery where the personal touch is more crucial since OTAs permit them to be relieved from repetitive responsibilities (Lee and Allaway, 2002). Despite all the benefits, OTAs also have their limitations. From the hotel perspective, there are limitations linked to the expenditure on investment and training for personnel and client (Bitner et al., 2002). According to Lee and Allaway (2002), the business may encounter increment in expenses if the technology does not gain user utilization because at the same time, it needs to maintain the operational personnel and pay for the new technology. OTAs leave small chances for the early encounter of opportunities and feedback for service recovery since it reduces tremendously the employee's contact with customers during service delivery process (Laws, 2004).

Nevertheless, technologies are varied and understanding on how technology-specific characteristics influence acceptance is a crucial issue in research. According to Azdel, Khalid, Radzi, and Yusof (2016), most of the recent technology acceptance studies have failed to address the consumers' psychological traits or general belief from the researchers' point of view are very crucial. Conventionally, most social science researchers will adopt various kinds of models that specifically study the perception of customers on a specific system and relate them with their behavioral intention and actual usage of the systems. From the above discussion, it is clear that the application of OTA has not been empirically measured to any great extent in both developed countries and developing countries like Malaysia where the implementation of this type of reservation system is still in the early stage. From this gap, it is therefore important to gain an in-depth understanding of the system by examining technology readiness as the psychographic factor and technology acceptance on customers' OTA experiences.

Literature Review
Technology Readiness
The rapid emergence of new technology-based products and services are making businesses transforming their market strategies towards serving customers through modernization and technology application. One of these technology improvements is on communication and interaction

with the customers via the Internet, which is dependable on customers' technology readiness. Therefore, it is a necessity to embark on a thorough investigation on customers' Technology Readiness (TR). Their readiness might influence their perspective on ideal website and efficiency towards producing superior electronic service quality. According to Robert and DelVecchio (2009), if an individual has stable thoughts and behavior, relatively it will be consistent across different kind of situations. It represents the person's personality. Personality characteristics have been considered significant in predicting human behavior. In identifying the local customer, Ranaweera, Bansal, and McDougall (2008) suggested that personality traits have both challenges and opportunities to OTAs.

Individuals are likely to have different feelings towards a variety of technologies, whether it is positive or negative. However, the levels of dominance of those feelings are not the same across persons. Thus, it is rational that consumers will have dissimilar excitement on the usage of technology-based service. According to Davis, Bagozzi, and Warshaw (1989), individuals are believed to be exposed to theoretical technology-belief continuum secured between strongly positive and strongly negative. The high sense of willingness to adopt or to use technologies is referred to as Technology Readiness (TR). TR is defined as a person's inclination to adopt and use new technologies in achieving goals in home life and at work (Parasuraman, 2000). In addition, TR is a perspective consequential from a shape of psychological enablers and inhibitors that determine an individual's propensity to use new technology. Those state of mind categorized the positive and negative beliefs about technology into four technology readiness dimensions called optimism, innovativeness, discomfort, and insecurity. The first two dimensions are the motivator that increase a customer's TR while the other two are identified as inhibitors that restrain TR. According to Lam, Chiang and Parasuraman (2008), both stimuli and inhibitors will manage every person's behavior towards technology adoption. Generally, TR will specify individual's openness to technology.

The four TR variables signify various attributes and psychological processes essential to technology adoption. Optimism on the other hand is referred to as a positive vision and belief in technology that provides people efficiency, flexibility and control in their lives (Tsikriktsis, 2004). According to Parasuraman and Grewal (2000), innovativeness is defined as the tendency to be a thoughtful leader and technological pioneer. Discomfort is defined as a persons' perception over technology's absence of control and a feeling of being overwhelmed by it (Sophonthummapharn and Tesar, 2007). Insecurity is defined as suspicion of technology and skepticism about its capability to work appropriately. It specifically focuses on how an individual feel about the operation of technology-based services (Sophonthummapharn and Tesar, 2007). In terms of technology adoption, people are not necessarily being only in one of the dimensions. A person who is optimist and innovative towards technology also experienced anxiety the same way as the insecure and discomfort experienced it (Parasuraman, 2000). Mick and Fournier (1998) have confirmed this situation that simultaneously, customers can feel both positive and negative emotion towards new technology. However, when individuals use new technology, they will express more dominant feelings in line with TR dimensions.

Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT)

Venkatesh, Morris, Davis and Davis (2003), formulated Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) to integrate the main competing user acceptance models (i.e. The Theory of Reasoned Action, Technology Acceptance Model, Theory of Planned Behaviour, Motivational Model, The Combined Theory of Planned Behaviour/Technology Acceptance Model, Innovation Diffusion Theory, Model of PC Utilisation, and Social Cognitive Theory) and consequently improve the expectedness and understanding of technology acceptance. According to Venkatesh et al. (2003), the eight models independently explained 17 to 53 percent of the variance in use of various information technology systems. The more significant characteristics of the eight models were brought together to form a unified model for understanding technology acceptance. Later, they developed an extension of UTAUT and called it UTAUT2 (Venkatesh, Thong and Xu, 2012) which will be adopted in this study, and it is more towards the customer usage rather than an organization. Even the new constructs are able to explain consumers' online technology acceptance and usage. UTAUT2 considers seven constructs by which four are from UTAUT (performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence and facilitating conditions) and the additional new three dimensions are hedonic motivation, price value, and habit. UTAUT2 adapts the definitions of the seven constructs to consumer technology acceptance (Venkatesh et al., 2012). All of the variables will directly determine the behavioral intention.

Venkatesh et al. (2003) stated that performance expectancy is defined as the degree to which an individual believes that using the system will help him or her to achieve improvements in job performance. These constructs are statistically the strongest and the most significant predictor when measured individually either on mandatory or voluntary context (Venkatesh et al., 2003). Baptista and Oliveira (2015) confirmed the previous statement where in various environments, the attribute that influence the intentions to use information system is performance expectancy. Effort expectancy is defined as the level of ease associated with the utilization of the system (Venkatesh et al. 2003). According to Alsharif (2013), effort expectancy was found to be significant only after the individuals had a proper training or experience towards the system. According to Venkatesh et al. (2003), Social Influence is defined as the level of endorsement of a certain behavior by important reference that can influence individual information system usage. Al-Qeisi (2009) reported that the effect of Social Influence is important at the early stage of personal experience. If there is an appropriate reward or punishment when it comes to involuntary contexts, it can influence customers' perception about the technology. Since in today's world the platform to share our travel experience is booming (social media, trip advisor, reviews in OTAs platform, blogs), people can share on every subject pertaining to their travel, even from the start where they search the information about their travel until they get back home from traveling. According to Venkatesh et al. (2003), facilitating conditions are defined as the degree of ease in the technical infrastructure associated with consumers' utilization of the technology. Quality and speed of Internet service provider (if the system needs Internet access) or the performance of the platform itself plays an important role in forming perception among the customers (Deng, Liu, and Qi, 2011).

Venkatesh et al. (2012) extended the model by adding three new constructs which are Hedonic Motivation, Price Value, and Habit. They defined hedonic motivation as the excitement or

pleasure resulting from using technology. For instance, some OTAs platform are designed to include the hedonic attributes such as displaying a virtual tour of a room or free electronic coupon, which may create the leisurely character of hotels. Such elements have been proven to influence consumers' IT adoption in hotels (Morosan and Jeong, 2008). Price value is the financial cost that consumers typically bear. According to Venkatesh et al. (2012), the price value is claimed to have a positive effect on behavioral intention if the benefit of technology utilization is greater than monetary cost. According to Limayem, Hirt, and Cheung (2007), habit is seen as the instinctive behaviors executed due to learning. Pavlou and Fygenson (2006) confirmed habit significantly influenced behavioral intention, and it became stronger if continuous utilization of technology occurs. It was found that increased experience in usage leads to habitual technology use (Lankton, Wilson, and Mao, 2010).

Methodology

The present study looks at the OTAs usage experience from the customer's perspective in general. At the same time, it will be assessed along with the antecedents of their technology readiness in relation to the UTAUT2 construct. At this point, there is a clear indicator that the population of the study is the people who have the experience using OTAs. A criterion has been made to define OTAs since there are many travel websites on the Internet, and not all are relevant to this study. Those criteria include websites that sell hotel rooms in a non-specific geographic area, does not link to other agencies or hotels for booking and operating the website in English language (Peterkin, 2014).

An internet searches were conducted to find the most widely used OTAs, since there is no known body or organization that specifically records this type of data. By using the Google Search which is the largest search engine on the Internet to date (ComScore, 2016), a quick search using the keywords of 'top online travel agencies' have resulted in a broad list of websites. A trustworthy website called 'The eBusiness Guide' was chosen. From the website, an article entitled 'The Top 15 Most Popular Travel Websites – March 2017' was published and ranked by 'estimated unique monthly visitors'. According to Webopedia (2016), unique visitors are measured according to users' unique IP addresses, similar to online fingerprints, and they are calculated only once no matter how many times the user visits the website. However, not all of the website listed are OTAs, hence the previously mentioned criteria is used to effectively choose the website. Consequently, five OTAs which met the following criteria were identified. From those criteria, the top five OTAs are Booking.com (40,000,000 unique monthly users), followed by TripAdvisor (38,000,000 unique monthly users), Expedia (25,000,000 unique monthly users), Priceline (20,000,000 unique monthly users) and Hotels.com (16,000,000 unique monthly users). Then, each number will be multiplied by traffic share percentage of Malaysia provided by Similarweb (2017). Thus, the population of Malaysia OTA users is as follows (table 1):

Table 1: Population of OTA users in Malaysia

OTA	Users (world)	Users (Malaysia)	Traffic Share of Malaysia (%)
Booking.com	40,000,000	272,000	0.68
TripAdvisor	38,000,000	190,000	0.5
Expedia	25,000,000	42,500	0.17
Priceline	20,000,000	20,000	0.1
Hotels.com	16,000,000	86,400	0.54
Total	**139,000,000**	**610,900**	

Hair, Anderson, Tatham, and Black (1998) had advised to set a minimum of 5 times and a maximum of 10 times as a benchmark to the ratio of variables to respondents. Furthermore, historical evidence of similar research can also be used to determine sample size (Aaker, Kumar, Day and Lawley, 2005; Malhotra. Hall, Shaw and Oppenheim, 2002; Churchill, 2004). According to AlMohaimmeed (2012), a sample size between 125 and 400 was needed for past studies about Internet users. Some authors believe that studies pertaining to consumer data significantly depend on the researcher's decisions. According to Roscoe (1975), rule of thumb specified that sample sizes larger than 30 and smaller than 500 are suitable for most researches. Krejcie and Morgan (1970) recommended the least amount of 384 respondents as a right sample size to statistically signify a population of 610,900. With the justification specified, a total of 400 respondents are sufficient for this study to give more reliable and meaningful results despite the total population of OTAs users in Malaysia of 610,900 (refer to Table 1).

In this research, non-probability sampling technique was used since the respondents in this research are controlled to those who can reflect on real experience with OTAs so that their technology readiness, technology acceptance, and behavioral intention can be measured. Convenience sampling was chosen to be used to select the respondents due to only those with experience in using OTAs are the target sample. According to Bhattacherjee (2012), it is the nature of this technique that the target population is convenient, readily available and at the same time significant to the data collected.

The researchers used their decision to select one site to successfully collect the data from several respondents as there was no way to recognize the exact location of the OTA users. The location chosen was the Kuala Lumpur International Airport 2 (KLIA2) which generally has a large quantity of travelers that may have experience on OTA. The instrument used in this study can only reflect general configurations related to OTA. Therefore, the chosen location is not unique and will not affect the response based on the specific location. Various authors within technology acceptance studies used one location to gather their data and generalize them. Li (2010) studied online service delivery and revisit intention by using one travel agency. Meanwhile, Yee-Loong (2013) collected the data from university students about mobile commerce usage behavior and made a conclusion about China. Technology acceptance study by Srite and Karahanna (2006) used only one university to generalize the usage by universities students in America.

The researchers completed the collection of the data approximately within one month. Google Forms were used to develop the questionnaire and data collection was conducted using tablet devices rather than a paper-based questionnaire. Google Forms allowed the researchers to create survey-style forms and each item will be set as compulsory to answer so that respondents will not miss answering any questions. The technology readiness stated among the customers was probed through 16 items adapted from the Technology Readiness Index 2.0 (Parasuraman and Colby, 2015). Meanwhile, for the UTAUT2, 25 questions were adapted and modified from Venkatesh et al., (2012). The researchers managed to get 453 respondents. All of the data were used and analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) version 20.0.

Result and Analysis
Demographic Profiles
With regards to gender distribution, 57.6 percent of the respondents were females (n=261) and 42.4 percent were males (n=192). The majority of the respondents aged between 25 to 34 years old which accounted for 40.2 percent of the total number of respondents (n=182). Based on the age, it is related with the marital status of the respondents where those who were single dominated the total number of respondents with 64 percent (n = 290). They were also asked on the highest educational level and it was found that 53.9 percent of them (n=244) were undergraduates. As for the occupation of the respondents, 39.3 percent of them were professionals (n=178). The majority of the respondents were actually the second time users which represented 41.7 percent of the total number of respondents (n=189).

Technology Readiness results
All the combination of scores on the four technology readiness dimensions represents respondents' overall technology readiness to use or to accept technologies (Parasuraman, 2000; Parasuraman and Colby, 2015). From Table 2, it is clear that most of the respondents were optimistic towards new technologies (M=4.06). This specifies that their level of readiness is high and they are keen to accept any new technologies if they believe the technologies will enhance and improve their actions. Despite a high optimism score, their level of innovativeness was somehow around the scale's middle point (M=3.08), which indicates neutrality. This result signifies that not many of them are really the first adopters of new technologies without much hesitancy. In relation to the mean score of optimism dimension, the respondents display a low level of discomfort with new technologies (M=2.6308). This designates their self-confidence in taking charge of new technologies. However, they have the high score in insecurity, indicating their concern with the security of new technology (M=3.84) possibly due to the increasing number of cases regarding cyber-crime activities and online-transaction fraud.

Table 2: Respondents' Technology Readiness

	N	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**
Optimism	453	4.06	0.766
Innovativeness	453	3.08	0.944
Discomfort	453	2.63	0.826
Insecurity	453	3.84	0.774

Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) results

The results in Table 3 were based on the five-point Likert scale of agreement. The highest range of mean scores was attained from the 'Performance Expectancy' dimension by which the highest mean score (M=4.22) is represented by the item 'OTA website speeds up my booking process'. However, the lowest item score (M=3.65) was from 'Habit' dimension, in reference to the item 'The use of OTA website has become a habit for me'. It was in line with the demographics of respondent where most of them were only second time users. The range of scores attained by 'Performance Expectancy', 'Effort Expectancy', and 'Price Value' were the highest with M=4.19, M=4.05, and M=4.08 respectively. This indicates that the customers believe that OTA helps their booking activity, easy to utilize, and the benefits are greater than monetary cost. A similar view can be given to the 'Facilitating Condition' dimension, where it shows that OTA users are fairly satisfied (M=3.94) due to easy access of Internet especially through smartphones and tablets to access the OTA system. Despite the lowest score from 'Hedonic Motivation' and 'Habit' dimensions (M=3.83), both are still considered as important because excitement in OTA creates good feelings towards the users, and at the same time will make the users to continuously use the technology as a habit.

Table 3: Respondents' UTAUT

	N	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**
Performance Expectancy	453	4.19	0.784
I found OTA website is an efficient alternative in making a hotel booking	453	4.18	0.800
OTA website speeds up my booking process	453	4.22	0.855
OTA website makes my booking process easier	453	4.21	0.836
I found that using OTA website improves my experience in the hotel booking process	453	4.12	0.883
Effort Expectancy	453	4.05	0.797
Learning how to use OTA website is easy for me	453	4.07	0.837
My interaction with OTA website is clear and understandable	453	4.02	0.865
I find OTA website easy to use	453	4.09	0.867
It is easy for me to become skillful at using OTA website	453	3.99	0.882

Social Influence	453	3.87	0.823
People who are important to me think that I should use OTA website	453	3.88	0.863
People who influence my behavior think that I should use OTA website			
People whose opinions that I value prefer that I use OTA website	453	3.84	0.913
	453	3.87	0.879
Facilitating Condition	453	3.94	0.743
I have the resources necessary to use OTA website	453	3.98	0.832
I have the knowledge necessary to use OTA website	453	3.85	0.894
OTA website is compatible with other technologies I use	453	3.94	0.843
I can get help from others when I have difficulties using OTA website			
	453	3.96	0.823
Hedonic Motivation	453	3.83	0.884
Using OTA website is fun	453	3.86	0.916
Using OTA website is enjoyable	453	3.86	0.899
Using OTA website is very entertaining	453	3.76	0.955
Price Value	453	4.08	0.714
The deal in OTA website is reasonably priced	453	4.06	0.755
The deal in OTA website is a good value for the money	453	4.07	0.787
At the current price, the deal provided in OTA website is good in value	453	4.08	0.741
Habit	453	3.83	0.947
The use of OTA website has become a habit for me	453	3.65	1.074
I use OTA website every time I want to make a booking	453	3.88	1.018
I will continue to use the OTA website each time I book a hotel room(s)	453	3.97	0.970
Using OTA website has become natural to me	453	3.81	1.042

Conclusion

This study has able to conclude that majority of the respondents believed that technology can enhance and improve flexibility, efficiency, and control over their daily lives, even though most of them were not the avid owners and users of new technologies. Their main concern is the security aspects of technology usage, especially involving online monetary transactions and use of personal identity information. Other than that, respondents were found to have no hesitancy to use the technology when making online bookings. It was also found that they were satisfied with the dimensions understudy, especially on performance expectancy, effort expectancy, and price value. The result of customers' technology readiness and acceptance towards the system also revealed that hotels can accomplish a lot in future if they implement OTA. The habitual usage activity towards technology such as smartphones and tablets, especially from the millennials generation will have a good impact on hotels' investment in technology. The knowledge of customers' readiness and

acceptance will be beneficial for hotel managers to identify possible adopters and users of the technology-based offering.

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