Guidelines to Improve Online Services for Small Hotel Business

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Abstract

After COVID-19 dissolves, hotel business needs to adjust business strategy in terms of income distribution to enable businesses to operate flexibly and to cope with changes in future business operations. The operators should consider increasing the proportion of tourists to ensure their business is ready in the situation that may affect the number of guests, which is not predictable in advance. It may conduct marketing activities through digital channels, social media, and various online platforms. Especially, small hotels that need to increase their competitiveness. Because of the current situation, the larger hotels promote their sales by lowering their prices closer to the prices of smaller hotels but more of their amenities. The objective of this research is to suggest improvements guidelines in online services for small hotels business in six areas: Perceived benefits, Ease perception of use, Efficiency, Accomplishment, System Capability, and Privacy. It classified by personal factors. Data were collected by using questionnaires with a sample of 385 hotel online users. The study found that online hotel users which have different gender, age, education level, occupation, average monthly income, and the media that receive information will have different perspectives on how to use hotel online services with statistical significance at the .05 level.

Keywords: Hotel online services**,** Usage perspective, Small hotel business

I. Introduction

From the situation of COVID-19 pandemic all over the world, the number of foreign tourists and Thai tourists in 2020 has shrunk significantly. The Thai hotel business saw a 55-65% drop-in average room rates per room sold (RevPAR). Operators should therefore consider increasing the proportion of tourists to ensure their business is ready in the situation that may affect the number of guests which unable to predict. The marketing activities through digital channels, social media, and various online platforms are considered as one of important strategy [17]. With the advancement of technology and the ubiquity of the use of online media to communicate through today's fast Internet networks, the hotel business has taken advantage of the Internet to increase its competitiveness. All website channels, Social network, and applications to facilitate more business operations for instance, reservation, data communication, organizing activities, listening to opinions and comments from guests, and creating discount coupons in E-coupon format. By taking advantage of the features of the Internet that interact with guests in a timely manner. It is including able to reach a wide range of guests through partnerships with related businesses such as, intermediaries providing services via the Internet, hotel review, and hotel searching to generate additional income from expanding new target group [7].

Online services are a widely used and emerging technology. This has resulted in more business operators becoming interested in using social media and mobile applications (mobile apps). As mobile apps on Smartphone today can meet consumers who appreciate the convenience of buying goods or services through a growing number of smartphones. Building mobile apps to facilitate customers can help businesses easily penetrate the customer market by using mobile phones to communicate and promote special offers to target customers [16]. Past research shows that consumers' decision to use online services is due to user satisfaction such as easy-to-use applications and its usefulness which will affect the intention of using the application in the future [6, 9, 11]. Besides, the other past

researches have also shown that the customer's online service outlook is an important factor in measuring the quality of electronic services in terms of efficiency, accomplishment, system capability, and privacy [12, 21, 4].

From the above reasons, this makes the researcher would like to know the perspective of the guest's use of hotel online services. To study how the guests' perspective of the hotel's online services is used. Are there any factors that affect the use of the hotel online services application? To apply the research finding as a guideline for the quality of hotel online services improving to be as consistent with the usage and needs of guests as possible. Especially small hotels that need to increase their competitiveness. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic situation, large hotels have adjusted and promoted their sales by lowering their prices close to the prices of smaller hotels which has more facilities and more standardized services. Hence, it may affect the number of guests of small hotels. Using online channels more efficiently and closer to guests might be one of the channels that increase competitiveness. To make the users satisfied in using and returning to use the service repeatedly as a result, it will benefit in increasing the profits for the small hoteliers in the future.

II. The Aim of Study

1) To study guests' perspectives of online hotel usage in 6 areas: Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use, Efficiency, Accomplishment, System Capability, and Privacy, and 2) to propose the improvement guidelines of online services for small hotel businesses.

III. Research Hypothesis

H1 Hotel online users of different genders have different views on the use of hotel online services.
H2 Hotel online users of different ages have different views on the use of hotel online services.
H3 Hotel online users with different marital status have different views on using hotel online services.
H4 Hotel online users with different educational levels have different views on how to use hotel online services.
H5 Hotel online users with different occupations have different views on the use of hotel online services.
H6 Hotel online users with different average monthly income have different views on using hotel online services.
H7 Hotel online users with different operating systems have different views on how to use hotel online services.
H8 Hotel online users with different received media have different views on how to use hotel online services.

IV. Methodology

The questionnaires were used for data collection and distributed to 385 respondent's hotel guests and all were returned. Research variables were categorized as 1) Preliminary variables i.e. personal factors (Demographic) consisted of gender, age, marital status, education level, occupation, average monthly income, Smartphone operating system, and media that receive information 2) The dependent variables consisted of 6 aspects of the user's perspectives of the hotel online services, includes Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use, Efficiency, Accomplishment, System Capability, and Privacy. The statistics used in this research are percentage, standard deviation. The hypothesis was tested by statistics, t-test, and one-way analysis of variance. Individual test was performed using LSD method statistically significant at the .05 level.

V. Literature review

The concepts and theories on technology adoption, scholars modified their TAM by excluding attitudes towards behavior so that intentions could be described more thoroughly. It can be used to predict the individual adoption of information technology and explain the relationship between intent and behavior. Factors that affect the decision about usage and the duration of use or the adoption of technology which consists of 2 factors as follows 1) Perceived Usefulness, the level of belief in a person's use of that technology will improve their productivity 2) Perceived Ease of Use, is the level of belief that perceived ease of use is effortless [2, 3].

Concepts of electronic service quality, internet service quality assessment, experts have applied SERVQUAL's principles to electronic business and have developed a new website service quality assessment tool called "E-S-QUAL" and "E-RecS-Qual". And grouping of website quality measurement by dividing into 4 quality measurement dimensions: 1) Efficiency, means ease of use, speed of access to information within the website, complete transactional capabilities, data grading, quick presentation of results, ease of use, and rapid transaction execution 2) Accomplishment (Fulfillment), means the ability to meet the agreed goals (through the website) with respect to the delivery of the product and the availability of the product to be delivered, the ability to deliver the work for a reasonable period of time, promptness on-demand, presentation on-demand, delivery of products or services that can be accommodated, reliability of presentation, and accuracy in presentation 3) System availability, means that the system must always be in a state of readiness, the system can display or calculate correctly, the work system has no errors or stops, and the screen does not stop during the use 4) Privacy refers to the level of security and data protection, customer behavior, privacy (protection of personal information) and security [13].

The small hotel is a hotel with no more than 100 rooms with outstanding decoration, architecture, and service style. The atmosphere inside and outside the property, unlike the big hotels, is affordable, suitable for guests who want privacy and a new focus on hotel experience. The management of a small hotel requires a competent and knowledgeable management all-round because, having to manage all departments with a small number of employees and able to manage both administrative and operational tasks. This includes service quality control in all departments to be able to meet the needs of customers completely. However, from the expansion of the small hotel business in Thailand that occurred over the past 10 years [18, 8]. It is causing competition to be quite high, whether in investment such as decoration, quality, facilities, high-rate staffing, and use of technology, online media, and talent recruitment. Because in a small hotel, people are required to be able to perform a variety of tasks because, the scope of responsibilities and work details are not equal to large hotels. The effective online service study could be one way to increase competitive performance.

VI. Result

From the number of respondents 385 people found that most of the users of online service were female, 53.5 percent, aged between 21-30 years, 61.6 percent, the status of single, accounted for 76.9 percent, with a bachelor's degree/equivalent, accounted for percent 64.7, employed as a private company employee, 50.4 percent, average monthly income 15,000 - 25,000 baht or 49.4 percent, using a smartphone with an operating android system accounted for 75.3 percent, and received information from friends or colleagues for 49.6 percent.

The results of an analysis of the online guest perspective data of the hotels showed that the overall and all aspects of the perspective were at a high level, with the perceived usefulness being the most average. It can consider the views from each side as follows: on the perceived usefulness, it is found that most of the terms of using a hotel online reduce the time taken to make a reservation the most. The perceived ease of use was found to be the most in terms of how easy it was to find the hotel that the guests want from the application source (Play Store or App Store). The efficiency aspect was the greatest in terms of the requested execution of the transaction completely correctly. The accomplishment aspect was found to be the most in terms of offering the product or service the user requested. The system capabilities of the system were found to be the most in terms of instant activation capability required. In terms of privacy, it is most likely the ability of a hotel to make a secure online financial transaction.

Summary of hypothesis testing

Assumptions for hotel online users, who have different personal factors, have different satisfaction with the hotel online services. The results of hypothesis testing showed that hotel online services users with gender, age, education level, occupation, average monthly income, and the media that received information were different in the overall satisfaction of using the hotel online services with statistical significance at level 0.05, the hypothesis test results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Show results of hypothesis testing

Variable	Statistics	Sig.	Hypothesis test results
Gender	t = -2.541	0.011*	Accepted
Age	F = 10.380	0.000*	Accepted
Marital status	F = 0.248	0.780	Rejected
Education level	F = 3.384	0.035*	Accepted
Occupation	F = 8.836	0.000*	Accepted
Average monthly income	F = 10.057	0.000*	Accepted
Smartphone operating system	t = -0.719	0.473	Rejected
The media that received information			
	F = 16.200	0.000*	Accepted

* Statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

VII. Discussion

The sample's perspective on the perceived usefulness of online hotel use was found to be at a high level. Today's online hotel operators have brought the ability of smartphone-type mobile applications to be an alternative to their guests to receive news about the products and services of the hotel. Thus, the guests feel that using the hotel's online services makes it more convenient to receive hotel services. This will reduce the duration of the service because guests can study room details immediately without having to visit at the hotel first. Besides, some hotels also offer hotel room and restaurant reservations. Align with [2, 5] say that the perceived usefulness is a level of belief in a person's use of that technology to improve their productivity. And mobile devices allow users to access many applications. If users find that they can use it all the time when needed and reliable, they will recognize that such hotel online services are beneficial. Align with [1, 11] which found that perceptions of benefits and satisfaction of mobile phone users were related to each other. And the perceived usefulness had a positive influence on guest satisfaction.

The samples' perspective on the use of online hotel services on the perceived ease of use was found to be at a high level. As at present, the hotel has deposited the hotel information with the application source. This makes it easy for hotel online users to find the hotel service they need. It can also be installed as soon as needed. This includes the use of the current hotel application, where the menu structure is very easy-to-use and satisfying hotel online users. This is consistent with the idea of [19, 14] found that perceived ease of use is the degree to which the user expects the technology it is aiming to use that it must be easy and independent of endeavor. Perceived ease of use of hotel online services on mobile determines the satisfaction of the user as the user wants to use it.

The sample's perspective on efficiency of hotel online service usage was found to be high. As the hotel online service has evolved, the hotel online service is working properly without any freezes or downtime during use. In addition, the list is presented, and the required information is displayed quickly, thus making the users satisfied. Consistent with the concept of [13] said that efficiency is ease of use, speed of access to information within the website, complete transaction capacity, data grading, quick presentation of results, and simplicity fast execution of transactions.

The sample's perspective on hotel online service utilization in accomplishment the goal was found to be at a high level. Since in the use of the hotel online service, the product or service can be presented as requested by the user, in order to use the order, the results can be displayed correctly as stated and the list is properly declared and fast. This is consistent with the idea of [13, 20] achieving goals is the ability to meet the agreed goals (through the website) with respect to the speed of presentation on request, on-demand delivery of results, the reliability of the presentation, the accuracy, and the attainment. Goals are the best predictors of satisfaction.

The sample's perspective on hotel online service utilization of the system capability was found to be at a high level. Due to the use of online hotel services on Smartphone today, it can be activated through the application more quickly. This allows the user to activate as soon as they want, unlike computers in the past. It is very convenient to use until the user is satisfied. In line with the concept of [13], it is said that the capability of a system is that the system must always be in a ready-to-use. The system can display or calculate accurately and has no operating errors, and the screen does not freeze during use.

The sample's perspective on the privacy of hotel online service was found to be at a high level. Due to the use of the online services of the hotel, there will be a payment procedure through the service channel set by the hotel, which the user deems that financial transactions are safe. In addition, users' personal information is well protected to

make users more satisfied. This is consistent with the concept of [13], saying that privacy is a level of security and customer behavior data protection.

Based on the assumption, hotel online users with different personal factors included gender, age, marital status, education level, occupation, average monthly income, and the media that receive information. There will be different perspectives on the usage of the hotel application, which can be discussed as follows.

Hotel online users with different gender, age, education level, occupation, average monthly income and the media that receive information, views of hotel online satisfaction differ while marital status has no different view. This is because female hotel online users are more satisfied with hotel online than males. Guests aged 31-40 years old are more satisfied with using hotel online services than other age groups, while those with a bachelor's degree are more likely to satisfy with hotel online services more than other educated users. Private company employees are more satisfied than other occupational groups. Users with an average monthly income of between 15,000 and 25,000 baht will be more satisfied than other income levels. And people who receive information about the application from friends or colleagues are more satisfied than receiving information from other media. This is because females are more likely to accept technology change faster and use more technology than males. During the age of hotel online users, which is the age of working people who are mostly corporate employees, there is a working society that requires meeting friends or co-workers, creating recommendations for hotel online services. Today's online hotel services are promoted in various media so users can easily find information. The hotel has made an application that belongs to the hotel and has other applications. As a result, the use of the hotel is even more diverse, so hotel users can choose to use according to their own needs. Therefore, hotel online users with different personal factors are satisfied with different hotel online services [10, 21, 15].

VIII. Conclusion and Recommendations

1. The hotel should focus on improving its online services so that the efficiency of the information displayed is better all the time for the efficient use of hotel online services to function properly. And responding to users' data access quickly with good performance stability, making users feel satisfied, resulting in re-use of the service.
2. The hotel should have a variety of payment methods to provide convenience when booking, which is very important. It may allow the guest to decide to go to a different hotel if the system is inefficient.
3. The hotel should pay more attention to the timing of the results when booking through online services that are appropriate, in addition, to improving the efficiency of the application, the service of the staff or the system. The responses of the hotel must be prompt and consistent with the operation of online services. To respond to the reservation quickly and the user does not have to wait too long, resulting in the satisfaction of using the hotel's online service, which will benefit the re-use of the service.
4. Hotels need to opt for a reliable and secure payment system such as credit card payments through the banking system and direct hotel bank transfers. This is to satisfy in using the hotel services.
5. Most hotel online users are employees of a private company, so hoteliers should always promote or send news to this group of customers about the hotel online services and their applications. This will enable users who have not yet used the hotel's online services to try out and if they are satisfied, they will continue to use them through the hotel online services and such applications. This will benefit hotel users who will be more comfortable in using the service, resulting in an impressive service experience.

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