STUDY ON SUCCESS FACTORS OF TOURISM WEBSITES

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Abstract: In the past, continuance intention is treated as the only success factor of information system. However, with the development and prevalence of the Internet, tourism companies and the individuals can communicate with others online. Tourism companies build websites to approach customers. People share personal travelling experience on blogs. Continuance intention will no longer be the only success factor of information system. This study regards recommendation intention and complaint intention as the keys of information system, and probes into success key factors affecting tourism websites based on expectation disconfirmation theory. It divides the disconfirmation in expectation disconfirmation theory into: information quality disconfirmation, system quality disconfirmation, and service quality disconfirmation; and divides the satisfaction in the theory into: information satisfaction, system satisfaction, and service satisfaction. It further explores the success factors affecting tourism websites, and find out if the factors of tourism websites of different attributes are different.

1 RESEARCH MOTIVES AND PURPOSES

The explosive growth of the Internet has made it a popular platform for providing electronic services (e-service) (Chiu et al., 2005). Internet technology has also changed the relationship among customers, tourism companies and travel agencies, a whole new set of challenges and opportunities are made available for the tourism industry. Suppliers and agencies of tourism industry start developing tourism websites, they have thus obtained benefits in reducing service costs, providing more effective service and attracting customers (Lu et al., 2002).

Few researches in the past treat tourism websites as information system. From the perspective of information system, success key factor of tourism websites is customers' continuance use. However, with the prevalence of Internet and blogs, virtual communities and consumer review forums, continuance use is no longer the only success factor of tourism websites. Buhalis and Law (2008) suggested that virtual communities are gradually becoming incredibly influential in tourism as consumers increasingly trust better their peers, rather than marketing messages. Customers' word of

mouth would also influence others' views on products or services of tourism websites. Furthermore, evidence from previous studies shows that loyal customers not only continue to use a product or service, but also help to recruit more customers through favourable word of mouth (Chea and Luo, 2008). Dolinsky (1994) and Halstead et al. (1993) suggested that due to negative word of mouth (i.e. complaints), companies would not satisfy customers' demands by service, and customers' repurchase intention and first-purchase customers would be reduced. According to Blodgett et al. (1995), customers' negative comments on forum would make the companies losing their customers. Thus, it is important to learn customers' recommendation and complaint intention of tourism websites. This study also aims to probe into the factors that affect customers' continuance intention, recommendation intention and complaint intention. Research model is shown in Figure 1.

2 RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

McKinney et al. (2002) divided satisfaction into information quality satisfaction and system quality

satisfaction, and suggested that information quality disconfirmation positively influences information quality satisfaction, and system quality disconfirmation positively affects system quality satisfaction. According to Bhattacherjee (2001), disconfirmation is the key factor of users' system satisfaction with on-line banks. Finding of Roca et al. (2006) demonstrated that disconfirmation positively influences satisfaction.
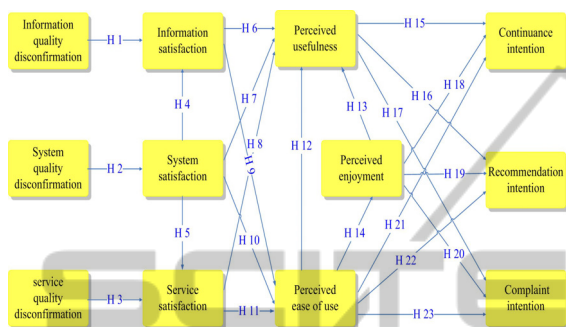

Figure 1: Research model.

Information quality disconfirmation of tourism websites is due to the discrepancy between customers' expected information quality before the use and perceived information quality after the use. According to past experience or reports of mass media, customers expect to acquire rich information from tourism websites. After using the websites, if there is no gap between customers' perceived real information quality and expected one (i.e. confirmation or positive disconfirmation), customers will be satisfied with information quality of tourism websites. On the contrary, if there is a gap between information quality expectation and the real cognition (i.e. negative disconfirmation), customers will be unsatisfied. Customers' views on system quality disconfirmation and service quality disconfirmation of tourism websites reveal the same. Based on the above, H 1, H2 and H3 are proposed, as shown in Figure 1.

Wixom and Todd (2005) suggested that interaction with information system is necessary to acquire information in the system. Thus, an individual's level of satisfaction with the system is likely to influence his or her sense of satisfaction with the information it produces. Their research demonstrated that system satisfaction would positively influence information satisfaction. When customers search for or browse information on tourism websites, they must constantly interact with tourism websites. Customers' system satisfaction with tourism websites will possibly influence information satisfaction with tourism websites.

Service on tourism websites is provided to customers through websites. When customers cannot find the information needed, they can access customer service system. When customers have on-line transaction, they would interact with website system. Thus, customers' system satisfaction with tourism websites will possibly influence service satisfaction with tourism websites. Based on the above, H4 and H5 are proposed, as shown in Figure 1.

Wixom and Todd (2005) suggested that users' information satisfaction with information system would influence users' perceived usefulness. That is, the higher the overall satisfaction with the information, the more likely one will find the application of that information useful in enhancing work performance. They demonstrated that information satisfaction positively influenced perceived usefulness.

When customers have higher degree of information satisfaction with tourism websites, it means that information on websites meets their demands and is interesting for them. In other words, the information is useful for customers. Likewise, when customers' system satisfaction with tourism websites is higher, it means that customers can recognize the benefits for them from websites. For instance, immediate responses on website can save customers' searching time. When the services satisfy customers' demands, customers will be satisfied. It also means that services on websites benefit the customers and influence their perceived usefulness of tourism websites. Based on the above, H6, H7 and H8 are proposed, as shown in Figure 1.

Wixom and Todd (2005) indicated that System satisfaction represents a degree of favorableness with respect to the system and the mechanics of interaction, and demonstrated that system satisfaction would positively influence perceived ease of use. Thus, when users use the system, they must interact with the system. If they perceive the interaction process to be more satisfactory, they would more like to find the system to be easy to use.

When acquiring related information or service on tourism websites, customers need to constantly interact with websites. If the information or service satisfies customers, it means the interaction between customers and websites is successful and customers will think that tourism websites are easy to use. Based on the above, H9, H10 and H11 are proposed, as shown in Figure 1.

Previous TAM research demonstrates strong empirical support for a positive relationship between perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness (Van

der Heijden, 2004). Song et al. (2007), Lim et al. (2008) and Fagan et al. (2008) demonstrated that perceived ease of use would positively influence perceived usefulness. Regarding the relationship between perceived usefulness and perceived enjoyment, Kim et al. (2008) indicated that the higher users' perceived enjoyment with message service, the higher users' perceived usefulness of the service. Fagan et al. (2008), Sun and Zhang (2008) and Lim et al. (2008) found that perceived enjoyment would positively influence perceived usefulness. When tourism websites are easier to use, customers would more easily recognize the usefulness of the websites; likewise, customers with a favorable perception of the enjoyment of a system are more likely to perceive it useful.

Van der Heijden (2004) suggested that previous researches demonstrate the positive influence of perceived ease of use on perceived usefulness. Similarly, perceived ease-of-use can be associated with perceived relative enjoyment: the easier the system is to use, the more enjoyable it is. Van der Heijden (2004), Lim et al. (2008) and Sun and Zhang (2008) suggested that perceived ease of use would positively influence perceived enjoyment. When customers or users use tourism websites, if the websites are easier to use, they would find the websites more enjoyable. Based on the above, H12, H13 and H14 are proposed, as shown in Figure 1. Bhattacherjee (2001) suggested that users would continue using the information system since it is beneficial. Bhattacherjee (2001), Thong et al. (2006) indicated that perceived usefulness positively influences continuance intention. Kim et al. (2008) probed into users' continuance intention of short message service, and found that perceived usefulness positively influences continuance intention. When customers recognize that information or service on tourism websites would benefit current or future traveling plan or increase their knowledge, they would continue using the websites.

Song et al. (2007) indicated that users' perceived usefulness of mobile commerce (m-commerce) would influence positive word-of-mouth marketing. When customers recognize that tourism websites are helpful, customers would recommend tourism websites to others or have positive word of mouth. On the contrary, when customers realize that tourism websites are not beneficial, they would possibly ask the websites to improve their service or have negative word of mouth. Based on the above, H15, H16 and H17 are proposed.

Thong et al. (2006) probed into continuance

intention of mobile Internet services, and demonstrated that perceived ease of use, in comparison to perceived usefulness and perceived enjoyment, is more influential on continuance intention. Kim et al. (2008) studied uses' continuance intention of short message service, and found that perceived ease of use positively influences continuance intention. When customers use tourism websites and acquire traveling information or service easily, they would continue using the websites.

Study of Song et al. (2007) suggested that users' perceived ease of use of m-commerce would influence the positive word-of-mouth intention. When customers recognize that they could easily plan or purchase traveling itinerary by tourism websites, they would recommend the websites to others. On the contrary, when they find the use of tourism websites difficult and complicated, and that they should spend more time planning or purchasing traveling itinerary, they would possibly ask the websites to improve their service or have negative word of mouth. Based on the above, H18, H19 and H20 are proposed, as shown in Figure 1.

Several recent studies report that perceived enjoyment plays a crucial role in explaining consumer adoption of new technologies (Van der Heijden, 2004). Childers et al. (2001) suggested that individuals may engage in a particular behavior if it provides a feeling of fun and enjoyment. When the visitors to a Web site find the visit enjoyable and entertaining, the likelihood of returning to the Web site is enhanced (Shang et al., 2005). Kim et al. (2008) demonstrated that perceived enjoyment positively influences continuance intention. When customers enjoy tourism websites, they would continue using tourism websites.

Fan et al. (2005) suggested that if an individual perceives a certain technology or service as enjoyable or playable, he/she is willing to recommend such technology or service to his/her friends and colleagues. Song et al. (2007) demonstrated that users' perceived enjoyment would positively influence positive word-of-mouth intention. When customers' enjoyment perceived from using tourism websites is higher, they would be more willing to recommend them to others. On the contrary, when the enjoyment is lower, they would possibly ask the websites to improve their service or have negative word of mouth. Based on the above, H21, H22 and H23 are proposed, as shown in Figure 1.

3 CONCLUSIONS

According to the findings of McKinney et al. (2002), this study assumes that service quality disconfirmation will positively influence service satisfaction. In addition, according to the findings of Wixom and Todd (2005), this study expects that system satisfaction will positively influence service satisfaction. Moreover, information satisfaction, system satisfaction and service satisfaction positively influence perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. According to Kim et al. (2008) and Song et al. (2007), this study predicts that continuance intention, recommendation intention, and complaint intention will be influenced by perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and perceived enjoyment. The weights of the factors of tourism websites (with and without transaction) upon different attributes will vary.

With the prevalence of the Internet, tourism websites are also increasing. They not only encounter the challenge from rivals, but also face the impact of other information platforms (such as blogs). The prediction of this study allows tourism website managers to recognize the success factors of websites. By examining the attributes of tourism websites, the managers can adjust their operational strategies and quality of tourism websites, and enhance operational performance.

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