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Factors Influencing Consumer's Intention to use Self Service Technology in Tourism and Hospitality Industry

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Abstract

This conceptual study highlights the relationship between several variables that influence consumer's intention to use self-service technologies in tourism and hospitality industry. With a rapid growth of technologies in the world nowadays, various technology innovations are introduced in order to facilitate people's needs and necessities. One of the innovations that has a great popularity among customers is Self-Service Technologies (SSTs). By understanding this relationship, it will provide different perspectives of customers' intention to use SSTs. By using the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), this research paper proposed the factors of perceived ease of use, perceived reliability, technology readiness, perceived interactivity, and perceived personality that influence customer's intention to use SSTs in tourism and hospitality industry. Consumer's intention plays a huge factor in benefitting the tourism and hospitality industry in terms of profitability and technology inventions. Theoretically, this paper contributes to the general understanding of consumer's intention and the usage of SSTs. In implicit term, it paves the path for further SSTs research to zoom in on the most concrete aspects of consumers' perspective.

INTRODUCTION

Numerous service providers have begun to use wide range of technologies to allow customers to consume services or products electronically without direct contact from firm employees. These technological interfaces are known as SSTs (Meuter, 2010). Kasavana (2008) suggested that the three most popular SSTs were vending machine, web applications, and kiosk. In similar fashion, food and beverages restaurants also introduced SSTs mainly in the form of tablet computers in order to empower consumers to place orders and pay bills (Konrad, 2013). Lee and Allaway (2002), provided examples of SSTs that can be found in tourism and hospitality industry which are airline ticketing machines, automatic teller machines, and computer-based booking services. Apart from that, the examples of SSTs in tourism and hospitality industry that can be found are; Ticket Vending Machine (TVM) for train and rail mode of transport, mobile application to book hotel rooms such as Trivago, Agoda.com and Booking.com, navigation application such as WAZE for directions, check-in kiosk in hotels, self-service kiosk for food ordering, and self-service information terminal usually found in a mall.

The objective of this paper is to discuss the factors that influence consumer's intention to use SSTs in tourism and hospitality industry. By referring to the previous research on TAM and SSTs, it was found that perceived ease of use, perceived reliability, perceived usefulness, and perceived interactivity were among the factors enormously discussed by previous researcher. Nevertheless, the factors of consumer's personality were rarely discussed and suffered demise of research. Thus, in order to fill the gap, the present research proposed perceived personality as one of the factors that influenced customer's intention to use SSTs in tourism and hospitality industry. The subsequent section of this paper presents the literature review of the study, and it is followed by a discussion on the conceptual researches model. The concluding section in this paper presents the recommendations of future research as well as providing theoretical and practical application.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Technology Acceptance Model

The technology acceptance model (TAM) is an information system theory that models how users come to accept and use a technology. This is one of the examples of TAM factor which is perceived ease-of-use (PEOU), which is defined as "the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free from effort" (Davis 1989). The next factor is predict continuance intention. These two TAM factors can develop the conceptual framework of factors influencing consumer's intention to use SSTs in tourism and hospitality industry.

Consumer's intention to use SST's

Behavioural intentions are markers, which demonstrated whether customers have stayed with or defected from the organization. Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1996) proposed that great behavioural aims included components, for example, saying positive things and prescribing the services to others, paying a value premium to the organization, and expressing cognitive loyalty to the organization. Pine and Gilmore (1998), described the consumer experience as an emerging economic offering, placing, an emphasis on consumer experience management, tourism activities, in particular, centre on experiences, fulfillment, and rejuvenation rather than on things and places. Since the infusion of SSTs in service encounters has drastically shifted the nature of service delivery from human-based to SST-mediated (Kim & Qu, 2014), the growing recognition of consumer experience urged the tourism and hospitality industry to apply or develop more and more SSTs. Hence, this research paper proposes a conceptual framework of the novel attributes that influence the consumer's intention to use SSTs in tourism and hospitality industry which is, perceived personality.

Perceived Ease of use

Consumers will utilize another technology innovation that is easy to understand and requires less effort to finish undergoing tasks. Ease of use is presented in the data frameworks writing by Davis (1989) and it is characterized as 'the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system or technology would be free of exertion'. Furthermore, some of the potential benefits of using SSTs include timesaving from the reduced waiting times, cost-savings, and a greater control over the service delivery (Curran, 2003). SSTs enable consumers to perform and provide their own services without direct assistance from employees, and this allows customers to enjoy efficient and customized services (Meuter, 2000). For example, consumers do not need to wait for a long queue during check-in process either in a hotel or airport due to the SSTs technology that consumers can perform by themselves. The fact that mobile phones, nowadays, are much smaller and lighter to carry, can facilitate consumer's need in requiring less effort to finish their check-in process via mobile check-in. Thus, most consumers prefer SSTs that offer easy interfaces, guidance, and assistance from the firm to ease their transition from traditional services to SSTs (Lin & Hsieh, 2006).

Perceived Reliability

The quality or state of being fit and trusted or relied on and yields the same results on repeated trials are what define reliability. Hence, with the aid of SSTs, products and services outcomes can be maintained as well as controlled to meet the minimal requirement or consumer's needs and satisfaction. For example, customers that wish to book a hotel room from a convenient, user-friendly, trusted, and customized web page or application will be more likely to have a great first impression of the hotel. It will indirectly influence their buying decision and there is a higher possibility that they will use the same apps or web page in the future. It is believed that satisfied customers are more likely to establish loyalty with the firm, portraying repeat purchasing, and positive word-of-mouth behaviour (Sim, Mak, & Jones, 2006).

Technology Readiness

Individuals avoid technology if they are uncomfortable and unprepared to utilize the technology. It is important to explore customers' readiness to use them as new technologies are developed. Parasuraman (2000) defined technology readiness (TR) as 'people's tendency to embrace and use new technologies for accomplishing goals in home life and at work'. As TR can positively distress customers' attitude and behaviour toward a technology-enabled service (Abdullah, Radzi, Jamaluddin & Patah, 2010; Lin, Shih, & Sher, 2007), a rational assumption is that when evaluating a product, customers who are high in TR would look at the product's technological features as being more important than would customers who are low in TR. Subsequently, hoteliers have introduced computers for reservation systems, online check-in and checkout, online websites for information and reservations, wireless internet in public and guest areas, and so forth, all with an end goal to upgrade guest fulfillment (Law & Jogaratnam, 2005).

Perceived Interactivity

Interactivity has turned into vibrant that customer convenience manifests itself as a key intention of why people use SSTs (Collier & Kimes, 2003). Interactivity can be defined as the ability or design to respond to the actions and commands of a user. According to Steuer (1995), interactivity can also be defined as "the degree to which users of a medium can influence the form or content of the mediated environment". Therefore, interactive SSTs offer two-way communication and enable users or consumers to move promptly and well-ordered through the SSTs. Personalized recommendations system can enhance sales opportunities in three ways. To begin with, consumers can be assisted in finding the products they are looking for before leaving the SST. Next, opportunities for cross selling can be exploited. Thirdly, customer loyalty can be improved due to value-added relationship (Schafer, 1999). For these reasons, personalized or interactive SSTs can offer substantial value to the two-way communication interaction between consumers and firms (Abdullah, Jayaraman, Kamal, Md Nor, 2016). In tourism, this means that booking a hotel room, retrieving data and navigating around the destination, locating dining as well as entertainment options can all be done simply through an application on a customer's mobile devices.

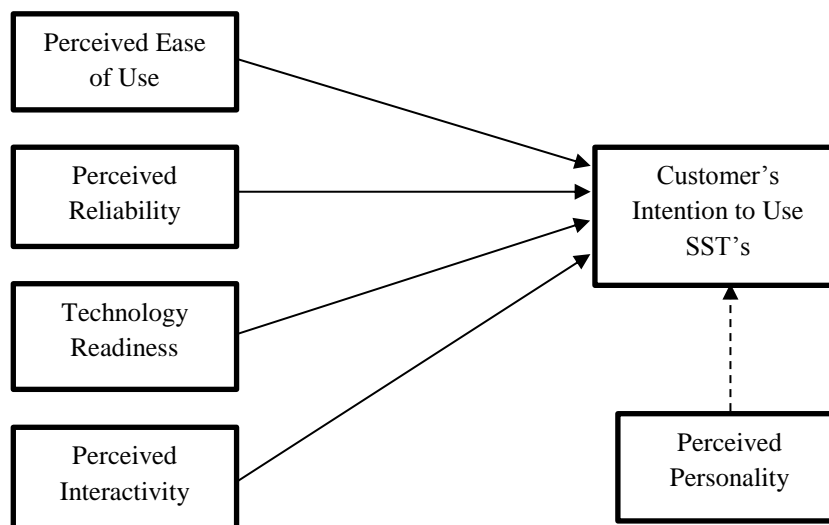
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH PROPOSITION

Fig. 1.
Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 proposes a framework to enhance the TAM model. Perceived personality is proposed as a new variable which influences the customer intentions to use SST's in tourism and hospitality industry.

Perceived Personality

One of the variables that influences consumer's intention to use SSTs is the customer's personality but it is rarely discussed among the scholar. Phares (1991) defined personality as a "pattern of characteristics, thoughts, feelings, and behaviour that distinguishes one person from another". Personality is relatively used to differentiate between individuals and to explain, and even under more or less circumstances to predict, their behaviour (Azmi, Buliah & Ismail, 2016; Aubke, 2007). Initially, Dabholkar and Bagozzi (2002), showed that

personalities play important roles in the evaluation and the use of SSTs. This study will focus on two essential characteristics which are: (1) self-efficacy; the degree in which consumers think that using SSTs is easy or difficult and, (2) inertia; the degree in which consumers do not want to change their customs or habits. Both characteristics might evoke hesitancy to use the SSTs or might promote the specific use of SSTs. For example, consumers with low self-efficacy are not certain and are uncomfortable to use SSTs, and would unlikely seek the values for the use of SSTs. On the other hand, high self-efficacy consumers would be more likely to use SSTs and search the values to use SSTs as they are comfortable with it. In other words, the higher the person's self-efficacy is, the higher the person's tendency to try and persist in behaviours that they feel they are capable of performing (Eastin & LaRose, 2000). In correspondence with the second characteristic, which is inertia, utilizing new SSTs calls for investing in time and energy and this minimizes motivation (Grembler, 1995). For that reason, consumers might hinder themselves from using the specific SSTs whereas it would be more appropriate for them to use the SSTs. An example of personality that influences customers, can be seen when the customers want to pay the online payment via debit or credit card. Thus, based on the discussion of how personality stimulate customer's intention to use SSTs in tourism and hospitality industry, this paper proposes the following proposition: *Perceived personality influence customer's intention to use self-service technologies.*

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In a nutshell, with the SSTs gaining popularity globally, tourism and hospitality industry had introduced and applied more SSTs in order to fulfill as well as facilitate consumer's needs and satisfaction. In correspondence with that, consumer's intentions to use SSTs are directly influenced by the variables that are mentioned in this research paper. This paper proposes a framework to enhance the existing body of knowledge by introducing perceived personality in the TAM. The original framework mentioned that perceived ease of use, perceived reliability, technology readiness and perceived interactivity that had a direct influence towards consumer's intention to use SSTs in tourism and hospitality industry. From the theoretical point of view, this framework adds a new variable which is perceived personality as most previous studies hardly discussed in their research. From the practical perspectives, it can be useful to tourism and hospitality industry to focus more on consumer's personality that plays a huge role in their intention to use SSTs.

Hence, this paper suggests that perceived personality needs to focus on the SSTs because of their direct influences on customers' intention to use technologies. Future researches are encouraged to conduct a longitudinal study to examine consumer's perception or personality, to evaluate SSTs before they use it as well as to identify the impacts of attributes on transcendent experience and consumer commitment. Furthermore, this paper recommends future researchers to quantify the relationship between consumer's personal characteristics or personality and their user experience of SSTs. Research along this line are expected to assist in consumer's satisfaction with the integration of SSTs to effectively and creatively cater to the needs of different consumer segments.

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