Marketing Teaching Innovation in the Internet Age: Evidence from AIRBNB Website

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ABSTRACT

In current internet age, universities are seeking for innovations in teaching mode, so as marketing course. In order to reach the goal of stimulating students'learning interest and initiative, case studies are becoming popular in marketing teaching innovations. This paper is to establish and test the quality of the peer-to-peer accommodation website and the customer trust model in marketing by taking Airbnb website as an example. In the model, the website quality of Airbnb was measured in five dimensions, that is, usability, information quality, customization, communication and community. In addition, the author implemented SPSS as the tool to analyze the statistical data collected from the participants, mainly using descriptive and correlation based on the data of 177 samples, the result demonstrated that there is a strong positive correlation between website quality and customer trust. Hence, it is important for improving the website quality by enhancing the "five dimensions" provided in the model for higher level customer trust in marketing. By using this intuitive approach, students can profound understand related marketing knowledge while internet provides an access for this possibility.

Keywords: Marketing Teaching Innovation, Sharing Economy, Website Quality, Customer Trust

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the 20th century, the Internet has broadened the space and added convenience for human being, it was then regarded as a mighty functional marketing tool and a series of enriched business activities in tourism and hospitality industry. Meanwhile, the sharing economy has rapidly evolved in capability, and it is expected to be part of the globalization process in the future and serve further as a game changer by osmosis particularly in tourism and hotel industry (Sigala, 2017, p.346). Along with the progression of sharing economy, peer-to-peer online platforms have been increasingly testifying their importance in consumer culture [1]. Airbnb was founded in 2008, services of which are principally comprised of accommodation-sharing in the form of short-term rental and connecting the hosts and the guests. It appears upon customers figuring it hard to conduct comprehensive analysis and evaluation on the quality of products and sellers. Besides, since peer-to-peer accommodation transactions are oftentimes executed between strangers, both sides tend to be unconsciously exposed to various

hazards such as false information, financial and security risks. Wang (2012) further indicated that Chinese online travel booking business had started relatively late, and the maturity of website construction varies.[2] Consequently, this paper aims to fill in the gap of previous studies on the basis of investigating the influence of peer-to-peer accommodation website quality upon customer trust. To accomplish the research objective, this paper will address the following question: "How does the Airbnb website quality influence the customer trust?"

2. P2P ACCOMMODATION IN THE CONTEXT OF SE

Several previous studies have discussed the practical usage of the sharing economy. The sharing economy (SE) emphasizes the goal of improving efficiency and sustainable development by sharing underutilized resources (Hossain, 2020, p.1). Nowadays, a large number of "sharing" phenomena appear in the field of tourism. People tend to share their remaining space in

accommodation and transportation. There are two forms of sharing economy. The first type is business-to-consumer, like commercial car sharing, e.g., Uber. The other one is consumer-to-consumer through online platforms and Airbnb is a typical example.

3. WEBSITE QUALITY

The quality of online stores includes both online retail system and information quality supported by the network technology, as well as the service quality of the products that customers need. This is one of the relatively typical definitions in the early stages, focusing on the website functions. Aladwani & Palvia (2002, p.468) repute that the quality of the website has the characteristics of complexity and multi-dimensionality that is the degree to which the website functions and the user's evaluation on the website's overall effectiveness meet the needs of users. In measuring information quality, one of the indicators is the user information satisfaction (UIS). According to Bai, Law & Wen (2008, p.393), the user information satisfaction (UIS) is defined as an indicator that customers believe that the available information system can meet their information requirements. There are six indicators to measure website quality, including information's accuracy, clarity, completeness, ease of use, navigation quality, and colour combinations.
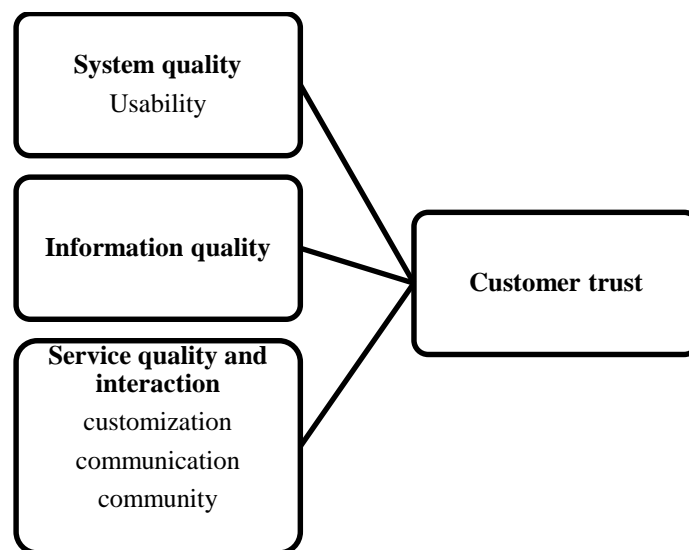
4. CUSTOMER TRUST

Gefen (2000, p.726) also points out that trust can effectively reduce the complexity of the consumers' decision-making process. Consumers will be less precautious against various problems within the scope of effective control and management, and then predict whether the transaction object benefits both parties. Due to the explosion of assorted choices of e-commerce

websites, customers' online trust (eTrust) becomes attention-grabbing in academia. Online trust reveals it an important tool in investigating the e-commerce environment [3].

5. RESEARCH DESIGN

Based on previous studies, the research model investigated in this study (see Figure 1) was adapted from relevant studies including Wang (2012, p.17) [4]. This model consisted of three main dimensions: system quality (usability), information quality, service quality and interaction (customization, communication, community). There are a large number of researchers to verify the relationship between the three variables of information quality, system quality, and service quality and customer trust, only a small amount of research is about the relationship between interaction and customer trust.

The research method of this paper applied the quantitative research. The reasons will be explained as follow. Firstly, compared with qualitative research methods, researcher can obtain more objective information and data easily. Secondly, the quantitative research method is a deductive method based on theory, there are more mature statistical software to analyse data (such as SPSS). This article is intended to study the relationship between Airbnb website quality and customer trust. Thus, the target interviewees in this research are customers who have browsed Airbnb website and have experience in purchasing related products. In order to obtain representative and effective data, a total of 196 people originally participated in this study, of which only 177 valid samples out of the 196 samples. All of these participants have visited the Airbnb website and have experience in purchasing related products.

Figure 1: The research model
Source: Author's chart

6. DATA ANALYSIS

6.1. Descriptive Analysis

In this research, website quality includes five dimensions, which are usability, information quality, communication, community and customization, have the power to impact customers trust directly.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Website Quality Dimension	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std.Deviation
Usability	177	1.24	5.00	3.85	0.65
Information Quality	177	2.10	5.00	3.87	0.72
Communication	177	1.69	5.00	3.89	0.78
Community	177	2.50	5.00	3.86	0.76
Customization	177	1.23	5.00	3.58	0.83
Vaild N (list wise)	177				

Source: Author's chart

According to the descriptive statistics in Table 1, the standard deviation of all website quality dimensions is between 0.65 and 0.83, which indicated that participants have focused more on these aspects. Moreover, it is obvious that the average value of each dimension of the website quality is between 3.5 and 3.8, which stated that the respondents gave a high rating to the website quality of the Airbnb website. More specifically, the community average is the highest point among the five elements in Table 3, which is 3.89. This number may indicate that the interviewee considers more and pays more attention to such factors. Following ones are usability (Mean=3.85), information quality (Mean=3.87), communication (Mean=3.89). However, customization (Mean=3.58) has a relatively low score. This result may indicate that the customer did not spend more energy on the site quality to consider this factor.

6.2. Correlation Analysis

Table 2: Correlations between website quality dimensions and customers' trust

		Customers Trust
Usability	Pearson Correlation	.730**
Information Quality	Pearson Correlation	.766**
Communication	Pearson Correlation	.620**
Community	Pearson Correlation	.670**
Customization	Pearson Correlation	.781**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

**. Correlation is signifigant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) N=177

Source: Author's chart

According to Table 2, all of the Sig. values between five website quality dimensions and customer trust are 0.000 (Sig.<0.01), which means that usability, information quality, communication, community and customization have a relationship with customers' trust. The value of the Pearson Correlation between usability and customers trust, information quality and customers trust, communication and customers trust, community and customers trust, and customization and customers trust are at 0.730, 0.766, 0.620, 0.670 and 0.781 respectively, which illustrated all of these five website quality dimensions have strongly positive relationship with customers' trust.

7. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Tourists who had the experiences on Airbnb website have a higher evaluation score on the impacts of community than other dimensions on customers trust, all of these indicated that the participants hope to have more faith and attention to these contents or comments (such as the existing user's purchase evaluation module, forum module, etc.) in the community of Airbnb website. However, the participants gave low scores on customization on customization of these five website quality dimensions, which means relatively speaking, customers do not pay much attention to whether Airbnb website can provide customized services. Therefore, the impact on customers trust is relatively small.

8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1. Conclusions

From the findings of this study, it is clear that all five website quality dimensions are related to customer trust. After the correlation analysis, it obviously demonstrates that all the five dimensions of website quality were found a significant correlation with customers' trust. This also showed that certain website quality indicators increase the possibility of increasing customer trust, making customers willing to use this website or purchase related products on this website [4].

8.2. Recommendations

Improve the usability (easy to use) of the website. Usability is the one of most indispensable elements that needs to be placed first in the process of website development. website usability involves building a site which is easy, fun, and logical for users, so that they can enjoy using the site and they can utilize it to find what they need. In order to make it easier for customers to use the website, the following aspects can be improved [5]. Firstly, language or word placement needs to be clear enough for every single of the users, so that they can enjoy using the site and they can utilize it to find what

they need. This consideration is critically important for companies that want to build brand loyalty and attract customers, as people are turned off by websites which they have trouble using. Secondly, Design aesthetics are also an important aspect of usability. If a site is well placed and designed, it is clear, easy to understand, and easy to view. Lastly, having a simple website navigation (e.g., menu). When a site is clearly and cleanly laid out, with a logical progression of areas and topics, it tends to appeal to users.

The key to improving information quality is to focus on the target audience. The centrepiece of website usability involves designing a site which is oriented around users, rather than a website which views users as secondary to the purpose of the site. A user-oriented site will respond to user feedback, and incorporate features into its design which keep users comfortable and encourage people to return in the future. There are five components that will ensure information quality; completeness, consistency, accuracy, validity, and timeliness. When each of these components are properly executed, it will result in high-quality information. It is also imperative that everyone who applied the information collected has a general understanding of what the data represents.

Websites need to value the quality of communication. Firstly, one of the biggest challenges that designers have to overcome is simply deciding on the amount of content and information to use. In many cases, websites with less content have an easier time effectively communicating a particular message to visitors because there is no excess to get in the way. Secondly, when developing websites, one needs to keep in mind that each visitor is unique and that it is impossible to classify all of them in the same group. Websites are designed with their target audience in mind, but even within that group of users, some diversity will still exist. These differences can have an impact on the communication of the website, because not every visitor will respond in the same way or understand the same messages. Thirdly, Online communication is unlike forms of communication that allow face-to-face interaction between two people. In online communication, the human visitor receives a message from a website, not directly from a person. However, the most effective communication generally occurs on websites that show some kind of personality in that communication.

The community refers to the message and comment sections of customers on the website. Creating online communities of customers and workers has been one of the hotter topics in business and technology this year. The website needs to strengthen and pay attention to the construction and management of these virtual communities. The virtual community can provide a convenient interactive platform for sharing useful information and experience among customers, for

problem discussion and online opinion consultation. Which platform a community effort should use is much better driven by the high-level goals and a co-developed design, with the technology subsequently selected to support them. However, it's also naive to think that most organizations don't already have a preference for a certain technology stack or even a specific community platform, which they may have already acquired or used previously.

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