



For Immediate Release

To: Assignment Editor/Editor of Education and Local News Sections

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HSUHK scholars develop six-dimension scale to measure perceived value of online travel reviews to help travellers and tourism sector

It is common for travellers to rely on online guides for trip planning. However, the abundance of information can be overwhelming and raise doubts about credibility. A research team led by The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong (HSUHK) and National Pingtung University have developed a “Perceived Value of Online Travel Reviews” (PVOTR) scale to assist travel service providers, travel agencies, and booking platforms in designing more effective online review templates for potential customers. It also gives potential customers more valuable reference information when planning their trips. The research was published in the *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*.

The research has been structured into two parts to examine online reviews posted about travel products and services providers including hotels, restaurants, and travel agencies. The first part focuses on establishing a comprehensive and methodical framework to analyse online travel reviews, and the second part focuses on exploring how online travel reviews written based on the established framework influences customers’ purchasing attitudes towards online travel products and services.

The research team observed that the existing studies on online reviews in the tourism market have primarily focused on the readily quantifiable aspects of reviews to assess the credibility of review sources and characteristics. However, the team identified a lack of comprehensive analytical tools and research focusing on the qualitative aspects of review quality. To address this gap, the team performed an extensive literature review and invited professionals from the industries of e-commerce and the internet usage, as well as tourism and hospitality, to evaluate content and provide expert insights. The PVOTR scale is categorised in six value dimensions, encompassing a total of 27 items (see Appendix) that customers consider when evaluating and making purchasing decisions. These six value dimensions are proficiency, timeliness, objectivity, product features, brand disclosure and comprehensiveness. The travel industry can use this framework to create online review templates for customers to write reviews.



Dr Crystal Wu, project coordinator and Assistant Professor at the Department of Marketing from the School of Business of HSUHK said that if a travel review comprises of these six elements, it will meet potential customers' expectations on important information and effectively assist them in choosing travel products and services. To determine the effectiveness of the framework, the team also conducted surveys via questionnaires as well as interviews to validate the findings with 69 undergraduate students majoring in tourism and hospitality, and 485 travellers.

In the second part of the research, researchers focused on the influence of online travel reviews based on the PVOTR scale for customers' attitudes and purchase decisions toward online travel products. The team invited individuals who had made online travel purchases within the last 12 months to complete a questionnaire at Kaohsiung International Airport, and received a total of 469 valid responses. The research findings indicate that when online travel reviews provide valid and reliable information, they facilitate more effective decision-making among customers and reduce the perceived complexity associated with the online travel purchasing process. As a result, travellers were more likely to have positive attitudes towards making travel-related purchases through digital channels.

Dr Wu said the research team believes that these findings can offer valuable guidance and reference for industry stakeholders. The results can inform the design of existing evaluation review template forms used by customers to provide feedback on tourism-related products and services. By incorporating the identified factors that influence PVOTR, customers can elicit more reliable and trustworthy information and have more confidence when making online travel purchases. Additionally, the PVOTR scale developed through this research can assist businesses in analysing big data collected by customer reviews. This analytical framework can then be leveraged to formulate targeted promotions, publicity, and sales strategies that align with the business model and attract a greater number of potential customers.

Click [here](#) for the full article (English only).

For details of PVOTR scale, please refer to Appendix.



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Photo:



Photo caption: Dr Crystal Wu hopes the PVOTR scale benefits the industry and customers.

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About The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong

The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong (HSUHK) is a non-profit private liberal-arts oriented university with five Schools (Business, Communication, Decision Sciences, Humanities and Social Science, and Translation and Foreign Languages) and over 6,000 full-time students. Adopting the unique “Liberal + Professional” education model, HSUHK aims to nurture young talent with critical thinking, innovative minds, caring attitudes, moral values, and social responsibility.

Aspiring to be a leading private university in the region, HSUHK features a primary focus on undergraduate education, top-quality faculty members, award-winning green campus facilities, innovative degree programmes, unique residential college system combining living and learning, interactive small class teaching, very close student-teacher relationship, RGC-funded impactful research, and excellent student development/support services. HSUHK is listed the 7th (overall) in the ASEAN+ region, the 1st in the Greater China region, and the 1st in Employability as per the 2023 AppliedHE ASEAN+ private university assessment by the Singapore-based AppliedHE. It is also listed among the top 200 worldwide on “Quality Education” and “Decent Work and Economic Growth” in the Times Higher Education University Impact Rankings 2021.



Appendix: Details of Perceived Value of Online Travel Reviews scale

<p>Proficiency value (Reviewers can indicate their skills and experience)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Online reviewers are knowledgeable about tourism products and services.• Online reviewers are people of some prominence in tourism areas.• Professional tourism terms and remarks are presented in online reviews.• Online travel reviewers have a good credibility record.• Posting negative online travel reviews requires more professionalism in reviewers.• Celebrities and cases representing the tourism profession are mentioned in online reviews.
<p>Timeliness value (Reviewers can deliver the latest information)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Instantly posted online travel reviews are important.• Recently posted online travel reviews are important.• The most recent online reviews would reflect the up-to-date information of tourism products and services.• I would read all available online reviews about tourism products and services.• I would pay more attention to tourism products and services which have a larger volume of positive online reviews.
<p>Objectivity value (Reviewers can set aside emotions or personal biases)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Online travel review content is genuine.• I would pay more attention to tourism products and services that have a larger volume of online reviews.• Online travel review content is neutral.• The volume of online reviews would indicate the attention that the tourism products and services get.
<p>Product features value (Reviewers show understanding of product and service features)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The online review title mentioning the features of tourism products and services is long.• The features of tourism products and services are introduced many times in online reviews.• Many online review titles mention the features of tourism products and services.• Many sentences mention the features of tourism products and services in online reviews.
<p>Brand disclosure value (Reviewers mentioned the brands of products and services)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Many tourism brands are introduced in online reviews.• Many online review titles mention tourism brands.• Much information about the brand types of tourism products and services is provided in online reviews.• Many online review titles mention the brand types of tourism products and services.



<p>Comprehensiveness value (Reviewers can fully describe the product and service)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Summarised reviews on tourism products and services are as valuable as detailed ones.• Detailed reviews of tourism products and services are more valuable.• Detailed reviews of tourism products and services would attract more attention.• A larger volume of online reviews would reflect that many people are interested in the tourism products and services.
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