Building Trust on the Online Review Site of Trip Advisor: The Cases of Top Ranked Hotels in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

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Abstract

Online guest reviews are becoming a powerful source of information affecting online hotel booking decision. The guest reviews affect hoteliers’ implementation of appropriate managerial tasks to enhance their hotel guest satisfaction; to improve staff morale with an ultimate aim to meet their owner satisfaction by increasing potential bookings or increasing revenue. Using a framework of organizational learning process, this study focuses on exploring online reviews in the co-creation of the guest service experience at the upscale hotels in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam. The content analysis methodology has been deployed to examine the task experiences of hotel managers and senior staff in creating knowledge about trust in the special context setting of social media via the world’s largest travel site TripAdvisor®. The proper organizational learning process is an ongoing process to convert managerial tasks into favorable knowledge about customer’s trust that affects their online hotel booking decisions (Argote and Miron-Spektor, 2011). In this study, three main constructs about customer’s trust in e-commerce are explored in parallel with the best management practices: trust in the competence, trust in the reliability, and trust in the goodwill of the service suppliers (Ratnasingam, 2012:194). Research design has two main flows of the descriptive exploration. At first, the secondary data in the form of published online guest reviews have been coded based on the three main constructs of customer’s trust with support of the NVivo10 software for content analysis. The second flow of insights has come from shared live experiences of in-depth interviews with hotel managers and senior staff in an effort to understand their best interaction practices in mastering three types of trust in responding to the satisfaction of their hotel customers. The findings highlight the importance of managing expectations from all the involved stakeholders’ right at a time with involvement of service staff, guests as well as hotel owner, and the ways to bring highest values for them.

Key words: Hoteliers, Online Guest Reviews, Customer Trust, Organizational Learning, Best Interaction Practices.
1. Introduction

In a form of consumer-generated content site, TripAdvisor provides travelers a way to search trusted opinions on hotels, amenities, and services via its main function of online reviews. At almost the same time, the social network can facilitate organizational learning by capturing real-time feedback from consumers as a source of input for operational improvement. Beside that the shared consumers’ experiences enable hotel operators to turn a service transaction into a true relationship of mutual benefits which may further enhance targeted promotion, inspire more transactions and create potential upsell opportunities (Sareen, 2013). With a focus on building trust on the online review site of TripAdvisor, the study contributes to online marketing and hospitality management research in three major ways. First, by taking into consideration interactions of various stakeholders (hotel staff, guest, and owner) in the service delivery process, all trust related factors will be explored deeply and newly under the specific context of social media. Second, given the prominent approach of theory/knowledge building in management research, this study contributes to the extension of different approach to create action-oriented knowledge in the field of hospitality in Vietnam. Third, by investigating the organizational learning process in the co-creation of the service experiences within the context of online customer comment, the findings of this research would contribute to identify important trends that enhance a closer linkage between marketing and operational management in hotel industry. The objective of this paper is therefore to present a framework of trust building in connections with brand loyalty and purchase decisions of hotel guests.

2. Literature Review

2.1 TripAdvisor and Online Booking

The customer online reviews on the TripAdvisor.com provide an interactive environment and context for the research. As the world largest travel community with more than 60 million unique monthly visitors and over 75 million reviews and opinions, TripAdvisor is selected to provide a case study of a point of contact for in-house guests and potential consumers to leave their comments and to find out more information about a range of hotel services, from accommodation to hotel bookings (PR, 2012). Moreover, customer reviews on the TripAdvisor.com has been increasingly received the attention from various stakeholders in the service delivery process.

According to the independent study of PR (2012), 87% of users agree that TripAdvisor hotel reviews help them feel more confident in their booking decisions with the fact that 98% of respondents have found TripAdvisor reviews to be accurate of the actual experience while 53% of respondents do not book a hotel that does not have any reviews on the sites. From the managerial perspectives, this point of social media contact could help hotel managers identify
business opportunities with capability of understanding and exploring effectively opportunistic advantages from the ‘going social’. In which, hoteliers can reach and meet customers and guests in the places they prefer to hang out. Moreover, a study conducted by Garcia (2013) showed that consumers who read reviews on ecommerce sites were 81% more likely to make a purchase on the site. Eventually hotels were investing more time and marketing dollars on managing the quantity, quality and location of online reviews, with particular attention paid to TripAdvisor (Thales and Leora, 2013:1).

The online sharing functions contribute to tangibilize the intangibles of hotel services. Online sharing services such as photo-sharing, video-sharing and social networking are deployed and integrated into the interface of hotel management system as a way to tangibilize the intangibles of hotel services. Hoteliers can encourage customers to share their personal guest experiences via Instagram’s services on other social networking services such as Facebook, Twitter. If Instagram can be featured on hotel’s own website, their digitally-savvy guests would love to share their best travel experiences from their own personal viewpoint. By leveraging mobile and social in this new way, the guest travel experience can be well connected with the hotel’s desired points of interaction that enable them to connect with guests and deliver them more personalized services (Hospitalitynet, 2013).

The online environment can provide hoteliers valuable business opportunity. By developing a new business model that focuses on emerging behaviors and demands of today and tomorrow hotel guests, hoteliers can identify more business opportunity. The real strategic competitive advantage should be linked with guest demand of deep personalization, innovative experiences and greater comfort. Social media will be deployed together with the ways hotels develop service propositions, marketing communication messages, and revenue solutions while new technologies enable the strategic moves by providing this emerged business model with tools to increase efficiency, reduce operations costs, personalize the unique guest experiences (Amadeus, 2010).

In a virtual marketplace, transactions between customers and employees can provide dynamic medium for effective learning. Given the emergence of the internet and technology, almost all transactions of guests and employees are dynamic medium for effective learning both at the individual and organizational level. In the hotel industry strategic use of technological factors will serve a primary purpose of better understanding the needs and wants of customers, hence building repeat business with them (Garver, 2002). Once the competitive advantage could be leveraged by technology, it enables all levels of the hotel team to get real-time feedback from guests and take action to create memorable experiences for them. The benefits of technology are mainly coming from the ability to navigate with social network (Koutroumanis, 2011). The hoteliers may even consider to integrate a POS

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(Point of Sales) system into the social networking to personalize the customer experience and place customer experience at the center of daily operations (Lorden and Creamer, 2012).

2.2 Cumulative Impact of User Reviews on Hotel Performance

It is asserted by research that the cumulative impact of user reviews across all channels had a positive relationship with overall hotel performance in the key factors of increased pricing power and occupancy (Anderson, 2012). The results of a Market Metrix global study conducted by Jonathan and Lenny (2010) offered insight into the behavior of hotel guests for the reasons why they select a particular hotel. Guest experience that includes past experience, recommendations, online reviews and referrals has a more statistically significant effects on hotel selection for luxury and upper scale guests than location, price or loyalty programs (Jonathan and Lenny, 2010). While guest experience, location and price were considered among the most important attributes when consumers were making decisions about which hotel to book, reviews allow those who had not been at a property before to gauge the experience of other guests (Thales and Leora, 2013:3 and Anderson, 2012:7).

A study conducted by Anderson (2012) estimated the impact of a hotel’s Global Review Index (GRI) on its ability to charge higher prices and to increase the rooms sold. The results from this study showed that an increase of 10% in the GRI of a hotel was associated with a 9% increase in Average Daily Rate (ADR), and a 5% increase in occupancy. When these effects were combined, an increase of 10% in the GRI could result in a 14% increase in Revenue per Available Room (RevPAR) (Anderson, 2012:13).

2.3 Customer’s Trust with a Rise in a Social Graphs for Hotel Business

Trust is the key factors helping consumers overcome perceptions of risks in the online shopping context (Corritore, Kracher, and Wiedenberg, 2003). The consumer trust nowadays can be affected by reputation scores of firms. Firms may use more social graphs to draw commercial graphs that are developed on the actual interactions between firms and their direct or indirect customers they capture digitally (Sangeet, 2015). Social graph is defined as a representation of the interconnection of relationships in an online social network. Firms can gain trust from their customers if they stand at the right commercial graphs where three things are visually displayed: “companies in an ecosystem, the relationships among them and the reputations they have earned through mutual dealings” (Sangeet, 2015). The social graph makes it possible to make personalized recommendations to customers. For example, TripAdvisor.com leverages Facebook’s social graph by giving customers or potential hotel guests the reviews of hotels, restaurants that posted by people these customers know and the reviews appear right at the top (Sangeet, 2015). The key point here is that beyond the social connections, customers are linked to their friend networks to know what they care about, what they are talking about and what they are buying, then taking action accordingly. This is also
the Facebook’s ability to depict the people’s friend networks with support of the mutual information sharing.

The concept of the digital handshake given by Narayanan (2015) further highlights the idea of online trust that customers would prefer “wisdom from friends” rather than “wisdom from strangers” given by firms’ effort to create review site as TripFriends for accommodation advice or Zomato for Food review. In these sites, customers might feel conveniently confident when they get notifications of your friends’ activities on the site they are visiting. Their friendly digital connections let them log in through the same sites of Facebook or Google account to enable sharing of review, rating, and recommendations. The customer trust is very much developed and maintained by their peer mutual information sharing. The richer the social graph of connections and relationships, the more successful the customer trust comes true. Emerging evidence suggests that consumers trusted online reviews as much as recommendations from family and friends (Thales and Leora, 2013).

In the traditional market, the tangible products and the personal contact with vendors establish the traditional bases for trust. But in the e-commerce markets, the absence of these tangible products and a lack of personal interface with online vendors prevent these bases to establish trust (Zhou and Tian, 2010). Potential consumers may doubt the benevolence and integrity of the online vendor, and as a result the development of consumers’ online initial trust is negatively affected (Zhou and Tian, 2010). As a result, online consumers are concerned about passing sensitive information to an unfamiliar party.

2.4 Consumer Trust Differs Across Cultures, Given the Global Nature of Online Transactions

Consumer trust issues should be considered on cross-cultural differences at the global level. Based on review of existing literature, different cultures may exist different social norms and propensities to trust (Doney, Cannon and Mullen, 1998). Consumers from different cultural background may trust the online businesses at different levels due to the various perceptions of risks associated with the online transactions. Risks associated with such transactions are normally inadequate security and privacy violation. Therefore, cross-cultural differences may have potentially significant implications for online businesses as they exhibit differing social norms and propensities to trust.

Browning, So & Sparks (2013) posit that it is important to manage the core service and to act promptly in addressing customer service problems as the remarks related to core services are more likely to induce positive service quality attributions. Moreover, as the emergence of social computing leads to consumers learning from each other, customer review have significant influence on buying patterns and increasingly viewed as significant factors in convincing potential clients to book hotel rooms (Travel Trade, 2006 & McCartney, 2012).

Ratnasingam (2012:194) has differentiated among three types of customer trust in the online hotel booking decision. In planning the trip and making decision to book a hotel room
customers believe that skills and knowledge of the hotel employees are a foundation of capability that implies the first type of competence trust. For the return guests, the consistency of the quality of the service provided is a valuable input as a foundation of familiarity that help them feel well with predictions and expectations. This type of trust is predictability or reliability trust. The third type of customer trust in the online hotel booking decision is the goodwill or relationship trust that provides an affective foundation for customers’ belief when they perceive that they could be given high value from hotel employees’ honesty, care and concern for their stay.

2.5 Organizational Learning as a Long-Term Internal Process of Trust Building

The organizational learning model in the hospitality industry could be built on the integrated applications with social media. This built model of application in integration with social media will provide management team with multiple options at the innovative capability of application and evaluating these options for appropriate investment. Social networking media can facilitate efficient individual and organizational learning by capturing real-time feedback from different stakeholders involving into the same transaction. By having guests share advice on popular places to dine, entertain, the social knowledge held by a hotelier can turn such positive consumer experiences into referral though the power of social media (Lorden and Creamer, 2012). Through innovative social strategies, shared consumer experiences enable operators to turn a transaction into a relationship while enhancing targeted promotion, inspiring more transactions and creating potential upsell opportunities (Sareen, 2013).

On the one hand, dealing with negative word-of-mouth (WoM) is a real challenge for management as at almost the same time, hotel manager need to deal with his service delivery system that has delivered unexpected services and to prevent dissatisfied guests who want to spread poor reviews, which can have a damaging effect on a hotel’s reputation (Levy, Duan, & Boo, 2013 and Memarzadeh & Chang, 2015). On the other hand, hoteliers should encourage customers to share their positive experiences relating to consumption-related services by offering strong arguments that will contribute to better hotel image and convince other customers to advocate the hotel (Floh, Koller, & Zauner, 2013).

A precise understanding of the organization’s internal drivers in delivering value to its customers and other stakeholders as employees, shareholders/owners is critical, especially when the organizational learning processes can help hoteliers develop new knowledge that facilitate behavior change and respond appropriately to all stakeholders (Slater & Narver, 1995 and Mena & Chabowski, 2015).

Organizational capability to catch up well with real-time social feedback requires that company must have an alignment of the ready intangible assets and a sound strategy (Kaplan and Norton, 2004). As the social networking media can capture real-time feedback when
functional daily operations are “managed” by social transactions, it is another effort to create organizational capability to catch up well with real-time social feedback to quickly direct customer relationship (Lorden and Creamer, 2012). In order to create favorable conditions for organizational learning based on the success factors derived from a well-developed state of e-commerce, priorities will be given to the technology application that helps our property to improve its customers’ and partners’ capabilities to build a new value co-creating system together. Working teams would be able to look for opportunities that may be discovered at the critical point of societal trends in taking advantages of social networking and technological trends in enabling comments and recommendations to be shared about experiences.

At the strategic level, hotel companies should have a good option when investing into their own e-commerce system. For example an independent hotel operator should not and never be able to compete directly with the big hotel chains by using heavy tech investment as the sole way to innovate their operation capabilities. They should think of using minimal cost of developing social networking to build their competitive strategy. The benefits of technology are mainly coming from the ability to navigate with social network (Koutroumanis, 2011). In the later phase, they might consider to integrate a POS (Point of Sales) system into the social networking to personalize the customer experience and place customer experience at the center of daily operations (Lorden and Creamer, 2012).

Hotel managers could approach to a hospitality-centric social strategy to build their innovative capability. The social strategy could help in creating and operating a team learning environment innovatively. Innovation is enabled via socially interactive mechanisms to drive increase in revenue per available room (RevPAR) and superiority in guest service experiences. Their functionally daily operations are “managed” by social transactions. Hotel brand should have its presence on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest, Google+, and/or Foursquare via the TripAdvisor.com. More social transactions, especially the C2C (customer to customer) socializing provides the opportunity to brand-promoting, revenue-generating (Sareen, 2013). It holds true meaning with the significant fact that 81% of US respondents indicated posts from their friends directly influenced their purchase decision (Olenksi, 2012). Moreover, hotel guests are more likely also to be suggested and encouraged by their friends to try new products/services when they are, not the service providers, sharing more honest details about their travel (Wharton, 2012).

Social networking media can facilitate efficient individual and organizational learning by capturing real-time feedback from different stakeholders involving into the same transaction. By having guests share advice on popular places to dine, entertain, the social knowledge held by a hotelier can turn such positive consumer experiences into referral though the power of social media (Lorden and Creamer, 2012). Through innovative social strategies, shared consumer experiences enable operators to turn a transaction into a relationship while
enhancing targeted promotion, inspiring more transactions and creating potential upsell opportunities (Sareen, 2013).

Organizational learning involves the long-term internal process of building newer capacities for both individual and organizational levels. The performance assessment system should be aligned well with the strategic readiness of available resources in efforts to target at high-level strategic objectives. The various processes should link closely to each other. Therefore, organizational learning that is related to managerial actions is of utmost importance to help hotels develop new knowledge that facilitate behavior change and respond appropriately to customers and overall stakeholders (Slater and Narver, 1995).

Until recently, however, research on examining the imperative of trust building in the social context of hotel industry was limited by a lack of insightful connections between marketing and operations.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Questions

We attempt to develop a thick description of the possible links between the organizational learning and the value delivering process for all involved stakeholders based on the factor of trust. In this regards, we formulate the following research questions:

**Research Question 1:** The first question is to find out how trust affects the interaction of a hotel operation team within the context of social media on the triple satisfactions for hotel staff, their guests and the property owners.

**Research Question 2:** The second research question is to find out whether there are trends in delivering these triple satisfactions being emerged from the top ranked hotels on the TripAdvisor.

We will examine the research design and methodology in order to answer the questions.

3.2 Research Design & Methodology

In order to develop a thick description or a deep understanding about trust building with regards to organizational learning and satisfaction delivery, qualitative methodology has been selected for the study when the new knowledge constructed has to be based on the exploration of complex phenomena with considerable attention to a given context experienced by individuals (Moser & Vandet Nat, 1995 and Creswell, 2011). A philosophy of social construction of reality with ontological stance has been adopted for this study to guide the researcher in his effort to answer the key research question how the interactions of a hotel management team within the context of social media affect the triple satisfactions and in search of emerging trends in delivering these triple satisfactions.
3.2.1 Strategies of Inquiry

In an effort to understand the organizational learning and interactive practices that both occur in the organizational and external context, the selection of strategies of inquiry is the case-study approach (Creswell, 2009). The case study is selected as a strategy of inquiry for this research with an aim in which the researcher will explore in depth the activities of organizational learning and interactive practices in social media (Creswell, 2009). Cases about building trust in social media: the best interaction practices between hoteliers and their customers in Vietnam are bounded by the time period from June 2015 to December 2015.

Personal experience and engagement are the themes selected for data collection and fieldwork strategies. Purposeful sampling is the qualitative method for the research as the research specifically selects individuals who can purposefully help build the understanding of the phenomenon of interest (Patton, 2002 and Creswell, 2006). The researcher selects participants for the study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and they have directly experienced with the phenomenon (Creswell, 2006). The inclusion criteria will be developed later to select the suitable participants.

The data presentation of the research will be followed up strictly by the procedure of the purposeful sampling method while the data is interpreted and compared in the view of the existing theoretical background from the literature review. This approach is a necessary step to confirm the validity of the textural-structural description of the experiences with the participants for accuracy and clarity checking.

3.3 Data

3.3.1 Data Collection Procedures

Types of data collection in this qualitative study include observations, documents, Interviews, and Audio-Visual Materials (Merriam, 1998, and Creswell, 2007). In observations, the observer in this study will play his role as a participant who can record information as it occurs. Moreover, researcher will collect selected private and public documents, such as public announcement, training materials, industry reports, newspapers and articles related to the research topics.

Purposeful sampling strategy has been employed to select suitable participants for the interview. This research set a target of eight to ten hotel executives and managers working directly in the hotels of case study or having sufficient related experiences. Almost participants were chosen based on personal connections or via references. In-person interviews were conducted as the most appropriate option for the qualitative study in order to provide further input for the already constructed themes. The questions used in the interview were semi-structured and open-end ones.

In total, eight personal in-depth interviews have been conducted to provide additional input for the study, with each interview lasting for an average of 90 minutes. The number of
interviews to be conducted also depends on the sufficient input from the interviewees in an effort to provide in-depth insight for the research questions. The personal interviews and secondary data in various forms will be transcribed and analyzed with support of the NVivo10 software following the conceptual analysis (content analysis) step-by-step. An initial framework to guide the research in terms of design, data collection and analysis has been developed based on the works of Creswell (2007), Denzin (1978), Yin (2003), and Singh (2015).

### Table 1: Data Collected from TripAdvisor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services offered by TripAdvisor</th>
<th>Descriptions</th>
<th>Hotel 1</th>
<th>Hotel 2</th>
<th>Hotel 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hotel ranking</td>
<td>Based on 397 hotels in HCMC</td>
<td>#3</td>
<td>#2</td>
<td>#4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of reviews</td>
<td>Reviews from TripAdvisor Community for each hotel</td>
<td>1,786</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>1,431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traveller rating</td>
<td>Excellent (5), Very good (4), Average (3), Poor (2), Terrible (1)</td>
<td>(5) 1,320</td>
<td>(5) 81</td>
<td>(5) 1,096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(4) 388</td>
<td>(4) 4</td>
<td>(4) 263</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>(3) 61</td>
<td>(3) 3</td>
<td>(3) 54</td>
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<td>(2) 11</td>
<td>(2) 0</td>
<td>(2) 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1) 6</td>
<td>(1) 0</td>
<td>(1) 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Rating summary</td>
<td>Location: Sleep Quality: Rooms: Service: Value: Cleanliness:</td>
<td>Location: 4.5 Sleep Quality: 4.5 Rooms: 4.5 Service: 4.5 Value: 4.5 Cleanliness: 5.0</td>
<td>Location: 5.0 Sleep Quality: 4.5 Rooms: 5.0 Service: 5.0 Value: 5.0 Cleanliness: 5.0</td>
<td>Location: 5.0 Sleep Quality: 4.5 Rooms: 4.5 Service: 4.5 Value: 4.0 Cleanliness: 5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TripAdvisor PriceFinder</td>
<td>Booking.com Check-in date: 29 Nov 15</td>
<td>US$ 191*/night</td>
<td>US$ 377*/night</td>
<td>US$ 250*/night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write a Review/Add a photo/</td>
<td>All reviews posted within 6 month period from May-Oct 2015 were collected for content analysis.</td>
<td>(5): 124</td>
<td>(5): 47</td>
<td>(5): 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3): 5</td>
<td>(3): 3</td>
<td>(3): 2</td>
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<td>(2): 1</td>
<td>(2): 0</td>
<td>(2): 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1): 1</td>
<td>(1): 0</td>
<td>(1): 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data collected as of 29 October 2015 at TripAdvisor.com

This study uses content analysis and the NVivo10 software as the guiding and supporting tools for operationalizing the philosophical and methodological choices that have been mentioned above. The specific tools and techniques help also integrate the theoretical and empirical options available for the study such as knowledge creation, co-creation of guest service experience, online reviews. A multi-pronged data collection strategy was adopted, which included personal in-depth interviews with the hoteliers (managers and senior staff), secondary and published data collection in the TripAdvisor.com sites and personal observation (Singh, 2015). Another qualitative research method of focus-group has also been used to investigate the opinion of hoteliers and to conduct the conceptual analysis (content analysis) of three constructs in e-commerce trust.
The comparison of data collected from in-depth interviews and other multi-pronged data collection strategy as mentioned above would support the researcher to arrive at a higher level of content analysis validity. The validity of categories in implicit concept analysis will be achieved by utilizing multiple classifiers in which the definition of one category would be agreed upon or broadened to include synonyms (Carley, 1992 and Weber, 1990). For example, a guest experience has its explicit variables and implicit variables in terms of a complaint, a negative comment, and a big surprise.

In order to enhance the rigour and authenticity of interview-based qualitative research, the Clean Language technique will be deployed in the process of data collection and interpretation (Tosey, Lawley, & Meese, 2014). The Clean Language technique not only can help researcher distinguish between metaphors introduced by the interviewer and those that stemmed from the interviewees’ subjective worlds, but it also can be shared among researchers, thereby increasing confidence in the validity of the findings of qualitative research. The use of the Clean Language questions technique can keep interviews free of the researcher’s metaphors, thus to enhance the authenticity (quality) of interview data (Tosey, Lawley, & Meese, 2014). Thus, this technique promotes research practice by reducing the risk of misrepresenting participants’ meaning (Tosey, Lawley, & Meese, 2014).

4. Results and Discussion

Figure 1: The framework of Data Analysis in Qualitative Research has been deployed for this study (Creswell, 2010).

Source: Data Analysis in Qualitative Research (Creswell, 2010)
Following the process of data analysis in qualitative research suggested by Creswell (2010), nine themes for this research study have been generated based on the detailed rendering of research data. These themes have displayed integrated perspectives from multiple data sources as company websites, annual reports, vision and mission, public announcement of executives, and corporate training materials. Then, beyond identifying the themes, the researcher has continuously build additional layers of complex analysis. The building process of complex analysis for the study themes has been supported by insights from in-depth interview data given by hotel managers and executives. The latest trends derived from hospitality industry reports about customer insights and competition analysis given by trusted companies as Medallia, Temkin Group, and STAR help to confirm the convergence or/and divergence of the themes emerged from the data and research findings gleaned from expert interviews and industry reports.

The outcomes of organizational learning process (creating, retaining, and transferring knowledge within an organization) to gain trusts from multiple stakeholders are the findings of this study in terms of emerging themes.

As the guests have more power than ever before, top-ranking hotels have improved over time the process of organizational learning to harness that power in order to gain trust from them.

**Figure 2: Word Frequency Query Result for Hotel Guest Reviews from the NVivo10**

Word Cloud for hotel guest reviews

### 4.1 The master theme. Building trust by focusing on nurturing Brand loyalty

Brand loyalty has been found out the covering theme or master theme of this research study. Brand loyalty has direct effects on driving revenue per available room (RevPAR), which is a key financial metric in the hospitality industry (Kriss, 2014). When a brand meets expectations of guests, they return more often and spend more in hospitality. This study
focuses on examining the guest feedbacks on different layers of their expectations related to brand loyalty that have been shared in the user-generated content website of Trip Advisor. Two dimensions of online guest comments have been deeply analyzed with support of the qualitative content analysis software NVivo10. Guest comment scores tell us the What of transactional interaction between hotel guests and their brands for their expectation while text analysis tell us the Why of the hidden best business insights each and all comments may bring to the study.

The success story of brand loyalty for the case of the upscale hotel in Ho Chi Minh city relates to an empowered service culture. By making each guest interaction really comes alive in a story, hotels put their guests at heart of all actions and decisions.

“That said, the customer services in the true highlight. Very friendly, very efficient and beyond-the-call-of-duty helpful. The former Director of sales and her team were amazing in their efforts to make stays happen, and make them trouble-free. The staff show a level of service and initiative that is uncommon in the region. The GM is quite visible and friendly, and always has great tips for restaurants and activities…” – a verbatim comment from one guest at a hotel. Source: Trip Advisor.

4.2 Building trust beyond the empowered service culture to develop fruitful relationship with guests

Top ranked hoteliers also understand that the importance of providing guests values may derive from the occasions and opportunities for interaction and relationship-building rather than just focusing on providing guests the traditional value of lifestyle they expect. Organizational learning process has been deployed to handle the task of educating the whole organization about customers continuously. At any moment along the guest journey, leading hotels have to synthesize insights from guests across multiple sources while using these insights immediately to make real-time adjustments.

In the new economy, companies build relationship with guests via the so-called social currency (IHG, 2015). Social currency as the medium of exchange helps the customer-facing hotel staff develop relationships. Hotel staff like concierges are the key person to build social currency to share with guests and enable guests to share with others. One of the best form of the guest sharing is via a live story which the guests may proudly tell the whole world their WOW about certain moment of trust. The concierges also the people who can help make the impossible possible.

"Service! So great! When we departed, someone greeted us at the airport, stood in the check in line for us and walked us to customs. I felt like we were leaving family. The gentleman, Hung, waved when we looked back from customs". A guest's review from Trip Advisor

This is the way that hoteliers help their guests collect social currency to use in building relationships with others and to share their discoveries about a destination with others. While
at the same time, hoteliers are trying to maintain the sense of discovery and adventure of travel. Along the process of relationship building with guests, hoteliers need prioritize actions simultaneously based on the biggest impact to customer loyalty. The biggest impact areas to take action on may come from the first arrival experience to stay experience until departure and post-departure one.

“Check in was done in the Club lounge on the 19th floor and was extremely courteous and informative. We were given cold scented towels and a welcome drink. We also received a welcome gift (a small Vietnamese pen cup holder). As we were staying on points, we decided to upgrade to a Club level room, which was 60US$++ per night. That was SO worth it”. A WOW Moment of Trust from one guest. Source: Trip Advisor.

Leading hotels drive accountability at all staff level effectively by a strong empowered service culture. During the customer journey, hotel operations staff need to deploy real-time operational tool and communications to stay closely and privately connected with guest’s needs and resolve their concerns and issues in real-time. To support the effective implementation of customer journey, staff training is essential to improve their ability to provide a senses of balance for guests in the organizational effort and provide a truly experience of comfortable personalization. In order to practice this required level of performance, the insightful training materials have to be combined among the IT enabled insights, back office data and on-the-ground practical knowledge. The empowered service culture as an important outcome that is expected at the end of this staff training and development process could further nurture brand expectation.

“The Best Brand Ever”. I am a Brand Ambassador and always stay at these properties. I was reading TripAdvisor reviews and decided to book this property for my stay in Saigon. I would say that it was the best property I have ever stayed at so far. I always write a review with associate's names in TripAdvisor. However, for this certain property, I would not remember all because all associates went beyond my expectation. While walking in the hotel, I was thinking how the management team could deal with this training and recruiting process. You guys did a very excellent job”. A guest stayed at the hotel in August 2015, traveled with family. Source: Trip Advisor.

4.3 Building trust by implementing innovative techniques to uncover critical emotional moments of guest experience

Leading hotel groups continuously innovate in detecting emerging trends of guest experiences and implement the innovations as a strategic priority. Based on the study of 2,830 travelers’ responses, both men and women are equally likely to choose a hotel of they see positive comments and likely to stay away from a hotel with negative comments regardless of the hotel’s segment (McCarthy et al., 2010). The leading hotel group in certain market need to find ways to use the depth of review information on social media sites to detect emerging
trends of guest experiences, even before they become wider scale issues. This trend of customer insight, according to the Temkin group, should emphasize on deep empathy but not stacks of metrics. While only qualitative techniques could uncover richer insights about customer journey.

They also innovatively excel in delivering distinctive emotions to gain high loyalty. Upscale and luxury hotels need not only to excel in delivering distinctive emotions for their guests, but to deliver the right ones among pampered, entertained or inspired emotion to gain their higher loyalty (Jonathan, 2009). The researcher in this study tries to look for ways to identify the interrelationships among these above categorized emotions based on the inherent wordings of data from guest reviews and to see if new categories of emotions emerge.

The question is whether pampered hotel guests who are given a very special treatment with extreme comfortable feelings are more likely to post positive comments than the entertained guests who are kept interested or enjoyed by enriched experiences. It’s not surprised to identify an emerging code of distinctive emotion when guests are inspired with a particular strong feeling that leads to a positive reaction of WOW and full-hearted recommendation. The pampered and entertained state of emotions when being gradually nurtured and developed, would arrive at the inspired feeling and reaction. These positive feelings inspire loyalty among the brand followers that further inspire them with recommendation and return tendency.

4.4 Building trust by enhancing real-time operational capabilities to resolve guests’ issues before they specializing their experiences on Trip Advisor

Leading hotels provide their competent service staff with relevant and actionable information to be able to transform customer experience into customers’ relationship purposefully. They need to wire hotel guests into every decisions in order to drive guest satisfactions. Providing service is not only to create a customer experience but also to nurture the fruitful customers’ relationships - a valuable social resource and opportunity that companies can use to develop their offerings to customers and attract loyalty.

Customers are retained by effectively maintaining a critical point of connection, even when the guests are invisible travellers who are no longer physically present and usually use room service, explore the local area with their own extensive knowledge. If all else fails or if none of their plans for nurturing an effective relationship with guests during they stays at the hotel succeed, people would likely to share their negative reviews with others. Real-time action helps hotel staff recover at-risk guests and overcome any potential negative experiences in order to draw out more positive reviews to the next level of sharing great stories.

“Not sure what all the rave reviews are about on here. This is a large business oriented hotel. Deluxe room comfortable bed but you could hear traffic outside through the double glazed
windows. More suited for 1 business man staying in the room rather than a couple travelling. Breakfast was included and the western buffet majority of all cooked items were luke warm. The choice of fruit and continental items was very good. Wouldn't return.” A negative review with 3 point as average from a guest’s post in August, 2015.

This is also a necessary balance between the valuable appreciation of customer touch points and the potential risk in making too much of personalized interactions, especially in providing the unnecessary service to the invisible travellers who prefer to transact online almost services offered, who frequently use room services and have extensive knowledge of local area.

4.5 Building trust with a competitive advantage of creating connection with local community

Creating connection with community brings hotel a real advantage. Local community hub for local bands and artists coming and performing - guest have opportunities to interact and develop connections with local people.

“Park Hyatt makes every experience more memorable”…The breakfast buffet choice is limited but you can order a variety of traditional Vietnamese and egg dishes on the menu. You probably can give the beef/chicken Pho a miss (highly recommend to save for Pho Le) but don't leave Park Hyatt until you have their Bahn Mi, which is way tastier than Bahn Mi Hyuh Hoa which is ranked no1 by TA. Last but not the least, don't forget to book a dinner at La Villa French which is great value for the exquisite dinner experience. The hotel is walkable to many attractions nearby, but the hotel is such a gem that we would not mind spending most time at the hotel and just fly over again to relive this unforgettable Park Hyatt experience”. Guests stayed in June 2015, traveled as a couple. Source: Trip Advisor.

Guests’ feeling of truly connections with the local area and culture should be highly respected. Hoteliers purposely create the context in which the Guests’ interactions with hotel’ internal and external places can enhance their feeling of truly connections with local area and culture. The challenge of local hotel team is to identify and respond to the guests’ individual needs when the independent-minded consumers increasingly feel that they should be working things out for themselves.

4.6 Building trust by walking on guest journey and encouraging them to tell their great stories of unforgettable experiences

The great stories that have been shared by guests with ease and comfort via multi-channel are the common social capital of guests and hotels. Hoteliers are listening their guests’ feedback in more ways than ever while the customers are increasingly sharing their feedback in form of great stories. However, both parties invest into the common capital differently and expect different outcomes derived from that. While sharing the great stories of branded content, it gives trust to the travelers and help the guests define themselves to other people.
This encouraged practice contributes to creating deeper connections and building trust for company's reputation from behind voluntarily.

“MAGNIFICENT”. The stay at The Reverie Saigon was our first stop in the two week vacation of Vietnam and Cambodia. After our stay at the Hotel, we continuously kept reminiscing the time spent there and it was hard to like anything else. A very very very special thanks to Mr. Hai Tran, who is the Chief Concierge at the Hotel who was extremely helpful at every moment of the stay in the Hotel and without his assistance I do not think that my family or myself would have had such a good time in Ho Chi Minh City. He was an example of a pure gentleman with a high level of professionalism in the manner with he spoke to us and the way in which he handled the affairs of our trip. It appeared as if we were being taken care of by a "Savoy Academy trained" gentleman. His warmth and hospitality has left a memory in our mind that shall be remembered for times to come…Thanks a million Hai Tran and the rest of the team at the Reverie Saigon!!” a review from a couple, stayed in August 2015. Source: Trip Advisor

4.7 Building trust by providing authenticity of the experience for guests while making them feel personal and exclusive

The exclusivity of experience makes guests feel like they enjoy life like the local people do, to discover and uncover information only locals have.

"Is this the best hotel in the world? “Answer: a resounding yes!! My husband and I have travelled the world (many times over) for work and leisure. We have stayed in countless 5 star and a supposed 6 star hotel. Never in all my travels over the last 30 years have I experienced a hotel with such amazing service. I am not usually known for being overly generous with my praise, however, it would be an injustice not to be effusive following our incredible experience. EVERY guest is treated like a VVIP. Any potential hiccup is seamlessly intercepted by the incredibly efficient and professional management team, before it has a chance of developing into a problem”. A review from a couple, stayed in August 2015.

Source: Trip Advisor

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

While the master theme of this study emphasizes brand loyalty as the main organizational learning effort to build trust, the common links among six themes as major findings really comes from a convergence of the multiple needs of travelers. The cases of luxury hotel brands Park Hyatt, Leading hotels and InterContinental hotels tells us that as the guests are looking for as much as possible from each trip, hoteliers need to respond to the multiple needs of guests by making hotels/resorts havens of tranquility or unique perception. The responses to these guests’ need also include innovations around their latent needs with the readiness of predicting their future behaviors.
In this study, the research findings are presented in the typical form of the detailed description or themes for the qualitative case study as following: “developing empowered service culture”, “uncovering critical emotional moments of guest experience”, “enhancing real-time operational capabilities to resolve guest’s issues before they specializing their experiences on Trip Advisor”, “Creating connection with local community”, encouraging guests to tell their great stories of unforgettable experiences”, and “providing authenticity of experience for guests while making them feel personal and exclusive”

Beyond identifying the found themes, the researcher has continued to compare the findings with information gleaned from the literature and theories in order to build additional layers of complex analysis (Creswell, 2010:189). The interested phenomenon of trust building with its findings has been compared with Stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984 and Clarkson, 1995), Pattern theory (Lincoln and Guba, 1985 and Neuman, 2000:38), and the Service Profit Chain – A Primer (Heskett, Earl Sasser, and Wheeler, 2008) in order to confirm the findings from the reviewed literature theories or to diverge from it (Cresswell, 2010:189).

In comparison with the Stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984 and Clarkson, 1995), the findings are affirmatively matched with the descriptive perspective of this theory by purposeful inclusion of the organization’s various stakeholders in managerial decision making, especially when the hotels ought to attend to the interests of all their stakeholders with their own intrinsic value. Moreover, the findings are also aligned with the instrumental perspective of stakeholder theory (Donaldson and Preston, 1995) in reinforcing that hotels need to make a connection between the effective management of multiple stakeholders relationships and the achievement of organizational objectives as development of stakeholder relationships founded on mutual trust and collaboration with help gain a competitive advantage (Jones, 1995).

In line with the framework of pattern theory (Lincoln and Guba, 1985 and Neuman, 2000:38), it is asserted that each theme in the research links parts of their meanings and contribution to the whole phenomenon of trust building. The findings have been supported by the pattern theory as they contain an interconnected set of concepts and relationships without any requirement of causal statements or emphasis of logical deductive reasoning. The themes found from this study, like pattern theory, are systems of ideas that inform (Neuman, 2000:38).

From the strategic management literature, it is suggested that organizational learning is a strategic resource that can benefit the organization (Hult et al, 2003). In which hotel brands have proactively put the Harvard Service Profit Chain – A Primer (Heskett, Earl Sasser, and Wheeler, 2008) to help their employees build knowledge and leadership capacity by continuous individual and organizational learning. All the findings from this research are practically justifiable in the hotel operational context where trust capital owned by companies
acts on operating strategy and service delivery system of service profit chain (Heskett, Earl Sasser, and Wheeler, 2008:4).

In order to enhance the reliability of the findings, the researcher has followed several reliability procedures suggested by Creswell (2010) with special focus on checking transcripts and coding, comparing data with codes, and writing memos about codes and their definitions. The validity of the findings has been enhanced to the extent that this study incorporated several validity strategies, namely data triangulation with different data sources, member checking, and using rich and thick description to convey the findings (Creswell, 2010). Triangulation is a procedure used to produce better data for this study. The four types of triangulation are data triangulation, theory triangulation, investigator triangulation, and methodological triangulation (Denzin, 1978, Huettman, 1993, and Creswell, 2009).

References


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