

ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH'S (EWOM'S)
INFLUENCE ON BOOKING INTENTION: A STUDY
OF HOTELS IN KUALA LUMPUR

ADRIAN TAN YENN WEI
COLLINS MAVUVUNI HIRIBAE
DIANE YONG MAY KUEN
LIM CHEE YI
POON YEE LING

BACHELOR OF COMMERCE (HONS)
ACCOUNTING

UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN

FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND FINANCE
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND
ACCOUNTANCY

AUGUST 2014

ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH'S (EWOM'S)
INFLUENCE ON BOOKING INTENTION: A
STUDY OF HOTELS IN KUALA LUMPUR

BY

ADRIAN TAN YENN WEI
COLLINS MAVUVUNI HIRIBAE
DIANE YONG MAY KUEN
LIM CHEE YI
POON YEE LING

A research project submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirement for the degree of

BACHELOR OF COMMERCE (HONS)
ACCOUNTING

UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN

FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND FINANCE
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND
ACCOUNTANCY

AUGUST 2014

Copyright @ 2014

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. No part of this paper may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, graphics, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise, without the prior consent of the authors.

DECLARATION

We hereby declare that:

- (1) This undergraduate research project is the end result of our own work and that due acknowledgement has been given in the references to ALL sources of information be they printed, electronic, or personal.
- (2) No portion of this research has been submitted in support of any application for any other degree or qualification of this or any other University, or other institutes of learning.
- (3) Equal contribution has been made by each group member in completing the research project.
- (4) The word count of this research report is **11,214 words**.

Name of Student:	Student ID:	Signature:
1. Adrian Tan Yenn Wei	11ABB00867	
2. Collins Mavuvuni Hiribae	12ABB00484	
3. Diane Yong May Kuen	10ABB05220	
4. Lim Chee Yi	11ABB00898	
5. Poon Yee Ling	11ABB01388	

Date: 4 August 2014

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This research project is the consummation of effort put in by various parties who have contributed both time and money. Therefore, we would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to those who have contributed directly or indirectly to this research.

First of all, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to our beloved supervisor, Ms. Leong Lai Ying, for her invaluable guidance, continuous encouragement and constant support in making this research possible. We appreciate and value her guidance from the start to finish that enabled us to develop an understanding of this research thoroughly. We would also like to express our special thanks to Ms. Lee Voon Hsien, our coordinator, for guiding us throughout this research. Without both of their advice and assistance, it would be difficult for us to complete this project.

Next, our heartfelt thanks goes to Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, for the provision of necessary facilities and databases. We would also like to thank the dedicated lecturers and members of the staff UTAR, who have helped us in many ways and made our journey at UTAR pleasant and unforgettable.

We would like to acknowledge the past researchers whose published journals were helpful in providing us with the understanding of the prior significant findings and justification. We would also like to express our greatest gratitude to our family and friends for their love, dream and sacrifice throughout our life. Their continuous encouragement and support have been essential in our pursuit of academic excellence.

Thank you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Copyright Page.....	ii
Declaration.....	iii
Acknowledgement.....	iv
Table of Contents.....	v
List of Tables.....	ix
List of Figures.....	x
List of Appendices.....	xi
List of Abbreviations.....	xii
Preface.....	xiii
Abstract.....	xiv
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.0 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background of the Study.....	1
1.2 Problem Statement.....	2
1.3 Research Questions and Objectives.....	4
1.4 Significance of the Study.....	5
1.5 Outline of the Study.....	6
1.6 Conclusion.....	6
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW.....	7
2.0 Introduction.....	7
2.1 Theoretical / Conceptual Foundation.....	7
2.2 Review of Past Empirical Studies.....	9
2.2.1 From WoM to eWoM.....	9
2.2.2 Booking Intention.....	10
2.2.3 Factors of eWoM: Perceived eWoM Credibility..	11
2.2.4 Factors of eWoM: Positive eWoM.....	12
2.2.5 Factors of eWoM: Negative eWoM	13
2.2.6 Factors of eWoM: eWoM User's Expertise.....	14

	2.2.7	Factors of eWoM: eWoM User's Involvement.....	15
	2.3	Proposed Conceptual Framework.....	16
	2.4	Hypothesis Development.....	17
	2.5	Conclusion.....	18
CHAPTER	3	RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	19
	3.0	Introduction.....	19
	3.1	Research Design.....	19
	3.2	Data Collection Method.....	20
		3.2.1 Primary Data.....	20
	3.3	Sampling Design.....	20
		3.3.1 Target Population.....	20
		3.3.2 Sampling Frame and Sampling Location.....	21
		3.3.3 Sampling Elements.....	21
		3.3.4 Sampling Technique.....	21
		3.3.5 Sampling Size.....	22
	3.4	Research Instrument.....	22
	3.5	Construct Measurement.....	23
	3.6	Data Processing.....	26
		3.6.1 Data Checking.....	26
		3.6.2 Data Editing.....	26
		3.6.3 Data Coding.....	26
		3.6.4 Data Transcribing.....	27
		3.6.5 Data Cleaning.....	27
	3.7	Data Analysis.....	27
		3.7.1 Descriptive Analysis.....	27
		3.7.2 Scale Measurement.....	28
		3.7.2.1 Normality Test.....	28
		3.7.3 Inferential Analysis.....	28
		3.7.3.1 Pearson's Correlation Coefficient Analysis.....	28
		3.7.3.2 Multicollinearity.....	29
		3.7.3.3 Multiple Linear Regression (MLR).....	29
	3.8	Conclusion.....	30
CHAPTER	4	DATA ANALYSIS.....	31

	4.0	Introduction.....	31
	4.1	Pilot Test.....	31
	4.2	Descriptive Analysis.....	32
	4.2.1	Demographic Profile of the Respondents.....	32
	4.2.2	Central Tendencies Measurements of Constructs	37
	4.2.2.1	Perceived eWoM Credibility.....	37
	4.2.2.2	Positive eWoM.....	38
	4.2.2.3	Negative eWoM.....	39
	4.2.2.4	eWoM User's Expertise.....	40
	4.2.2.5	eWoM User's Involvement.....	41
	4.2.2.6	Booking Intention.....	42
	4.3	Scale Measurement.....	43
	4.4	Inferential Analysis.....	45
	4.4.1	Linearity.....	45
	4.4.2	Normality.....	46
	4.4.3	Homoscedasticity.....	47
	4.4.4	Person's Correlation Coefficient Analysis.....	48
	4.4.5	Multiple Linear Regression (MLR).....	49
	4.5	Conclusion.....	54
CHAPTER	5	DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS	55
	5.0	Introduction.....	55
	5.1	Summary of Statistical Analysis.....	55
	5.1.1	Summary of Descriptive Analysis.....	55
	5.1.2	Summary of Scale of Measurement.....	56
	5.1.3	Summary of Inferential Analysis.....	56
	5.1.3.1	Pearson's Correlation Coefficient Analysis	57
	5.1.3.2	Multiple Linear Regression Analysis.....	57
	5.2	Discussion of Major Findings.....	58
	5.2.1	Relationship between PC and BI.....	58
	5.2.2	Relationship between PE and BI.....	59
	5.2.3	Relationship between NE and BI.....	59
	5.2.4	Relationship between UE and BI.....	60
	5.2.5	Relationship between UI and BI.....	60

5.3	Implication of the Study.....	61
5.3.1	Managerial Implications.....	61
5.4	Limitations of the Study.....	62
5.4.1	Geographic.....	63
5.4.2	Variables.....	63
5.4.3	Questionnaire.....	63
5.4.4	Background of Target Respondents.....	64
5.5	Recommendations for Future Study.....	64
5.5.1	Geographic.....	64
5.5.2	Variables.....	65
5.5.3	Questionnaire.....	65
5.5.4	Background of Target Respondents.....	66
5.6	Conclusion.....	67
	References.....	68
	Appendices.....	78

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1:	General Objectives and Questions	4
Table 1.2:	Specific Objectives and Question	4
Table 3.1:	Definition of the Constructs and Their Sources	24
Table 3.2:	Origins of Sampling Items	24
Table 3.3:	Example of Modified Operational Constructs	25
Table 4.1:	Results of Pilot Test - Reliability Statistics	32
Table 4.2:	Gender of Respondents	32
Table 4.3:	Age of Respondents	33
Table 4.4:	Nationality of Respondents	33
Table 4.5:	Marital Status of Respondents	34
Table 4.6:	Highest Education Completed	34
Table 4.7:	Occupation of Respondents	35
Table 4.8:	Monthly Personal Income of Respondents	35
Table 4.9:	Have Experience Using Hotel Booking Websites	36
Table 4.10:	Statistical Summary of Perceived eWoM Credibility	37
Table 4.11:	Statistical Summary of Positive eWoM	38
Table 4.12:	Statistical Summary of Negative eWoM	39
Table 4.13:	Statistical Summary of eWoM User's Expertise	40
Table 4.14:	Statistical Summary of eWoM User's Involvement	41
Table 4.15:	Statistical Summary of Booking Intention	42
Table 4.16:	Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Tests for Variables	43
Table 4.17:	Tests of Skewness of Normality	44
Table 4.18:	Pearson's Correlation Coefficient Analysis	48
Table 4.19:	MLR Model Summary	49
Table 4.20:	Multiple Regression Analysis	50
Table 5.1:	Hypotheses Testing	58

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1:	Factors of eWoM Influencing Booking Intention	16
Figure 4.1:	Scatter Plot	45
Figure 4.2:	Distribution of Residuals	46
Figure 4.3:	Residual by Predicted	47

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1.1: Malaysia Hotel Guests in 2012	78
Appendix 2.1: Summary of Past Empirical Studies	79
Appendix 4.1: Gender of Respondents	81
Appendix 4.2: Age of Respondents	81
Appendix 4.3: Nationality of Respondents	82
Appendix 4.4: Marital Status of Respondents	82
Appendix 4.5: Highest Education Completed	83
Appendix 4.6: Occupation of Respondents	83
Appendix 4.7: Monthly Personal Income of Respondents	84
Appendix 4.8: Have Experience Using Hotel Booking Websites	84
Appendix 6.1: Letter of Permission to Conduct Survey	85
Appendix 7.1: Survey Questionnaire	86

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BI	Booking Intention
DV	Dependent Variable
ELM	Elaboration Likelihood Model
eWoM	electronic Word of Mouth
IV	Independent Variable
KL	Kuala Lumpur
MLR	Multiple Linear Regression
NE	Negative eWoM
PC	Perceived eWoM Credibility
PE	Positive eWoM
SAS	Statistical Analysis System
UE	eWoM User's Expertise
UI	eWoM User's Involvement
UTAR	Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman
WoM	Word of Mouth

PREFACE

In the past, the process of spreading information among the consumers was done through word of mouth (WoM). However, the advancement of technology has brought about the development of WoM into electronic word of mouth (eWoM). With technology advancements and the increased popularity of eWoM, word of mouth has slowly been moving away from the traditional methods of WoM.

The hotel industry is one sector of the market which relies heavily on hotel patrons' satisfaction. A good review by a hotel patron can attract other potential patrons to book a hotel room. Therefore, eWoM is used as a value-added marketing tool for hotels to gain a competitive advantage over its competitors.

As the advancements of eWoM is very sudden and grows substantially every year, it leads to this study to further explore the relationship between the factors of eWoM and the hotel patrons' booking intention.

ABSTRACT

The main objective of this research is to determine which eWoM factors trigger hotel patrons booking intention. Despite extensive research on the conventional word-of-mouth, very few have examined this scope in the hotel industry from a Malaysian perspective. Hence, the proposed conceptual model was developed by adapting from Fan, Miao, Fang and Lin (2013) to examine this relationship.

A total of 500 self-administered questionnaires were distributed to hotel patrons from 10 selected top hotels in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Data were analyzed by employing Pearson's correlation and multiple regression analysis.

The results of this research would contribute primarily to the hotel industry by giving a better understanding of what drives hotel patrons' booking intention. Hotel operators would be able to structure their hotels in a customer-oriented way thus encouraging the spread of positive eWoM. Indirectly, this would help in improving hotel's reputation; hence increasing revenue and future expansion. Moreover, these findings would be valuable to Malaysia's Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism in ensuring Malaysian hotels are up to par. Thus, making "Visit Malaysia Year 2014" campaign a success.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Provided in this chapter, is a general understanding of the entire research study. The background of the study explains the influence of eWoM on consumer's booking intention and discusses about the problem statement, which clarifies the reason for the topic to be selected and the purpose of the study. In addition, the research questions are also included in this chapter as a form of argument. The specific objectives set out the purpose of each independent variable. This chapter also explains the significance of the study which outlines the importance of the research. Lastly, the outline of the study provides a brief summary of Chapter 1 to Chapter 5.

1.1 Background of the Study

Traditional word-of-mouth (WoM) has been recognized as an effective marketing instrument that has significant influence on customer behaviour. Internet advancement has developed and transformed WoM into something much more influential and fast-spreading- Electronic Word of Mouth (eWoM). Litvin, Goldsmith, and Pan (2008) defined eWoM as the use of internet-based technology to communicate informally to consumers related to the usage or characteristics of particular goods, services and their sellers.

Internet allows one to research and book travel plans conveniently. A study by World Independent, a hotel marketing agency, discovered TripAdvisor ranks first for direct hotel bookings in the year 2013. Another survey by Google Malaysia (2013), in partnership with TNS research, a market research group, discovered that 9 in 10 Malaysian travelers researched for hotels online. Therefore, eWoM can potentially be a strong marketing platform for hotel marketers.

Over one third of consumers would not book a hotel without reading reviews first (Davies, 2012). Since hotel experiences contain non-physical qualities, such as room service and housekeeping, these qualities cannot be judged before the experience itself. This brings higher risk resulting in customers' uncertainty on booking a hotel. Hence, consumers rely on interpersonal influence of eWoM (Jeong & Jang, 2011). Challenges arise for marketers as customers trust their peers rather than traditional marketing (Cakim, 2010).

1.2 Problem Statement

The traditional means of marketing (e.g.: mass media advertising), has become costly and less affordable especially for individual hospitality organizations compared to a widely-reachable and cost-effective means of marketing (Sormunen, 2009). eWoM is suggested as a solution for these organizations in Malaysia because it is inexpensive and highly effective. eWoM is able to transform communication networks into influence networks effectively, increase recipients' awareness, and eventually leads to adoption or sales (Bruyn & Lilien, 2008). Increasing studies discovered consumers tend to be more interested in products discussed on blogs and web forums than those marketed traditionally (Pai & Chu, 2013). However, much is yet to be understood about eWoM in the hotel industry before it can be implemented by hotel managers to replace costly traditional marketing.

As eWoM is still in its pioneer status, several past studies have tried to harvest information regarding eWoM in hopes of getting a deeper understanding and ultimately utilizing it as a marketing tool. These studies have proven that eWoM has a significant effect on consumer behaviour. Researches were done on eWoM with regards to tourism (Litvin et al., 2008), online travel information (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010), destination image (Jalilvand, Samiei, Dini & Manzari, 2012), and travel blogs (Chen, Shang & Li, 2014).

Many studies have been done on various industries, some on the tourism industry (Litvin et al., 2008; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010; Jalilvand et al., 2012; Chen et al., 2013). However, few researches have examined the impact of eWoM specifically on the hotel sector. Additionally, research studies on service industry emphasize on bigger and more advanced countries rather than a developing country like Malaysia, e.g., in Taiwan (Pai, Chu, Wang & Chen, 2010) and China (Zhang, Ye, Law & Li, 2010). Moreover, many researches focus on eWoM intention (Jeong & Jang, 2011). Internet trends and technology are also constantly advancing and this may cause findings by studies in e-commerce to become obsolete (Godes & Mayzlin, 2004; Gruen, Osmonbekov & Czaplewski, 2005). Thus, the findings of these studies cannot be applied to solve this problem.

1.3 Research Questions and Objectives

Table 1.1: General Objectives and Questions

General Objectives	General Questions
To determine the eWoM factors that can influence hotel patrons' booking intention of hotel accommodation.	What eWoM factors that can influence hotel patrons' booking intention of hotel accommodation?

Source: Developed for the research

Table 1.2: Specific Objectives and Questions

Specific Objectives	Specific Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To determine whether perceived eWoM credibility will affect the booking intention. - To investigate the relationship between positive eWoM and the booking intention. - To determine whether negative eWoM will affect the booking intention. - To study whether eWoM user's expertise will affect the booking intention. - To investigate whether eWoM user's involvement will affect the booking intention. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Will perceived eWoM credibility affect the booking intention? - What is the relationship between positive eWoM and the booking intention? - Will negative eWoM affect the booking intention? - Does eWoM user's expertise affect the booking intention? - Will eWoM user's involvement affect the user's behaviour to book a hotel?

Source: Developed for the research

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study contributes primarily to hotel operators. Positive eWoM communication may enhance a hotel's reputation while negative communication may be destructive. From this study, they would know what to improve to increase its revenue and customer visits. They would have a better understanding of eWoM and how it influences hotel patrons' booking intentions.

Besides that, marketing companies would benefit from this study. Marketing companies utilizing eWoM for promotional efforts would be more efficient when they have knowledge of what influences hotel patrons' booking intention. It provides insights for marketing companies regarding hotel patrons' attitudes and behaviors, which can potentially be used to target customers.

This study would also contribute to Malaysia's Ministry Of Culture, Arts and Tourism. It could use this study to understand better what influences hotel patrons' booking intention and which areas need focus and improvement for Malaysian hotels to be up to par. By doing so, the Ministry will be one step closer in making Visit Malaysia Year 2014 successful.

As there are limitations to the conceptual model of Fan et al. (2013), this study contributed academically by coming out with an adapted conceptual model. Two independent variables (positive eWoM and negative eWoM) were added to Fan's conceptual model.

1.5 Outline of Study

Chapter 1 is the introduction of this study. It introduces the deficiencies in past studies and the significance of this study. Chapter 2 clarifies the theoretical framework for this study. Past empirical studies are also reviewed and the research hypotheses are developed. Chapter 3 deals with the research methodology of this study. The collection of the data and the analysis of the data are included. Chapter 4 analyzes the data collected from the survey questionnaire. Tests conducted include reliability, normality, Pearson's correlation and multiple regression testing. Chapter 5 discusses the results of the analysis conducted. Limitations and recommendations for future research are included.

1.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter basically provides a general overview of the entire chapters and research. It has determined the problem of eWoM on hospitality industry. Moreover, it has laid out the research objectives and questions of this study. Therefore, this chapter will serve as references for the further investigations in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, eWoM factors that influence the booking intentions of hotel patrons were studied. After studying on past researches on eWoM factors, five independent variables relating to eWoM that affect booking intentions of hotel patrons were found. The independent variables are perceived eWoM credibility, positive eWoM, negative eWoM, eWoM user's expertise and eWoM user's involvement. By using the five variables as independent variables and booking intention as the dependent variable, a conceptual framework was developed. This conceptual framework was used to study the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable

2.1 Theoretical / Conceptual Foundation

This study adapted the conceptual framework from the information adoption model. Sussman and Siegal's (2003) study used information adoption model to explain how people are influenced to adopt information posted in computer-mediated communication contexts. Under the information adoption model is the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM).

ELM was developed by Petty and Cacioppo during the 1980s. In ELM, attitude change occurs via two routes of influence: central or peripheral route. Recipients taking the central route process information critically. Conversely, people taking the peripheral route to persuasion use less cognitive efforts during attitude formation (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

When Petty and Wegener (1999) discuss the two routes to persuasion, they concluded that message recipients in higher elaboration state are more likely to engage in thoughtful information processing, and consequently their opinions are highly affected by argument quality. Conversely, individuals with lower elaboration likelihood are expected to base the attitude change on peripheral cues, e.g., source credibility.

In ELM, expertise is associated with ability to process information. Expertise gives individuals the ability to process information. According to Celsi and Olson (1988), involvement is associated with individual's motivation to process the given information whereas prior knowledge or expertise the individual possesses is associated with the ability to process information. In ELM, involvement gives individuals the motivation to process information and is likely to process it via the central route (MacInnis & Park, 1991). Conversely, individuals lacking either motivation or ability most likely process information via peripheral route (Celsi & Olson, 1988; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

ELM has been used in several studies such as the mobile banking sector to understand mobile banking user behaviour (Zhou & Tao, 2012). Besides, ELM is also used to understand the interactions among website content and design (Gregory, Meade & Thompson, 2013). ELM also explained why a given influential process may lead to different outcomes and impacts on human perceptions, behaviour and understanding information system acceptance (Li, 2013).

This study adapted information adoption model into the conceptual framework. The three variables taken from information adoption model are perceived eWoM credibility, eWoM user's expertise and eWoM user's involvement. The two variables added into the framework are positive eWoM and negative eWoM, which was taken from Fan et al. (2013).

2.2 Review of Past Empirical Studies

2.2.1 From Word-Of-Mouth (WoM) to Electronic Word-Of-Mouth (eWoM)

Traditional word-of-mouth (WoM) is defined as an oral form of interpersonal non-commercial communication among acquaintances (Arndt, 1967). As WoM is an influential channel of communication in the marketplace, studies existed to investigate how WoM changes consumer attitude toward purchasing decisions (Fan et al., 2013).

Consumers seek information before making purchase to reduce perceived risk (Bettman, 1973). When consumers actively seek information about products, they are inclined to trust WoM. WoM is a powerful marketing tool as it is perceived to be more trustworthy and relevant, and reduces consumer resistance because it originates from the experiences of other consumers (Fan et al., 2013).

The world has become digital and with the presence of the internet, it has changed many aspects of our lives, including WoM. WoM is not limited to face-to-face communication anymore. Online WoM, in the shape of online communities such as internet forums and newsgroups, enables consumers to share their experiences, opinions and knowledge with other people (Prendergast & Ko, 2010).

Electronic word-of-mouth (eWoM) can be defined as the usage of internet-based technology to communicate informally to consumers about characteristics of particular goods (Litvin et al., 2008). eWoM is more powerful than traditional WoM because eWoM information is disseminated faster, as millions of people are able to receive and spread information through email and other internet-based media (Prendergast & Ko, 2010). The number of online consumer reviews has reached 116

million and is still increasing (Stills, 2009). Furthermore, 83% of internet shoppers reported that their purchasing decisions are based on online product evaluations and reviews (Opinion Research Corporation, 2008).

A study by Fan et al. (2013) emphasizes on how much trust the consumers have on eWoM. As this study and Fan et al. (2013) are closely related, this study adapted their model and added three independent variables (perceived eWoM credibility, eWoM user's expertise and eWoM user's involvement), which were taken from information adoption model.

2.2.2 Booking Intention

Purchase intention is defined as a consumer's conscious plan or intention to make an effort to purchase a product (Spears & Singh, 2004). Booking intention is similar to purchase intention. In this study, booking intention is defined as the intent of a consumer to book a room in a hotel. Booking intention can be swayed by many factors such as eWoM. It is widely recognized that positive and negative WoM can potentially influence customer's purchase decisions (Sparks & Browning, 2010).

Booking intention is affected by eWoM because of consumer-generated information preference (Doh & Hwang, 2009). Prospective customers visit websites and read reviews from other customers (eWoM) to learn about a product before making a purchase. These reviews have the potential to enhance or destroy a firm's reputation (Sparks & Browning, 2010). That is why information generated by consumers is perceived to be unbiased and more trustworthy than other types of promotions. Promotions like advertising only shows the good side of the product and do not always reveal the true sides of the products.

A consumer's willingness to adopt eWoM information affects booking intention. After obtaining information about a hotel, it has to be adopted in order for eWoM to take effect. Adoption refers to WoM persuasiveness and the extent that consumers are likely to rely on WoM in purchasing decisions (Duhan, Johnson, Wilcox, & Harrell, 1997).

2.2.3 Factors of eWoM : Perceived eWoM Credibility

Consumer-perceived credibility of eWoM is defined as the extent to which one perceives a recommendation or review as believable, true or factual (Cheung, Luo, Sia & Chen, 2009). Flanagin and Metzger (2008) defined the term 'credibility' as the believability of a source or message. In this study, perceived eWoM credibility is defined as the extent to which hotel customers believes eWoM to be true and reliable.

Fan and Miao (2012) investigated social factors, personal attributes and cultural factors that can affect the use and acceptance of eWoM. 117 customers were surveyed about their eWoM experiences. The study concluded that gender, a moderator, has an effect on the credibility of eWoM, which in turn, will affect the consumer purchasing decision.

Another study found perceived credibility is a prime determinant in consumer's decision making process and reduces uncertainty in both social and business interactions (Awad & Ragowsky, 2008). eWoM user will use the review in his/her purchasing decision if he/she perceives the eWoM as credible (Cheung et al., 2009). Park, Wong, Yao, and Kang (2011) found that if online consumers in China think an online review is credible, they will make purchase decisions accordingly.

Based on the previous studies, the following hypothesis was developed:

H1: There is a significant and positive relationship between perceived eWoM credibility and the booking intention of hotel patrons.

2.2.4 Factors of eWoM : Positive eWoM

Buttle (1997) stated that two kinds of eWoM exist, namely, positive and negative/unpleasant eWoM, that may have influence on customers. Positive eWoM are type of buyer's compliments for firms (Singh & Pandya, 1991). In this study, positive eWoM is defined as positive reviews of hotels.

According to Ji and Zhang (2009), who conducted an empirical study through online and offline questionnaires; the message impression of eWoM and leader's comments have great influence on consumer's willingness of buying. It has a mean of 2.387, which means that most respondents agree with its statements.

While studying hotel awareness and hotel consideration, which assessed 117 participants' choice and consideration, Priester, Nayakankuppam, Fleming and Godek (2004) found that only positive reviews will improve hotel attitude and increase hotel consideration. Sorensen and Rasmussen's (2004) study on impact of New York Times book reviews on book sales established that positive reviews have a more positive impact on book sales than negative review. According to their research, positive reviews generates 62.9% increase in demand while negative reviews lead to only 34.4% increase in demand.

Based on previous studies, it is hypothesized that:

H2: There is a significant and positive relationship between positive eWoM and the booking intention of hotel patrons.

2.2.5 Factors of eWoM : Negative eWoM

Unpleasant eWoM is defined as a type of buyer's criticisms against firms (Singh & Pandya, 1991). In this study, negative eWoM is defined as negative reviews of hotels.

While using media data and panel survey data on the salient beliefs and reputations held by news consumers, Meijer and Kleinnijenhuis (2006) suggested that negative reviews sometimes bring out positive responses in audiences. Sorensen and Rasmussen (2004), who when analyzing the weekly national sales of 175 hardcover fiction titles that were released from 2001 to 2003, found that negative reviews had a positive impact on book sales because the reviews are viewed as informative, and not persuasive.

An experimental study conducted among 168 participants investigating the impact of online hotel reviews on consumer consideration in Netherlands discovered that positive reviews had a positive impact on consideration ($F(1,159) = 12.25, p < .005$), whereas negative review had no significant impact ($F < 1$). Although negative reviews lower consumer attitudes towards hotels, the enhanced hotel awareness compensates for this effect, causing no effect on consideration (Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009). In another study on the impact of eWoM information direction on the eWoM effect, it was shown that eWoM effect is greater for negative eWoM than positive eWoM (Park & Lee, 2009).

As reviews on hotels are subjective to a person's perspective and negative reviews increases awareness on hotels, the following hypothesis was developed:

H3: There is a significant and positive relationship between negative eWoM and the booking intention of hotel patrons in Malaysia.

2.2.6 Factors of eWoM : eWoM User's Expertise

The seeker's level of expertise is the main characteristic that's expected to affect his or her susceptibility to influence (Bansal & Voyer, 2000). Expertness is defined as the extent of skillfulness, authoritativeness, competence and qualification a person has about the specific knowledge (Appelbaum & Anatol, 1972). In this study, eWoM user's expertise is defined as eWoM user's skillfulness and knowledge about eWoM.

Studies have found that there is a negative effect of the seeker's expertise on the impact of perceived influence (Bansal & Voyer, 2000; Tseng & Hsu, 2010). However, a study on Singaporeans established that Singaporeans who use the internet more often are more willing to make purchases over the Internet (Liao & Cheung, 2001).

Park et. al. (2011) found that the impact of using experience of eWoM to eWoM effect exists. After young Chinese consumers frequently use online reviews in shopping sites, blogs and other portal sites, online reviews became a kind of power to control them to make online purchase decisions. The Chinese' expertise on eWoM is significant as it had a p-value of 0.049, which is below the benchmark 0.05. This theory is also supported by another study on adolescents. It was found that expert adolescents consulted much more eWoM than experienced and novice adolescents (Wang & Chang, 2008).

Based on previous studies, it is hypothesized that:

H4: There is a significant and positive relationship between eWoM user's expertise and the booking intention of hotel patrons.

2.2.6 Factors Of eWoM: eWoM User's Involvement

Park, Lee and Han (2007) defined involvement as the perceived personal relevance of a product based on the individual consumer's needs, interests, and values. This study defined eWoM user's involvement as the perceived eWoM user's relevance of eWoM messages on hotels based on his/her needs, interests and values.

In a study on consumers' interactions with a website, Eroglu, Machleit and Davies (2003) found involvement is heightened when consumers are exposed to website cues like merchandise description and price. These features enhance the experiential value of shopping on the website (Babin, Darden & Griffin, 1994; Mathwick, Malhotra & Rigdon, 2001).

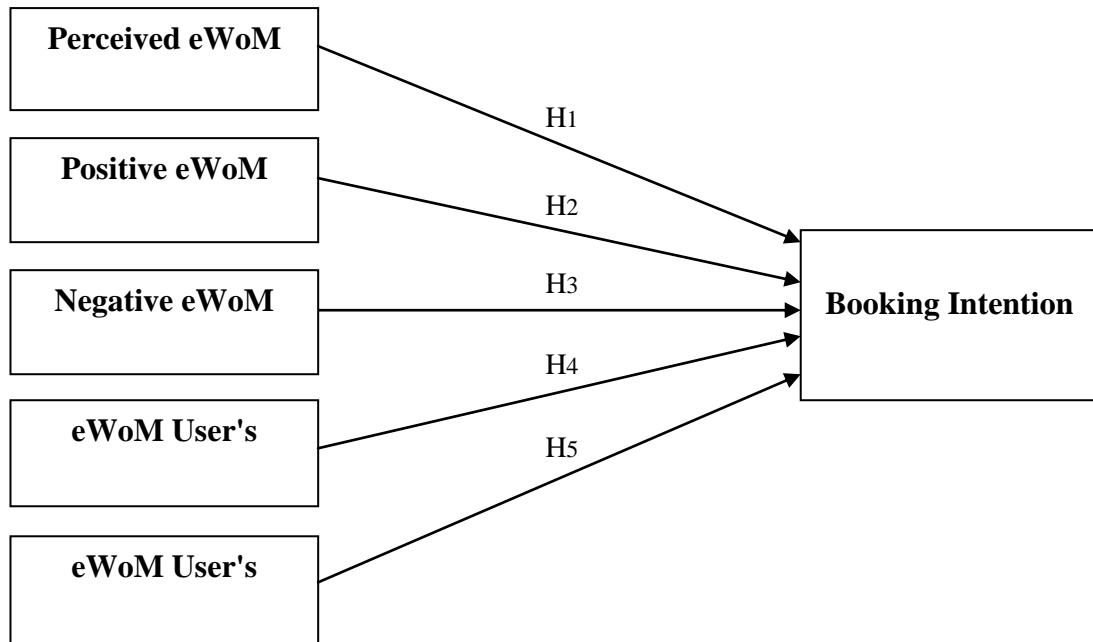
Prendergast, Tsang and Chan (2010) indicated that when a person is highly involved with the product, a message will be processed via the central pathway. He/she will utilize both product attributes and Country of Manufacturing (COM) cues to arrive at a purchase decision. The mean score for the purchase intention scale was 3.0 (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.96), and the mean score for the personal involvement scale was (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.94), which indicates that the scale items are internally consistent. Moreover, it was found that the impact of COM/ Product attributes cues on purchase intention is moderated by personal involvement, with low involvement respondents being more sensitive than high involvement respondents.

Based on the previous studies, the following hypothesis was developed:

H5: There is a significant and positive relationship between eWoM user's involvement and the booking intention of hotel patrons.

2.3 Proposed Conceptual Framework

Figure 2.1 : Factors Of eWoM Influencing Booking Intention



Adapted from: Fan et al. (2013).

The model developed above shows the conceptual framework of this study. This study examines the relationship between five independent variables (perceived eWoM credibility, positive eWoM, negative eWoM, eWoM user's expertise and eWoM user's involvement) and the dependent variable (booking intention).

From the above relationships between the constructs, the hypotheses below were developed.

2.4 Hypothesis Development

The hypotheses are to test the relationship between eWoM factors and booking intention.

H₀: There is no significant and positive relationship between perceived eWoM credibility and the booking intention of hotel patrons.

H₁: There is a significant and positive relationship between perceived eWoM credibility and the booking intention of hotel patrons.

H₀: There is no significant and positive relationship between positive eWoM and the booking intention of hotel patrons.

H₂: There is a significant and positive relationship between positive eWoM and the booking intention of hotel patrons.

H₀: There is no significant and positive relationship between negative eWoM and the booking intention of hotel patrons.

H₃: There is a significant and positive relationship between negative eWoM and the booking intention of hotel patrons.

H₀: There is no significant and positive relationship between eWoM user's expertise and the booking intention of hotel patrons.

H₄: There is a significant and positive relationship between eWoM user's expertise and the booking intention of hotel patrons.

H₀: There is no significant and positive relationship between eWoM user's involvement and the booking intention of hotel patrons.

H₅: There is a significant and positive relationship between eWoM user's involvement and the booking intention of hotel patrons.

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, the ELM model, which is under information adoption model, was applied to this study. The application of this model was adapted based on past studies. Besides that, the hypothesis for each of the independent variables was constructed. The next chapter will discuss about the research mythology.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

Chapter 3 provides detailed information on the methods and procedures used to collect accurate and relevant data. This chapter aims to provide assurance that appropriate research procedures were followed. The major items included in this chapter are research and sampling design, and data collection methods. In addition, elaborations of constructs, scales of measurement and data analysis methods are also described.

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive research to survey a representative sample of hotel patrons to determine which independent variable (perceived eWoM credibility, positive eWoM, negative eWoM, eWoM user's expertise, eWoM user's involvement) might influence the booking intention. Zikmund, Babin, Carr and Griffin (2010) indicated surveys as a fast, inexpensive, accurate, and efficient way to obtain information from a population. Survey allows researchers to collect a large amount of data from a sizeable population in an economical manner (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009).

This study employed a quantitative research strategy as it emphasized on hypotheses testing or specific research questions which represent phenomena by assigning numbers in an ordered and meaningful way.

In this study, quantitative data analysis is used to quantify the data and conclude the evidence. The data consisted of large, representative samples of hotel patrons from selected hotels in Kuala Lumpur, which were collected through cross-sectional self-administered questionnaires via self-distribution and collection.

3.2 Data Collection Method

3.2.1 Primary Data

For this study, primary data was collected through a survey questionnaire that was adapted from journal questionnaires. Zikmund et al. (2010) defined survey as a research technique in which information is obtained from a targeted sample of population using questionnaires. The self-administered survey questionnaires were distributed to hotel patrons of selected top 10 hotels in Kuala Lumpur. The questionnaires were designed with closed-ended questions using 5-point Likert scale.

3.3 Sampling Design

3.3.1 Target Population

The target population for this study is hotel patrons from selected top 10 hotels in Golden Triangle (the most visited area in Kuala Lumpur). The Golden Triangle area is bordered by three roads: Jalan Sultan Ismail, Jalan Imbi and Jalan Raja Chulan, which forms a triangle ("Golden Triangle in Kuala Lumpur", n.d.). Golden Triangle is Kuala Lumpur's main commercial, shopping, and entertainment district that has shopping malls, plenty of restaurants and bars and hotels that attract people to visit the area (LonelyTravelog, 2012).

3.3.2 Sampling Frame and Sampling Location

Non-probability sampling technique was adopted in this study as there is an inaccessibility to gain sufficient information for a sampling frame. This research is targeted to hotel patrons in Kuala Lumpur. According to Tourism Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur ranks top 3 in the total number of Malaysia hotel guests in 2012. The 10 selected top hotels in Kuala Lumpur are Berjaya Times Square, Melia Hotel, Parkroyal Hotel, Capitol Hotel, Furama Hotel, Federal Hotel, Royale Bintang, Grand Millennium Hotel, Sky Hotel Bukit Bintang, and Radius International Hotel. Based on the review count, the hotels were chosen by observing Agoda.com and Tripadvisor.com twice a week for 3 weeks. Agoda.com and TripAdvisor.com are two very popular websites that are used by travelers when planning trips.

3.3.3 Sampling Elements

The sampling elements used are the hotel patrons who have stayed in the hotels in Golden Triangle. They are able to answer the questionnaire as they are current hotel patrons of the selected hotels. Generally, the respondents are all above 18 years old and already have the purchasing power to book a hotel room.

3.3.4 Sampling Technique

The entire sample was drawn from selected hotels in Golden Triangle, Kuala Lumpur. The population of sampling is needed as it is possible to generate findings which can represent the whole population at a lower cost compared to data collection for the whole population, which is impracticable (Zikmund et al., 2010). Budget and time constraints are also hindrances to conduct surveys on the entire population.

Non-probability sampling technique was adopted in this study as there is inaccessibility to gain sufficient information for a sampling frame. Instead, reliance was on convenience sampling, where samples are easily accessible and cost effective. Convenience sampling is used to select a random group of people where a list of the population is unavailable (Crossman, n.d.). The size and the characteristics of the random group selected can be controlled. The selection process of samples takes place on a continuing basis until it fulfills the required sample size.

3.3.5 Sampling Size

According to the latest statistics by Tourism Malaysia, the known total population of hotel guests in Kuala Lumpur was 14,010,457 in 2012. At a 95% confidence level based on a 5% margin of error, a population of 100,000 requires 383 samples, while a 10,00,000 will need 384 samples (Saunders et al., 2009). Thus, a total of 500 questionnaires will be distributed to the target respondents.

3.4 Research Instrument

Survey questionnaires were used in this research because this is the most commonly used method to obtain data from a huge amount of respondents. Besides that, it is quick, efficient, less costly and accurate in assessing information from the target respondents.

A pre-test was done prior to distributing the survey questionnaires to avoid any problems in respondents answering the questions and recording the data. A self-administered pilot test was conducted in April 2014 by distributing 30 survey questionnaires to target respondents.

After conducting the pilot test and ensuring that any deficiencies are corrected, the self-administered survey questionnaires were distributed to the target respondents. The distribution and collection of 500 survey questionnaires were carried out in May 2014 for a week. 500 survey questionnaires were distributed but only 497 of them were usable. There is a high response rate of 99.4% because the surveys were self-administered. Thus, if there are any incomplete surveys, it is possible to rectify the error immediately. 3 of the survey questionnaires were rejected because they were incomplete. The 3 participants of the 3 incomplete questionnaires were in a rush, thus resulting in the withdrawal from the survey before the questionnaires were completed.

3.5 Construct Measurement

Demographic details were asked in Section A. This section was measured using ordinal scale and nominal scale. Ordinal scale was also applied to gather data about the respondent's age, education level achieved, the monthly income, and the frequency of using online booking. This is to determine the discrepancy level of the variables. Nominal scale was used in questions about gender and respondent's country.

Section B consists of questions about the independent variables (perceived eWoM credibility, positive eWoM, negative eWoM, eWoM user's expertise, eWoM user's involvement) and the dependent variable (booking intention). Each of the variable constructs was measured using interval data measurement. The survey questionnaires were designed with close-ended questions using 5-point Likert scale and scale response questions using ordinal scale. It is easier for respondents to understand and it allows them to respond in a degree of agreement, which ranged from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (5). Furthermore, these items were adopted from previous literature survey with the purpose of investigating the factors affecting online users' booking/purchase intention.

Table 3.1 shows the definitions of the independent variables and dependent variables in this study and their sources. The number of sampling items of each constructs and its sources are shown in Table 3.2. Table 3.3 indicates the examples of the sampling items of each construct.

Table 3.1 Definition of the Constructs and Their Sources

Constructs	Definition	Source
Perceived eWoM Credibility	The extent to which hotel patrons believes eWoM to be true and reliable.	Cheung et al., 2009
Positive eWoM	Positive reviews of hotels.	Singh & Pandya, 1991
Negative eWoM	Negative reviews of hotels.	Singh & Pandya, 1991
eWoM User's Expertise	eWoM user's skilfulness and knowledge about eWoM.	Applbaum & Anatol, 1972
eWoM User's Involvement	Perceived eWoM user's relevance of eWoM messages on hotels based on his/her needs, interests and values.	Park et al., 2007
Booking Intention	The intent of a consumer to book a room in a hotel.	Salisbury, Pearson, Pearson & Miller, 2001

Source: Developed for the research

Table 3.2 Origins of Sampling Items

Constructs	No. of Sampling Items	Adapted From
Perceived eWoM Credibility	4	Lou, Lou, Schatzberg & Sia, 2013
Positive eWoM	3	Tseng & Hu, 2010; Chang & Wu, 2013
Negative eWoM	3	Tseng & Hu, 2010; Chang & Wu, 2013
eWoM User's Expertise	3	Bruyn & Lilien, 2008
eWoM User's Involvement	3	Park & Lee, 2009
Booking Intention	3	Prendergast, Tsang & Chan, 2010

Source: Developed for the research

Table 3.3 Example of Modified Operational Constructs

Constructs	Sampling Items
Perceived eWoM Credibility	<p>The reviews about the hotel are believable.</p> <p>The reviews about the hotel are factual.</p> <p>The reviews about the hotel are credible.</p> <p>The reviews about the hotel are trustworthy.</p>
Positive eWoM	<p>The reviews on the booking website recommended the hotel.</p> <p>The reviews on the booking website said positive things about the hotel.</p> <p>Positive reviews on the booking website increase my booking desire on the hotel.</p>
Negative eWoM	<p>The reviews on the booking website discouraged others to book a room at the hotel.</p> <p>The reviews on the booking website also said negative things about the hotel.</p> <p>The negative reviews on the booking website will affect my decision on whether to choose the hotel.</p>
eWoM User's Expertise	<p>I am very knowledgeable about eWoM.</p> <p>I often influence other people in their usage or opinions about eWoM.</p> <p>My friends see me as a good source of information about eWoM.</p>
eWoM User's Involvement	<p>When I book a room online, I always read reviews that are presented on the website.</p> <p>If I don't read the reviews presented on the website when I book a room online, I worry about my decision.</p> <p>When I book a room online, the reviews presented on the website are helpful for my decision making.</p>
Booking Intention	<p>Based on reviews, I will make a booking at the hotel.</p> <p>Based on reviews, I would recommend my friends to make a booking at the hotel.</p> <p>I will rely on reviews the next time I need to book a hotel room.</p>

Source: Developed for the research

3.6 Data Processing

3.6.1 Data Checking

Data checking is the process of thoroughly checking the collected data to maintain optimal quality levels. The checking process is made during and after the questionnaires surveys were distributed to the respondents. This is to ensure that there are no problems in the questionnaires.

3.6.2 Data Editing

Data editing is done before the data is being presented. This is to ensure that the information provided is complete, consistent and accurate among the questionnaire. Unclear or complicated questions will cause the respondents having the difficulties to answer the questions and this will affect the overall result. Thus, editing is important to discard the unsatisfactory responses.

3.6.3 Data Coding

The data coding process is to categorize the numerical score or other character symbol from previously edited data. The SAS Enterprise Guide is used for data coding as well as analysis. For example, the gender of the respondents was coded as “1” for male and “2” for female. Section B was coded as “1” for strongly disagree, “2” for disagree, “3” for neutral, “4” for agree and “5” for strongly agree.

3.6.4 Data Transcribing

After the collected questionnaires were being coded, it will be keyed in as raw data for the analysis of SAS.

3.6.5 Data Cleaning

Data cleaning is the process of raw data being verified and checked to certify that the data was accurately input from the questionnaires into the computer software program. SAS Enterprise Guide was used to check and detect the out-of-range data.

3.7 Data Analysis

SAS Enterprise Guide is a model which can be used easily on local computer and work as Window application to analyze result from data collected to generate the required analysis.

3.7.1 Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis refers to the transformation of raw data into a form that make them easier to understand and interpret (Zikmund et al., 2010). Demographic information was analyzed by finding its frequency and percentage distribution. The constructs were analyzed by calculating its mean, mode and standard deviation.

3.7.2 Scale Measurement

SAS version 5.1 software is used to conduct reliability test through the interpretation of Cronbach's Alpha. The test shows a reliability coefficient on how reliability the items in a set are positively contributed to one another (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). The results of the construct must meet the minimum requirement of 0.70 (George & Mallery, 2003).

3.7.2.1 Normality test

This is used to test the distribution of values for variables containing numerical data. The skewness and kurtosis test was executed to test the normality of data. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2010) statistical tests are to characterize the location and variability of a data set. The benchmark of skewness and kurtosis is ± 1 or ± 2 (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010).

3.7.3 Inferential analysis

It is an important element that is used to test the hypotheses developed for the research. It draws a conclusion of a larger population based on the smaller sample size.

3.7.3.1 Pearson's Correlation Coefficient Analysis

Pearson's coefficient of correlation measures the strength of the linear relationship between two variables. As this study's constructs is measured using interval data measurement, Pearson's correlation is a suitable analysis tool.

The coefficient result from this test has a range of possible value from -1 or 1. The number indicates the strength of the relationship while the sign (+ or -) indicates the direction (Kinnear & Gray, 2009). Positive sign means there is a positive relationship between the independent and dependent variables while the negative sign is vice versa.

3.7.3.2 Multicollinearity

Multicollinearity problem occurs when the correlations among independent variables are too strong. As multicollinearity increases standard error of coefficients, the correlation between each pair of independent variables must not be more than 0.90 (Tabachnich & Fidel, 2007).

3.7.3.3 Multiple Linear Regression (MLR)

MLR is an analysis of association in which the result of two or more independent variables on as single, interval scaled or ratio scaled dependent variable is examined simultaneously (Zikmund, 2010). MLR will be used to confirm the significance of each variable and to determine which of the independent variables has the strongest relationship with the dependent variable.

It is based on the proposed formula, $Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + b_4X_4 + \dots + b_mX_m$, where $Y =$ dependent variable, $a =$ intercept, $b =$ the slope for independent variable, $X_1 =$ independent variable i and $m =$ number of independent variable.

Three assumptions of MLR were tested, which are linearity, normality and homoscedasticity. Linearity assumption is tested by checking the scatterplot and correlations between the dependent variables and each of the independent variables. Normality assumption is tested by checking that a normal curve is imposed in the histogram. Scatterplot of the residual and predicted values is used to test the homoscedasticity assumption (Osborne & Waters, 2002).

3.8 Conclusion

The population for this research consists of hotel patrons from 10 hotels in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The 10 hotels were selected based on the number of reviews. The collection of primary data using convenient sampling was done through an on-site field work. Each variable was then examined accordingly to test the hypotheses with measurement of constructs according to past studies, subject to the fulfillment of pre-test requirement. In the next chapter, there will be statistical analysis on the collected data and also results based on the findings.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the pilot test, descriptive analysis, scale measurement and inferential analysis. The statistic results of respondents were compiled using SAS statistical software. All the demographics information is described in pie charts.

Reliability is tested based on Cronbach's Alpha to ensure they are reliable for further analysis. Inferential analysis was carried out using Pearson's Correlation Coefficient Analysis and Multiple Linear Regression (MLR). Linearity, normality, and homoscedasticity analysis were also done to enhance the research.

4.1 Pilot Test

After the early version of the questionnaire was completed, a self-administered pilot test was carried out in April 2014 to test the reliability and validity of the 30 questionnaires. The pilot test questionnaires were distributed to the target respondents of this survey, which are hotel patrons in Kuala Lumpur.

The pilot test questionnaires consisted of four pages with twenty seven questions, eight of which were demographic questions. After running the Cronbach's Alpha test on the data collected, a question was deleted from the questionnaire to improve the reliability of the questionnaire. As a result, the actual questionnaire consists of four pages with twenty six questions, included were eight demographic questions.

Table 4.1: Results of Pilot Test- Reliability Statistics

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Perceived eWoM Credibility	0.892	4
Positive eWoM	0.722	3
Negative eWoM	0.751	3
eWoM User's Expertise	0.798	3
eWoM User's Involvement	0.589 (0.662 after UI3 was deleted)	3 (2 after UI 3 was deleted)
Booking Intention	0.615	3

Source: Developed for the research.

4.2 Descriptive Analysis

4.2.1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 4.2: Gender of Respondents

Gender of Respondents	Frequency	%
Male	228	45.88
Female	269	54.12

Source: Developed for the research

Table 4.2 and Appendix 4.1 showed that 45.88% of male and 54.12% female respondents were involved in the process of completing the survey questionnaire. This indicates that the questionnaire has been distributed fairly among both genders.

Table 4.3: Age of Respondents

Age	Frequency	%
18-24 years old	70	14.08
25-34 years old	137	27.57
35-44 years old	147	29.58
45-60 years old	101	20.32
Above 60 years old	42	8.45

Source: Developed for the research

Table 4.3 and Appendix 4.2 highlighted the age groups of the target respondents. The highest percentage of respondents fell in between the age group of 35-44 years old, which constituted 29.58% of total respondents. The age group of above 60 years old carried the lowest percentage at 8.45%. For the age group of 18-24 years old, it constitutes 14.08% of the total respondents. The remaining age groups of 25-34 years old and 45-60 years old carried a percentage of 27.57% and 20.32% respectively.

Table 4.4: Nationality of Respondents

Nationality	Frequency	%
Malaysian	394	79.28
Non-Malaysian	103	20.72

Source: Developed for the research

Table 4.4 and Appendix 4.3 represented the nationality of the respondents. Among the total respondents, 79.28% of them are Malaysians while the other 20.72% of them are Non-Malaysians.

Table 4.5: Marital Status of Respondents

Marital Status	Frequency	%
Single	210	42.25
Divorced	26	5.23
Married	251	50.50
Others	10	2.01

Source: Developed for the research

Table 4.5 and Appendix 4.4 depicted the marital status of the respondents. Half of the respondents are married, representing 50.50% of the total respondents. 42.25% of the respondents are single while 5.23% are divorced. The remaining 2.01% are categorized as others, some of which the respondents had written as widowed.

Table 4.6: Highest Education Completed

Highest Education Completed	Frequency	%
Below SPM	12	2.41
SPM/O-Level	52	10.46
STPM/Foundation/UEC/A-Level	63	12.68
Diploma/ Advanced Diploma	111	22.33
Bachelor Degree	195	39.24
Masters Degree	50	10.06
PhD	14	2.82
Others	0	-

Source: Developed for the research

Table 4.6 and Appendix 4.5 drew attention to the educational level of the respondents. The majority of the respondents that has a bachelor degree represented 39.24% of the respondents. Minority of the respondents were below SPM level, which constitute 2.41%. 2.82% of the respondents have a PhD. The remaining respondents of the SPM/O-Level, STPM/Foundation/UEC/A-Level and Masters Degree education level were 10.46%, 12.68% and 10.06% respectively.

Table 4.7: Occupation of Respondents

Occupations	Frequency	%
Student	65	13.08
Self-Employed	81	16.30
Employed	304	61.17
Unemployed	11	2.21
Housewife	26	5.23
Others	10	2.01

Source: Developed for the research

Table 4.7 and Appendix 4.6 showed that majority of the respondents (61.17%) were employed. Besides that, there are 13.08% which are students and 16.30% are self-employed. For the unemployed respondents, it constitutes of 2.21%. The remaining of the respondents are housewives and others, which stands at 5.23% and 2.01% respectively.

Table 4.8: Monthly Personal Income of Respondents

Monthly Personal Income	Frequency	%
Below RM1000	98	19.72
RM1000-RM3000	100	20.12
RM3000-RM5000	131	26.36
More than RM5000	168	33.80

Source: Developed for the research

Table 4.8 and Appendix 4.7 showed different categories of monthly income of the respondents. The highest percentage of respondents earns more than RM5000 at 33.80%. Meanwhile, the lowest ranking is those earning below RM1000, with 19.72% of the respondents. 20.12% are earning between RM1000 to RM3000 while 26.36% earn between RM3000 to RM5000.

Table 4.9 Have Experience Using Hotel Booking Websites

Have Experience Using Hotel Booking Websites	Frequency	%
Yes	463	93.16
No	34	6.84

Source: Developed for the research

Table 4.9 and Appendix 4.8 showed the number of the respondents who have experience in using booking websites to book a hotel room. 93.16% of the respondents possess experience in using hotel booking websites, while 6.84% has no experience in using hotel booking websites to book a hotel room.

4.2.2 Central Tendencies Measurement of Constructs

4.2.2.1 Perceived eWoM Credibility

Table 4.10 Statistical Summary of Perceived eWoM Credibility

Research Construct and Research Items		Mean	Standard Deviation	Mode
Perceived eWoM Credibility				
PC1	The reviews about the hotel are believable.	3.99	0.63	4.00
PC2	The reviews about the hotel are factual.	3.66	0.80	4.00
PC3	The reviews about the hotel are credible.	3.86	0.68	4.00
PC4	The reviews about the hotel are trustworthy.	3.84	0.69	4.00

Source: Developed for the research

In terms of perceived eWoM credibility, the highest mean scored was that of PC1, at 3.99. The lowest mean was scored by PC2 with a value of 3.66. This means that most respondents agree that the reviews about the hotel are believable.

PC2 recorded the highest standard deviation with a value of 0.80 whereas PC1 has the lowest standard deviation, at 0.63. The lower standard deviation of PC1 indicates that the data are clustered closely around the mean.

In conclusion, most respondents agree that perceived eWoM credibility influences booking intention.

4.2.2.2 Positive eWoM

Table 4.11 Statistical Summary of Positive eWoM

Research Construct and Research Items		Mean	Standard Deviation	Mode
Positive eWoM				
PE1	The reviews on the booking website recommended the hotel.	4.02	0.66	4.00
PE2	The reviews on the booking website said positive things about the hotel.	4.03	0.68	4.00
PE3	Positive reviews on the booking website increase my booking desire on the hotel.	4.20	0.71	4.00

Source: Developed for the research

PE3 recorded the highest mean, at 4.20, and the highest standard deviation of 0.71. On the other hand, PE1 recorded the lowest mean with a value of 4.02 and also the lowest standard deviation of 0.66. This indicates that the data in PE1 are constant because of the low value of its standard deviation. As a conclusion, most respondents agree that positive eWoM are present in booking websites and it influences their booking intention as the data notch a mean with a value of more than 4.

4.2.2.3 Negative eWoM

Table 4.12 Statistical Summary of Negative eWoM

Research Construct and Research Items		Mean	Standard Deviation	Mode
Negative eWoM				
NE1	The reviews on the booking website discourage others to book a room at the hotel.	2.00	0.87	2.00
NE2	The reviews on the booking website said negative things about the hotel.	2.00	0.88	2.00
NE3	The negative reviews on the booking website will affect my decision on whether to choose the hotel.	3.80	0.99	4.00

Source: developed for the research

NE1 and NE2 both shared the same mean, which are 2.00. Both of them also have a mode of 2.00. This means that most respondents disagree with the statements that they will book a room if the reviews on the booking website discourage others to book a room at the hotel and if the reviews on the booking website said negative things about the hotel.

NE2 has the highest standard deviation with 0.88 while NE1's standard deviation is 0.87. This means that both NE1 and NE2 are consistent.

In conclusion, most of the respondents disagree with the two statements as both of their means are 2.00.

4.2.2.4 eWoM User's Expertise

Table 4.13 Statistical Summary of User's Expertise

Research Construct and Research Items		Mean	Standard Deviation	Mode
eWoM User's Expertise				
UE1	I am very knowledgeable about eWoM.	3.53	0.88	4.00
UE2	I often influence other people in their usage or opinions about eWoM.	3.47	0.82	3.00
UE3	My friends see me as a good source of information about eWoM.	3.36	0.86	3.00

Source: Developed for the research

UE1 has the highest mean at 3.53 while UE3 has the lowest mean at 3.36. This shows that the majority of the respondents either agree or is neutral with the items.

The standard deviation of UE1, UE2 and UE3 is 0.88, 0.82 and 0.86 respectively. This low number shows that all the data is relatively close to the mean. A low standard deviation is favourable because it indicates that the data collected has high consistency.

From the survey it is concluded that respondents agree or are neutral to the statement that they are knowledgeable, influential and a good source of eWoM.

4.2.2.5 eWoM User's Involvement

Table 4.14 Statistical Summary of User's Involvement

Research Construct and Research Items		Mean	Standard Deviation	Mode
eWoM User's Involvement				
UI1	When I book a room online, I always read reviews that are presented on the website.	4.00	0.71	4.00
UI2	If I don't read the reviews presented on the website when I book a room online, I worry about my decision.	3.88	0.83	4.00

Source: Developed for the research

In terms of eWoM user's involvement, the highest mean score was that of UI1 at 4.00 while UI2 was the lowest with mean of 3.88. This shows that most of the respondents concur with the statements.

On the other hand, UI2 has the higher standard deviation of 0.83 while UI1 is having a standard deviation of 0.71. A lower standard deviation indicates that the data collected are clustered closely around the mean hence constant.

In conclusion, respondents agree that they read the reviews when booking a room and may worry about their decision if they did not read the reviews beforehand.

4.2.2.6 Booking Intention

Table 4.15 Statistical Summary of Booking Intention

Research Construct and Research Items		Mean	Standard Deviation	Mode
Booking Intention				
BI1	Based on the reviews, I will make a booking at the hotel.	4.02	0.65	4.00
BI2	Based on the reviews, I would recommend my friends to make a booking at the hotel.	3.80	0.70	4.00
BI3	I will rely on reviews the next time I need to book a hotel room.	4.02	0.80	4.00

Source: Developed for the research

BI1 and BI3 both have the highest mean scores of 4.02 in terms of booking intention while BI2 has the lowest at 3.80. However, BI3 has the highest standard deviation of 0.80 while BI1 has the lowest at 0.65.

Therefore, with the highest mean of 4.02, most respondents agree with the statements in BI1 and BI3 while the data in BI1 are constant because of the lowest standard deviation.

4.3 Scale Measurement

Table 4.16 Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Tests for Variables

Variable	Numbers of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Perceived eWoM Credibility	3	0.821
Positive eWoM	3	0.775
Negative eWoM	3 (2 after NE3 was deleted)	0.335 (0.886 after NE3 was deleted)
eWoM User's Expertise	3	0.857
eWoM User's Involvement	2	0.723
Booking Intention	3	0.803

Source: Developed for the research

In Table 4.16, the reliability of the measurement items was verified using Cronbach's Alpha, which measures the internal consistency of the construct. This testing would provide evidence as to how closely a set of measurement items in a group are related to each other. After the data verification was completed using Cronbach's Alpha, one question was deleted from the variable, negative eWoM, as the value fell below the benchmark of 0.70. The Cronbach's Alpha scores for all variables were between the range of 0.723 and 0.886. Therefore, items can be considered as internally consistent as the maximum hurdle of 0.70 is exceeded (Hair et al., 2005). After deleting NE3, the variable of negative eWoM recorded the highest Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.886. On the contrary, the lowest score of 0.723 was obtained for eWoM user's involvement.

Table 4.17 Tests of Skewness and Normality

Variable	Numbers of Items	Skewness	Kurtosis
Perceived eWoM Credibility	3	-0.180	0.081
Positive eWoM	3	-0.352	0.318
Negative eWoM	2	0.884	0.695
eWoM User's Expertise	3	-0.382	0.221
eWoM User's Involvement	2	-0.475	0.503
Booking Intention	3	-0.288	0.267

Source: Developed for the research

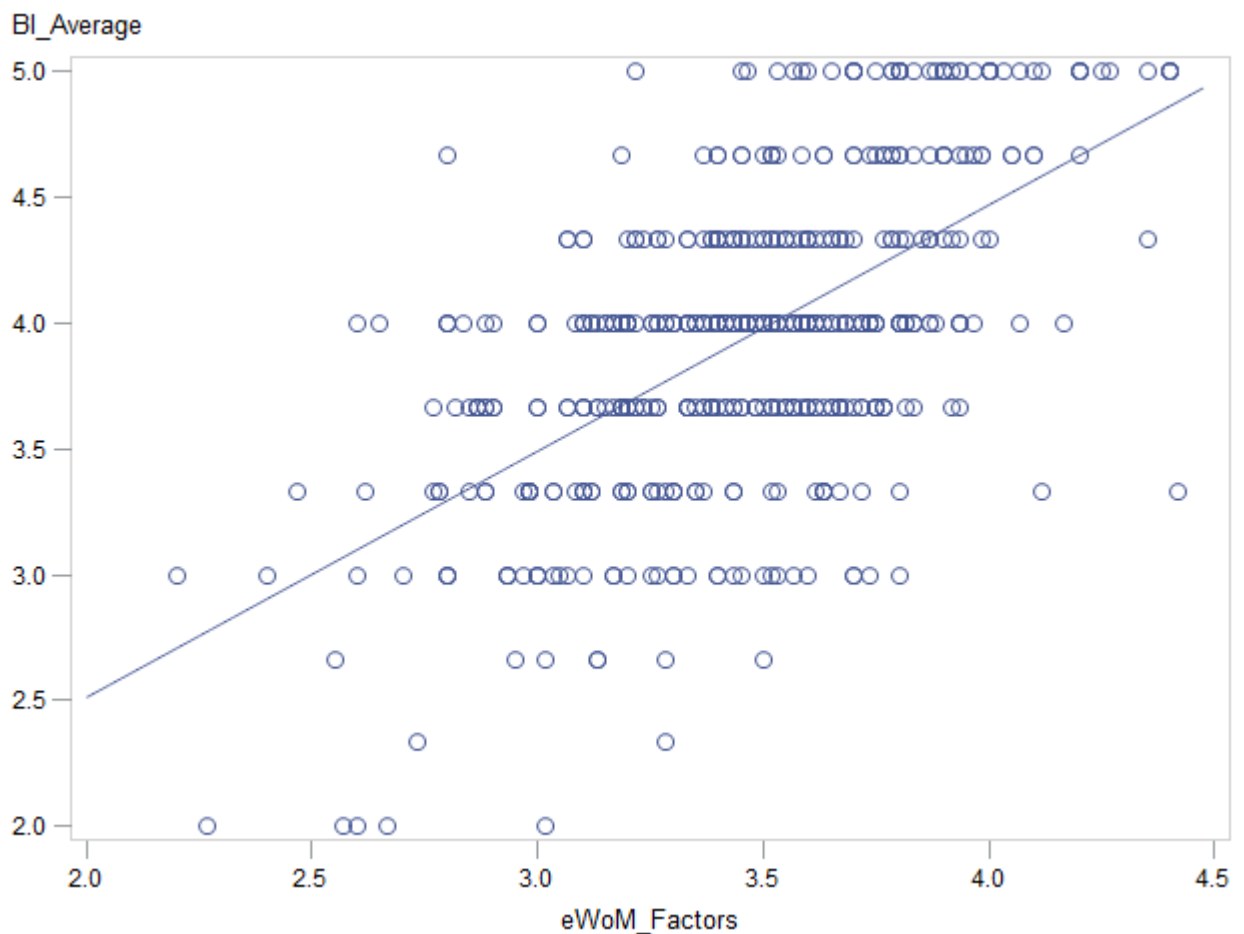
Table 4.17 indicates the level of Skewness and Kurtosis of the variables. A negative value of skewness implies that the variable is positively skewed whereas a positive value of skewness indicates that the variable is a negatively skewed variable. The skewness of the variables ranges from -0.475 and 0.884. Out of the six variables, five of the variables are positively skewed while only one variable, negative eWoM, is a negatively skewed variable.

The normal level of kurtosis is 0. However, according to Hair et al. (2010), the level of acceptable kurtosis is ± 1 or ± 2 . The value of kurtosis for all the variables ranges from 0.081 to 0.695. The highest kurtosis score of 0.695 was achieved for the variable of negative eWoM. On the contrary, the lowest score of 0.081 was obtained for the variable, perceived eWoM credibility.

4.4 Inferential Analysis

4.4.1 Linearity

Figure 4.1: Scatter Plot

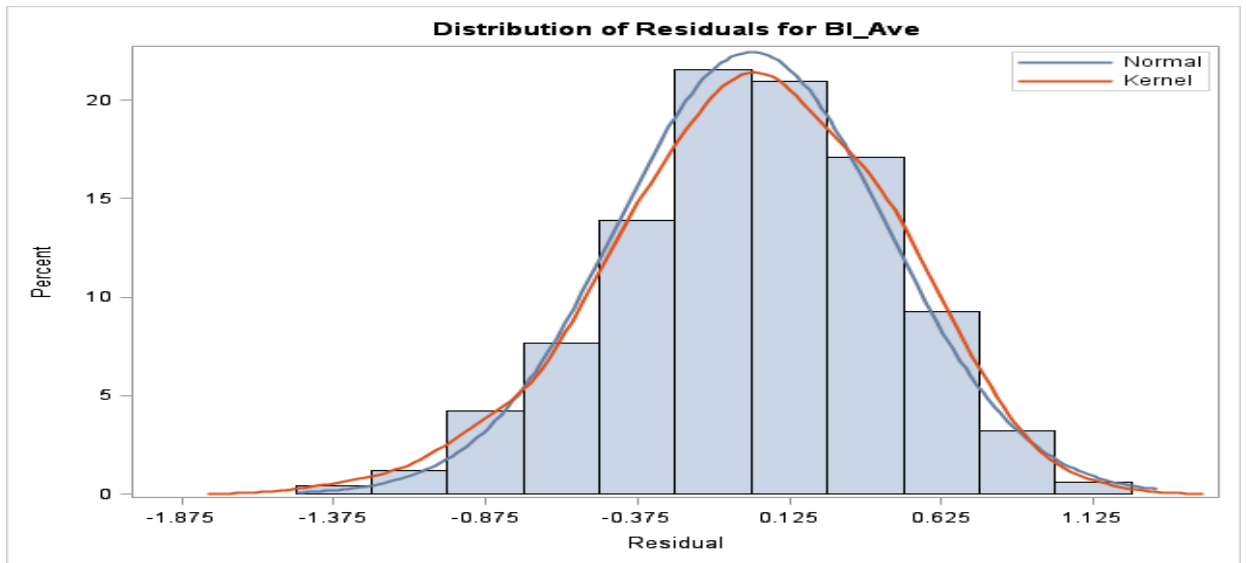


Source: Developed for the research

Figure 4.1 shows a positive linear relationship between the eWoM factors and hotel patrons booking intention. The results fall along a straight line and their spread are constant across the range of x. The correlation between them is significant so it can be concluded that there is a linear relationship between eWoM factors and hotel patrons booking intention. It meets the linearity assumption.

4.4.2 Normality

Figure 4.2: Distribution of Residuals

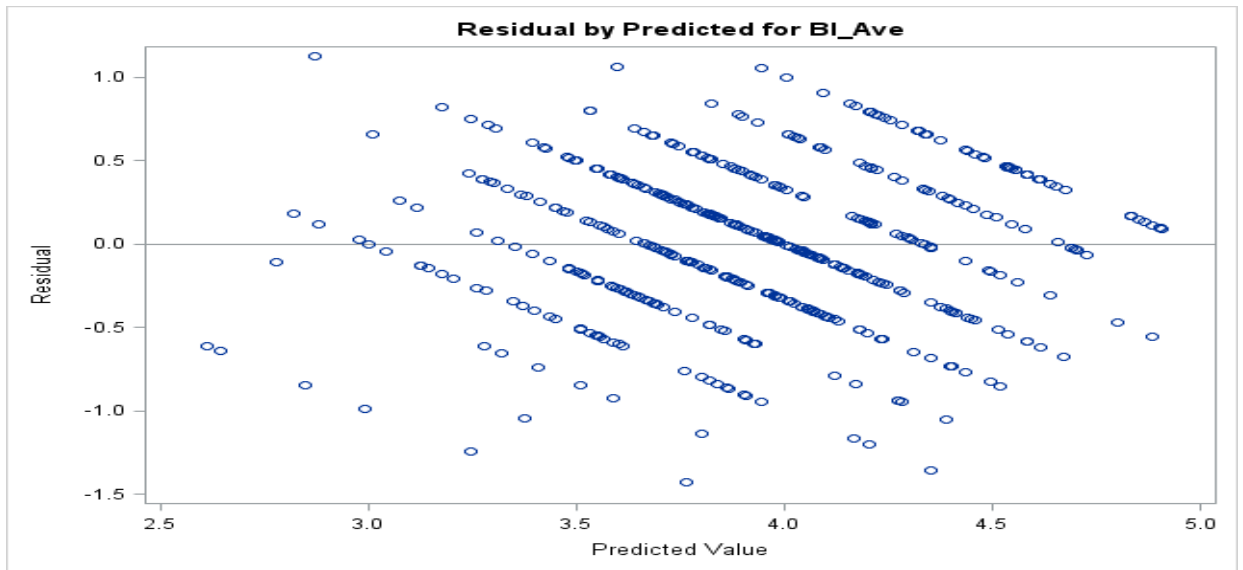


Source: Developed for the research

Distribution of residuals is used to examine the extent to which the residuals are normally distributed. According to Figure 4.2, each value of x (independent variable) and y (dependent value) has followed the normal distribution. Thus, the normality assumption is fulfilled.

4.4.3 Homoscedasticity

Figure 4.3: Residual by Predicted



Source: Developed for the research

Plots of residual versus predicted value is used to detect the violations of the homoscedasticity assumption can be detected. Figure 4.3 shows that the variables are in the sequence. It means that it meets the homoscedasticity assumption.

4.4.4 Pearson's Correlation Coefficient Analysis

Table 4.18: Pearson's Correlation Coefficient Analysis

	PC	PE	NE	UE	UI	BI
PC	1.00000					
PE	0.45560 <.0001	1.00000				
NE	-0.22321 <.0001	-0.29135 <.0001	1.00000			
UE	0.36606 <.0001	0.30632 <.0001	-0.09145 0.0416	1.00000		
UI	0.24786 <.0001	0.38832 <.0001	-0.06631 0.1399	0.34011 <.0001	1.00000	
BI	0.35911 <.0001	0.51377 <.0001	-0.14360 0.0013	0.43801 <.0001	0.56880 <.0001	1.00000

Source: Developed for the research

The correlation matrix from the table given above reveals that the perceived eWoM credibility, positive eWoM, eWoM user's expertise and eWoM user's involvement have a positive correlation while negative eWoM has a negative correlation with hotel patrons booking intention. There are strong correlations between positive eWoM ($r= 0.51377$, $n= 497$) and booking intention; eWoM user's involvement ($r= 0.56880$, $n=497$) and booking intention. The lowest correlation is negative eWoM ($r= -0.14360$, $n=497$). Overall, the correlation coefficients between eWoM factors and booking intention were below 0.9, which would signify that the data were not affected by collinearity problems (Hair et al., 1998). In this study, these six constructs are significant since they are at $p < 0.01$ level.

4.4.5 Multiple Linear Regression (MLR)

Table 4.19: MLR Model Summary

Model	R	R Square (R ²)	Adjusted R Square
1	0.6840 (a)	0.4679	0.4625

a. Predictors: (Constant), PC, PE, NE, UE, UI

Source: Developed for the research

Based on the Table 4.19, $R = 0.6840$, which means that the 5 eWoM factors (IV) is strongly correlated with the booking intention (DV), after all the inter-correlations among the five independent variables are taken into account.

For the examined regression model, R^2 is 0.4679. This means that 46.79% of the variance in booking intention can be explained by all 5 eWoM factors.

The adjusted R^2 for the conceptual model is 0.4625, which is a measurement of how much the variability in eWoM intention is accounted by the independent variables. It decreases when the predictor improves the model by less than expected by chance.

Table 4.20: Multiple Regression Analysis

IVs	Parameter	t-Value	Sig.	Hypothesis	Result	Tolerance	VIF
(constant)	0.597	0.202	0.0033	-	-	-	-
PC	0.070	1.71	0.0887	H1	Reject	0.726	1.377
PE	0.293	6.81	<0.0001	H2	Accept	0.669	1.493
NE	-0.004	-0.16	0.0870	H3	Reject	0.901	1.109
UE	0.162	5.44	<0.0001	H4	Accept	0.793	1.260
UI	0.337	10.20	<0.0001	H5	Accept	0.792	1.262

Source: Developed for the research

Hypothesis 1

H0: There is no significant and positive relationship between perceived eWoM credibility and the booking intention of hotel patrons.

H1: There is a significant and positive relationship between perceived eWoM credibility and the booking intention of hotel patrons.

Reject H0 if $p < 0.05$

Table 4.20 shows the results of the regression analysis on the relationship between perceived eWoM credibility and booking intention of the respondents. From the results obtained, the significant value of perceived eWoM credibility is 0.0887, which is higher than the acceptable p-value of <0.05. Therefore, H1 is rejected and H0 is accepted, that perceived eWoM credibility does not have a positive and significant relationship with booking intention of hotel patrons.

Hypothesis 2

H0: There is no significant and positive relationship between positive eWoM and the booking intention of hotel patrons.

H1: There is a significant and positive relationship between positive eWoM and the booking intention of hotel patrons.

Reject H0 if $p < 0.05$

Based on the results displayed in Table 4.20, the significant value for the relationship between positive eWoM and booking intention is < 0.0001 . This value is lower than the acceptable value of 0.05 which means that H0 is rejected while H1 is accepted. Hence, a significant and positive relationship exists between positive eWoM and booking intention.

Hypothesis 3

H0: There is no significant and positive relationship between negative eWoM and the booking intention of hotel patrons.

H1: There is a significant and positive relationship between negative eWoM and the booking intention of hotel patrons.

Reject H0 if $p < 0.05$

From the results obtained, the relationship between negative eWoM and booking intention has a significant value of 0.0870. This value has exceeded the acceptable p-value. It can be concluded that H1 has to be rejected and H0 is accepted, which means that negative eWoM has no significant and positive relationship with booking intention.

Hypothesis 4

H0: There is no significant and positive relationship between eWoM user's expertise and the booking intention of hotel patrons.

H1: There is a significant and positive relationship between eWoM user's expertise and the booking intention of hotel patrons.

Reject H0 if $p < 0.05$

As shown in Table 4.20, the significant value of the relationship between eWoM user's expertise and booking intention is <0.0001 , which is lower than the acceptable p-value of 0.05. This indication allows the rejection of H0 and the acceptance of H1. Therefore, there is a significant and positive relationship between eWoM user's expertise and booking intention of hotel patrons.

Hypothesis 5

H0: There is no significant and positive relationship between eWoM user's involvement and the booking intention of hotel patrons.

H1: There is a significant and positive relationship between eWoM user's involvement and the booking intention of hotel patrons.

Reject H0 if $p < 0.05$

According to Table 4.20, the significant value for the relationship between eWoM user's involvement and booking intention is <0.0001 , since the value is lower than the acceptable p-value of 0.05, H0 rejected and H1 is accepted. It is concluded that there is a significant and positive relationship between eWoM user's involvement and booking intention of the respondents.

The multiple regression equation is formed as following:

$$BI = 0.597 + 0.070 PC + 0.293PE - 0.004NE + 0.162UE + 0.337UI$$

Where	BI	= Booking Intention
	PC	= Perceived eWoM Credibility
	PE	= Positive eWoM
	NE	= Negative eWoM
	UE	= eWoM User's Expertise
	UI	= eWoM User's Involvement

The most powerful antecedent to booking intention is eWoM user's involvement. Every 1 unit increase in user's involvement, booking intention will increase by 0.337 units. Positive eWoM ranked as second powerful antecedent to booking intention. Every 1 unit increase in positive eWoM, booking intention will increase by 0.293 units. It is followed by eWoM user's expertise. Every 1 unit increase in eWoM user's expertise, booking intention will increase by 0.162 units. The fourth powerful antecedent to booking intention is perceived eWoM credibility. Every 1 unit increase in perceived eWoM credibility, booking intention will increase by 0.070 units. The last antecedent to booking intention is negative eWoM. Every 1 unit increase in negative eWoM, booking intention will decrease by 0.004 units.

4.5 Conclusion

The data was divided into 3 parts being descriptive analysis, scale measurement and inferential analysis. As a result, we conclude that perceived eWoM credibility, positive eWoM, eWoM user's expertise and eWoM user's involvement have a positive correlation while negative eWoM has a negative correlation with hotel patrons booking intention. There are 2 variables be rejected which are eWoM perceived credibility and negative eWoM. Both of these variables have the p-value of less than 0.05. Besides, the data of this research is not affected by collinearity problems. The correlation coefficients between eWoM factors and booking intention were below 0.9. Moreover, the variables generated fulfil all the warranted assumptions namely, linearity, normality and homoscedasticity.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.0 Introduction

From the previous chapter, results of the analysis have been produced. In this final chapter, a summary of the statistical analysis would be detailed and this would be followed by a discussion of major findings. This chapter would also comprise of theoretical and practical implications for managers and also business owners. It would then end with limitations and recommendations for future research. A final conclusion would then be set forth to summarize the entire research project.

5.1 Summary of Statistical Analysis

5.1.1 Summary of Descriptive Analysis

A total of 497 respondents have taken part in this research, with 269 respondents that are female (54.12%) and 228 are male (45.88%). Majority of them fall between the ages of 35- 44 years at 29.58%. This was followed by those 25-34 years old at 27.57%, 45-60 years old (20.32%) and 18-24 years old (14.08%), while the lowest were those at the age of above 60 years with 8.45%.

There was a total of 497 respondents with 79.28% being Malaysian residents while 20.72% being Non-Malaysians. Moreover, 57.2% of the respondents are married while 42.8% are still single. About the education level, the highest were those with Bachelor Degree at 39.24% followed by Diploma/Advanced Diploma at 22.33%, STPM/A-Level (12.68%), SPM/O-Level (10.46%), Masters Degree (10.06%) and PhD (2.82%). The lowest were those below SPM level at 2.41%.

Out of the total respondents, 61.17% were employed, 16.30% self-employed, 13.08% students 5.23% housewife, 2.21% unemployed and last was others with 2.01%. As for the monthly personal income, 33.80% earn more than RM 5000, 26.36% between RM 3000-RM 5000, 20.12% fall in the RM 1000-RM 3000 bracket while 19.72% earn below RM 1000. Meanwhile, 93.16% of the respondents agree that they have got experience in using hotel booking websites. Only 6.84% disagree.

5.1.2 Summary of Scale of Measurement

Normality and reliability test were conducted to tested data collected. Reliability is assumed as all the variables have Cronbach's Alpha value of more than 0.70, which is the acceptable benchmark. In addition, there is no multicollinearity problem as correlation between each independent variable is less than 0.9.

5.1.3 Summary of Inferential Analysis

The five hypotheses developed for this research were tested and a conclusion of the total population was drawn based on the this research's sample size.

5.1.3.1 Person's Correlation Coefficient Analysis

The result showed that four of the independent variables (perceived eWoM credibility, positive eWoM, eWoM user's expertise, eWoM user's involvement) are positively and significantly correlated with the dependent variable (booking intention). However, negative eWoM is negatively correlated with hotel patrons' booking intention.

5.1.3.2 Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

In the MLR analysis that was conducted, adjusted R-square indicates that 0.4625 (46.25%) of the variation in dependent variable can be explained by the five independent variables.

According to table 4.3.2, it shows that three independent variables (positive eWoM, eWoM user's expertise and eWoM user's involvement) are significantly affecting the dependent variable (booking intention) as their significance values are less than alpha value of 0.05. Meanwhile, negative eWoM and perceived eWoM credibility are insignificant to the dependent variable with significant values of 0.0870 and 0.0887 respectively.

5.2 Discussion of Major Findings

Table 5.1 Hypotheses Testing

Model	Results	Supported
Perceived eWoM Credibility	Beta = 0.070 p-value of 0.0887	No
Positive eWoM	Beta = 0.293 p-value < 0.0001	Yes
Negative eWoM	Beta = -0.004 p-value of 0.0870	No
eWoM User's Expertise	Beta = 0.162 p-value < 0.0001	Yes
eWoM User's Involvement	Beta = 0.337 p-value < 0.0001	Yes

Source: Developed for the research

5.2.1 Relationship between Perceived eWoM Credibility and Booking Intention

From Table 5.1, the results show that there is no significant relationship between perceived eWoM credibility and booking intention (Beta = 0.070, p-value of 0.0887). The results indicate that the booking intention of hotel patrons in Kuala Lumpur is not affected by whether or not they perceive the eWoM on hotels to be true or reliable. This research's findings contradict the findings by Park et al. (2011) and Cheung et al. (2009). The difference of the results may be because of the anonymous of the reviewer

to the receiver. Most of the information seekers perceive eWoM to be highly credible when they know the reviewers are former consumers instead of experts in the hotel industry. Thus, a recommendation from a former consumer who has actual experience is more persuasive than a comment from an industry expert. Therefore, this uncertainty of who the actual reviewer is leads to the insignificant relationship between the perceived eWoM credibility and the booking intention.

5.2.2 Relationship between Positive eWoM and Booking Intention

Based on Table 5.1, there is a significant and positive relationship between positive eWoM and booking intention (Beta = 0.293, p-value of <0.0001). This would suggest that hotel patrons in Kuala Lumpur would book a hotel room when exposed to positive eWoM. Such a result is supported by Ji and Zhang (2009), where it was demonstrated that eWoM's message impression has a great influence on consumer's willingness of buying. This is also in line with a study by Priester et al. (2004), where it was found that positive reviews of hotels will increase consumers' hotel consideration.

5.2.3 Relationship between Negative eWoM and Booking Intention

According to Table 5.1, no significant relationship exists between negative eWoM and booking intention (Beta = -0.004, p-value of 0.0870). This result indicates that negative eWoM does not influence hotel patrons in Kuala Lumpur to book a hotel, unlike positive eWoM. This may be due to the fact that there were more positive reviews than negative ones. As explained by Doh and Hwang (2009), eWoM messages with higher consensus can be more persuasive and powerful than messages with lower

consensus. Hence, the number of negative reviews was not enough to make an impact on the user. This research's result was contradicted by Meijer and Kleinnijenhuis (2006), which suggested that negative reviews sometimes bring out positive responses in audiences. This may be because of brand familiarity. An eWoM evaluation of an unfamiliar brand is more susceptible to change than their attitude towards a familiar brand (Litvin et. al, 2008). Therefore, the lack of influence of negative eWoM on the target respondents may be because they are already familiar with those particular hotels and already have a good impression towards the hotels.

5.2.4 Relationship between eWoM's User Expertise and Booking Intention

The results in Table 5.1 indicate that there is a significant and positive relationship between eWoM user's expertise and booking intention (Beta = 0.162, p-value <0.001). Therefore, hotel patrons in Kuala Lumpur would tend to book a hotel room when they are skilful and knowledgeable about eWoM. A study by Akyüz (2013) on the determining factors influencing eWoM in Turkey, agreed with the above results, that a user's experience of online review usage and eWoM effect are positively related. Liao and Cheung (2001) also supported the result when they found that Singaporeans who are experts in using internet reviews are more willing to purchase a product/service over the internet.

5.2.5 Relationship between eWoM User's Involvement and Booking Intention

According to Table 5.1, there is a significant and positive relationship between eWoM user's involvement and booking intention (Beta = 0.337, p-value of <0.001). This would suggest that the hotel patrons in Kuala Lumpur would book a hotel room if they are more involved in eWoM.

Such a result was also obtained by Yang, Huang and Yang (n.d.), which found that the higher degree of involvement of the user, the higher the influence for that user to adopt the eWoM. Another study supported this result by stating that increased involvement leads to intent to purchase (Fan & Miao, 2012).

5.3 Implication of the Study

5.3.1 Managerial Implications

From a practical business standpoint, this research would assist hotel managers to further understand what factors of eWoM influences hotel patron's booking intention of a hotel room. In this research, three out of the five independent variables (i.e. positive eWoM, eWoM user's expertise and eWoM user's involvement) have significant and positive effects on hotel patron's booking intention.

Positive eWoM refers to the positive reviews of the hotel. Based on this research, positive eWoM is a major factor that influences hotel patrons to book a hotel room. Positive reviews of a hotel on booking websites increases hotel patron's booking desire on the hotel. Thus, hotel managers are recommended to increase its positive reviews by making a good impression on its patrons and maintain its good image. Providing excellent customer service and quality will motivate hotel patrons to go online and share to potential patrons about how great the hotel is.

According to the research done, eWoM user's expertise has a significant and positive effect on hotel patron's booking intention. Consumers who have experience in using online reviews will be influenced by the reviews when making purchasing decisions (Park et al., 2011). Therefore, in order to increase booking intention of hotel patrons on their hotel, hotel managers are suggested to focus marketing their hotel to expert online review users. They could advertise their hotels on popular online review sites, such as TripAdvisor and Agoda, to increase awareness of their hotels among expert online review users. Besides that, hotel managers could collaborate with online review sites to offer free hotel stays for consumers who are experienced and experts in using eWoM. This will attract more expert online review users to visit their hotels.

As per the research, eWoM user's involvement influences the hotel patron's booking intention since he/she will use the reviews to see if they match with his/her needs, interests and values. Therefore, the hotel management should ensure that hotel patrons' interests are prioritized and their needs are catered to. This can only be achieved when patrons are regularly engaged in giving their reviews and suggestions on the hotels. Furthermore, hotel managers should be attentive to patron's problems and try to solve it to the best of their ability. This will make the hotel patrons feel that they are heard and this will leave a positive impression on the patrons.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

This study has found that positive eWoM, eWoM user's expertise and eWoM user's involvement has a significant and positive effect of hotel patrons' booking intention. However, some limitations are associated with this study's result.

5.4.1 Geographic

The samples for this research were taken from the area of Golden Triangle alone. For that reason, top 10 hotels in Agoda and TripAdvisor websites were selected. Therefore, this research may not be conclusive in representing all the hotel patrons in Kuala Lumpur.

5.4.2 Variables

The current analysis consists of five independent variables, which are perceived eWoM credibility, positive eWoM, negative eWoM, eWoM user's expertise and eWoM user's involvement. Some other possible contributing factors may also influence hotel patron's booking intention other than those 5 variables. For example, the number of reviews will also affect the hotel patrons.

5.4.3 Questionnaire

The questionnaires were prepared in only one language, which is English. This may cause the non-English educated respondents to face difficulties in understanding and answering the questionnaire. Furthermore, there is no feedback column where the respondents can voice out any problems that they face when answering the questionnaires.

5.4.4 Background of Target Respondents

Target respondents who are from different backgrounds such as different culture and nationality, may have different perceptions of eWoM. Thus, they may have different decision-making process in using eWoM. Therefore, the different background of the target respondents may lead to different findings other than this research. Furthermore, as this research is using cross-sectional approach, it only studies the phenomena at a particular time. However, survey results may vary according to different time periods of the year. For example, the hotel patrons at the end of the year mainly consist of families going on holidays. Thus, their perception of eWoM may be different from other periods of the year, when businessmen are the majority of the hotel patrons in Kuala Lumpur.

5.5 Recommendations for Future Study

In conducting this research, several significant eWoM factors that affect hotel patrons' booking intentions were identified, but there are some limitations in this research. Thus, some recommendations are suggested for future research.

5.5.1 Geographic

The survey for this research was conducted in the Golden Triangle district of Kuala Lumpur alone and only from 10 hotels. Thus, future researchers can replicate this study with a larger representative samples from other demographic segments to obtain more accurate results. For example, research can be done on other states or the whole of Malaysia rather than just Kuala Lumpur. According to Tourism Malaysia, in 2012, Kuala Lumpur has the highest number of hotel patrons compared to other states. Although hotel patrons visit Kuala Lumpur the most, other states are worth investigating as well.

5.5.2 Variables

It is recommended that future researchers take into account other factors which are not included in this study but are significant to the investigation of eWoM influence. The R² for this study is 0.4679, which shows that there are more factors that can be studied to better explain booking intentions of hotel patrons. Therefore, future research can be conducted to investigate these other factors to gain better insight about the booking intention.

5.4.3 Questionnaires

Future studies can improve the questionnaires by adding translations of the questionnaires in other languages such as Malay, Mandarin and Tamil. This is because Malaysia is a multiracial country and is mainly made up of the three main races, which are Malays, Chinese and Indians. Some respondents may not be fluent in English and they will understand the questionnaires better in their mother tongue.

It is also recommend that future research add a feedback column in the survey forms. With a feedback column, researchers will know what problems the respondents may have had about the surveys. For example, some respondents may have some trouble in understanding the questionnaire, resulting in invalid data. However, if there is a feedback column, the respondents could state that they do not understand the questions and the researcher can then eliminate that particular survey as invalid data.

5.5.4 Background of Target Respondents

In this research, the results were not segmented into people from different age groups and education level. People from different age groups and education level may have very different responses towards the same questions. The younger generation grew up with the internet, thus will have much more experience with eWoM compared to the older generation. Therefore, it is recommended that future research can be conducted based on age group and education level. This will ensure that the research is not bias.

Malaysia is a multiracial country and different races may have different perceptions of eWoM and these may cause hotel patrons to have different decision-making process. Thus, to get more reliable results, future researchers can apply a cross-cultural perspective of the topic by means of the analysis of existing differences among various cultures, taking into account the different races in Malaysia. As such, the results produced will more accurately represent the population of Malaysia.

5.6 Conclusion

In a nutshell, the objectives of determining the relevant eWoM factors that influence the booking intention of hotel patrons in Kuala Lumpur are accomplished. The factors investigated are perceived eWoM credibility, positive eWoM, negative eWoM, eWoM user's expertise, and eWoM user's involvement. The result revealed that positive eWoM, eWoM user's expertise and eWoM user's involvement have a positive and significant relationship with booking intention. Meanwhile, perceived eWoM credibility and negative eWoM has no significant relationship with booking intention. Lastly, the problem of this research has been solved. This study provides organizations in the hospitality industry in Malaysia with a better understanding on how eWoM works. Furthermore, this knowledge can be utilized to replace traditional marketing means and improve the industries marketing methods and enhance business performance.

REFERENCES

- Akyüz, A. (2013). Determinant factors influencing eWoM. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 4(11), 159-166.
- Appelbaum, R.F., & Anatol, K.W.E. (1972). The factor structure of source credibility as a function of the speaking situation. *Speech Monographs*, 39(3), 216-222.
- Arndt, J. (1967). Role of product-related conversations in the diffusion of a new product. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 4(3), 291-295.
- Awad, N.F., & Ragowsky, A. (2008). Establishing trust in electronic commerce through online word of mouth: An examination across genders. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, 24, 101-121.
- Babin, B.J., Darden, W.R., & Griffin, M. (1994). Work and/or fun: Measuring hedonic and utilitarian shopping value. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 20(4), 644-656.
- Bansal, H.S., & Voyer, P.A. (2000). Word-of-mouth process within a service purchase decision context. *Journal of Service Research*, 3(2), 166-177.
- Bettman, J.R. (1973). Perceived risk and its components: A model and empirical test. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 10(2), 184.
- Bruyn, A.D., & Lilien, G.L. (2008). A multi-stage model of word-of-mouth influence through viral marketing. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 25(3), 151-163.
- Buttle, F.A. (1998). Word of mouth: understanding and managing referral marketing. *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 6, 241-254.

- Cakim, I.M. (2010). *Implementing word of mouth marketing: Online strategies to identify influences, craft stories, and draw customers*. New Jersey, USA: John Wiley & Sons.
- Cantalops, A.S., & Salvi, F. (2013). New consumer behaviour: A review of research on eWoM and hotels. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 36, 41-51.
- Celsi, R.L., & Olson, J.C. (1988). The role of involvement in attention and comprehension processes. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 15(2), 210-224.
- Chang, H.H., & Wu, L.H. (2013). An examination of negative e-WOM adoption: Brand commitment as a moderator. *Decision Support Systems*, 59, 206-218.
- Chen, Y.C., Shang, R.A., & Li, M.J. (2014). The effects of perceived relevance of travel blogs' content on the behavioural intention to visit a tourist destination. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 30, 787-799.
- Cheung, M.Y., Luo, C., Sia, C.L., & Chen, H. (2009). Credibility of electronic word of mouth: informational and normative determinants of on-line consumer recommendations. *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, 13(4), 9-38.
- Crossman, A. (n.d.). *Convenience Sample*. Retrieved June 14, 2014, from <http://sociology.about.com/od/Types-of-Samples/a/Convenience-Sample.htm>
- Davies, P. (2012). *Customers 'after the truth' in hotel reviews, finds study*. Retrieved February 2, 2014, from <http://www.travolution.co.uk/articles/2012/11/15/6195/customers-after-the-truth-in-hotel-reviews-finds-study.html>

- Ding, Y. (2011). *The influences of e-word-of-mouth on hotel online bookings: A comparison of traveller reviews and editor reviews*. Unpublished thesis, University of Amsterdam.
- Doh, S., & Hwang, J. (2009). How consumers evaluate eWoM (electronic word-of-mouth) messages. *CyberPsychology & Behavior, 12*(2), 193-197.
- Duhan, D.F., Johnson, S.D., Wilcox, J.B., & Harrell, G.D. (1997). Influences on consumer use of word-of-mouth recommendation sources. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 25*(4), 283-295.
- Eroglu, S.A., Machleit, K.A., & Davis, L.M. (2003). Empirical testing of a model of online store atmospherics and shopper responses. *Psychology & Marketing, 20*(2), 139-150.
- Fakharyan, M., Jalilvand, M.R., Elyasi, M., & Mohammadi, M. (2012). The influence of online word of mouth communications on tourists' attitudes toward Islamic destinations and travel intention: Evidence from Iran. *African Journal of Business Management, 6*(38), 10381-10388.
- Fan, Y.W., & Miao, Y.F. (2012). Effect of wlectronic word-of-mouth on consumer purchase intention: The perspective of gender differences. *International Journal of Electronic Business Management, 10*(3), 175-181.
- Fan, Y.W., Miao, Y.F., Fang, Y.H., & Lin, R.Y. (2013). Establishing the adoption of electronic word-of-mouth through consumers' perceived credibility. *International Business Research, 6*(3), 1-8.
- Fareed, S. (2013). 'Visit Malaysia Year 2014' drive aims to attract 28 million visitors. Retrieved February 3, 2014, from <http://www.saudigazette.com.sa/index.cfm?method=home.regcon&contentid=20130130151159>

- Flanagin, A. J., & Metzger, M. J. (2008). Digital media and youth: Unparalleled opportunity and unprecedented responsibility. *Digital media, youth, and credibility*, 5–27.
- File, K.M., Judd, B.B., & Prince, R.A. (1992). Interactive marketing: the influence of participation on positive word-of-mouth and referrals. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 6(4), 5-14.
- Godes, D., & Mayzlin, D. (2004). Using online conversations to study word-of-mouth communication. *Marketing Science*, 23(4), 545-560.
- Golden Triangle in Kuala Lumpur*. (n.d.). Retrieved July 1, 2014 from <http://www.kuala-lumpur.ws/klareas/golden.htm>
- Gregory, C.K., Meade, A.W., & Thompson, L.F. (2013). Understanding internet recruitment via signaling theory. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 29(5), 1949-1959.
- Gruen, T.W., Osmonbekov, T., & Czaplewski, A.J. (2006). eWoM: The impact of customer-to-customer online know-how exchange on customer value and loyalty. *Journal of Business Research*, 59(4), 449-456.
- Hair, J.F., Black, W.C., Babin, B.J., & Anderson, R.E. (2010). *Multivariate Data Analysis*. (7th Edition). New Jersey, USA: Prentice Hall.
- Herr, P.M., Kardes, F.R., & Kim, J. (1991). Effects of word-of-mouth and product attribute information on persuasion: An accessibility-diagnostics perspective. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 17(4), 454-462.
- Jalilvand, R., Samiei, N., Dini, B., & Manzari, P.Y. (2012). Examining the structural relationships of electronic word of mouth, destination image, tourist attitude toward destination and travel intention: An integrated approach. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 1(1), 134-143.

- Jeong, E.H., & Jang, S.S.C. (2011). Restaurant experiences triggering positive electronic word-of-mouth (eWoM) motivations. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 30(2), 356-366.
- Ji, X.F., & Zhang, Y.L. (2009). The impacts of online word-of-mouth on consumer's buying intention on apparel: An empirical study. *International Symposium on Web Information Systems and Applications*, 24-28.
- Jones, S.A., Aiken, K.D., & Boush, D.M. (2009). Integrating experience, advertising, and electronic word of mouth. *Journal of Internet Commerce*, 8(3/4), 246-267.
- Li, C.Y. (2013). Persuasive messages on information system acceptance: A theoretical extension. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 29(1), 264-275.
- Liao, Z., Cheung, T.M. (2001). Internet-based e-shopping and consumer attitudes: an empirical study. *Information and Management*, 38(5), 299-306.
- Litvin, S.W., Goldsmith, R.E. & Pan, B. (2008). Electronic word-of-mouth in hospitality and tourism management. *Tourism Management*, 29, 458-568.
- LonelyTravelog. (2012). *Kuala Lumpur Golden Triangle*. Retrieved April 2, 2014 from <http://lonelytravelog.com/2012/01/18/kuala-lumpur-golden-triangle/>
- Luo, C., Luo, R.X., Schatzberg, L., & Sia, C.L. (2013). Impact of informational factors on online recommendation credibility: The moderating role of source credibility. *Decision Support Systems*, 56, 92-102.
- MacInnis, D.J., Park, C.W. (1991). The differential role of characteristics of music on high-involvement and low-involvement consumers processing of ads. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 18(2), 161-173.

- Mathwick, C., Malhotra, N., & Rigdon, E. (2001). Experiential value: conceptualization, measurement and application in the catalogue and Internet shopping environment. *Journal of Retailing*, 77(1), 39-56.
- Meijer, M., & Kleinnijenhuis, J. (2006). Issue news and corporate reputation: applying the theories of agenda setting and issue ownership in the field of business communication. *Journal of Communication*, 56(3), 543–559.
- Ohanian, R. (1990). Construction and validation of a scale to measure celebrity endorsers' perceived expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. *Journal of Advertising*, 19(3), 39-52.
- Osborne, J.W., & Waters, E. (2002). *Four Assumptions of Multiple Regression That Researchers Should Always Test*. Retrieved July 1, 2014, from <http://pareonline.net/getvn.asp?n=2&v=8>
- Online Consumer Reviews Significantly Impact Consumer Purchasing Decisions*. (2010). Retrieved February 21, 2014, from http://www.opinionresearch.com/fileSave%5COnline_Feedback_PR_Final_6202008.pdf
- Pai, M.Y., Chu, H.C., Wang, S.C., & Chen, Y.M. (2013). Electronic word of mouth analysis for service experience. *Expert Systems with Applications*, 40(6), 1993-2006.
- Park, C., & Lee, T.M. (2009). Information direction, website reputation and eWoM effect: A moderating role of product type. *Journal of Business Research*, 62(1), 61–67.
- Park, C., Wang, Y., Yao, Y., Kang, Y.R. (2011). Factors influencing e-WoM effects: Using experience, credibility and susceptibility. *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity*, 1(1), 74-79.

- Park, D.H., Lee, J., & Han, I. (2007). The effect of on-line consumer reviews on consumer purchasing intention: The moderating role of involvement. *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, 11(4), 125-148.
- Park, D.H., & Lee, J. (2009). eWoM overload and its effect on consumer behavioral intention depending on consumer involvement. *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications*, 7(4), 386-398.
- Petty, R.E., & Cacioppo, J.T. (1986). The elaboration likelihood model of persuasion. *Advances In Experimental Social Psychology*, 19, 123-162.
- Petty, R. E., & Wegener, D. T. (1999). The Elaboration Likelihood Model: Current status and controversies. *Dual process theories in social psychology*, 41-72.
- Prabu, K. (2013). *TripAdvisor shows who is the boss, top source for direct hotel bookings*. Retrieved February 6, 2014, from <http://www.tnooz.com/article/tripadvisor-shows-boss-top-source-direct-hotel-bookings/>
- Prendergast, G., Ko, D., & Yuen, S.V.V. (2010). Online word of mouth and consumer purchase intentions. *International Journal of Advertising*, 29(5), 687-708.
- Prendergast, G.P., Tsang, A.S.L., & Chan, C.N.W. (2010). The interactive influence of country of origin of brand and product involvement on purchase intention. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 27(2), 180-188.
- Priester, J., Nayakankuppam, D., Fleming, M., & Godek, J. (2004). The ASC model: The influence of attitudes and attitude strength on consideration and choice. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 30(4), 574-587
- Rieh, S.Y. (2002). Judgment of information quality and cognitive authority in the Web. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 53(2), 145-161.

- Salisbury, W.D., Pearson, R.A., Pearson, A.W., & Miller, D.W. (2001). Perceived security and worldwide web purchase intention. *Industrial Management & Data Systems*, 101(4), 165-77.
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2009). *Research methods for business students*. (5th Edition.). Essex: Pearson Education Limited.
- Singh, J., & Pandya, S. (1991). Exploring the effect of consumers' dissatisfaction level on complaint behaviours. *The European Journal of Marketing*, 25(90), 7-21.
- Sorensen, A., & Rasmussen, S. (2004). *Is any publicity good publicity? A note on the impact of book reviews*. NBER Working paper, Stanford University.
- Sormunen, V. (2009). *International Viral Marketing Campaign Planning and Evaluation*. Unpublished master's thesis, Helsinki School of Economics.
- Sparks, B.A., & Browning, V. (2011). The impact of online reviews on hotel booking intentions and perception of trust. *Tourism Management*, 32(6), 1310-1323.
- Spears, N., & Singh, S.N. (2004). Measuring attitude toward the brand and purchase intentions. *Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising*, 26(2), 53-66.
- Stills, S. (2009). *Can User-Generated Content Change Your World?* Retrieved February 21, 2014, from <http://www.emarketer.com/Article/User-Generated-Content-Change-Your-World/1006888>
- Sussman, S.W., & Siegal, W.S. (2003). Informational influence in organizations: An integrated approach to knowledge adoption. *Information Systems Research*, 14(1), 47-65.

- Tabachnick, B.G., & Fidell, L.S. (2007). *Using Multivariate Statistics*. (5th Edition.). Essex: Pearson Education.
- Tao, Z. (2012). Understanding users' initial trust in mobile banking: An elaboration. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 28(4), 1518-1525.
- Thum, R. (2014). *Google Malaysia's study reveals 9 in 10 Malaysians use the web to plan travels*. Retrieved February 16, 2014, from <http://www.techattack.my/9830/google-malaysias-study-reveals-9-10-malaysians-use-web-plan-travels/>
- Tourism Malaysia. (n.d.). *Malaysia Hotel Guests by States 2012*. Retrieved March 16, 2014, from http://corporate.tourism.gov.my/images/research/pdf/2012/hotel_guests/Hotel_Guest2012.pdf
- Tseng, F.M., & Hsu, F.Y. (2010). The influence of eWoM within the online community on consumers' purchasing intentions-The case of the Eee PC. *International Conference on Innovation and Management*.
- Tseng, C.H. (2014). *How electronic WOM affects behaviors of virtual community members?* Unpublished master's thesis, National Pingtung Institute of Commerce.
- Vermeulen, I.E., & Seegers, D. (2009). Tried and tested: The impact of online hotel reviews on consumer consideration. *Tourism Management*, 30(1), 123-127.
- Wang, C.C., & Chang, S.C. (2008). Online word of mouth as a determination in adolescents' purchase decision making: The influence of expertise and involvement. *Communications of the IBIMA*, 4, 1-7.
- Wangenheim, F., & Bayon, T. (2004). The effect of word of mouth on service switching. *European Journal of Marketing*, 38(9), 1173-1185.

- Whitehead, J.L. (1968). Factors of source credibility. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 54(1), 59-63.
- Xiang, Z., & Gretzel, U. (2010). Role of social media in online travel information search. *Tourism management*, 31(2), 179-188.
- Yang, C., Huang, C.R., & Yang, K.C. (n.d.). *eWoM: The effects of online consumer information adoption on purchasing decision*. Master thesis, National Chiao Tung University.
- Zhang, Z., Ye, Q., Law, R., & Li, Y. (2010). The impact of e-word-of-mouth on the online popularity of restaurants: A comparison of consumer reviews and editor reviews. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 29(4), 694-700.
- Zikmund, W.G., Babin, B.J., Carr, J.C., & Griffin, M. (2010). *Business Research Methods*. (9th Edition). Ohio, USA: South-Western Cengage Learning.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1.1: Malaysia Hotel Guests in 2012

LOCALITY	DOMESTIC		%CHANGE	FOREIGNER		%CHANGE	TOTAL		%CHANGE
	2011	2012	11-Dec	2011	2012	11-Dec	2011	2012	11-Dec
KUALA LUMPUR	3,760,325	4,749,723	26.31	8,990,338	9,260,734	3.01	12,750,663	14,010,457	9.88
PAHANG	4,888,129	5,034,979	3	3,218,135	3,107,088	-3.45	8,106,264	8,142,067	0.44
PENANG	2,956,390	2,996,282	1.35	3,063,564	3,096,907	1.09	6,019,954	6,093,189	1.22
SABAH	1,734,822	2,198,980	26.76	1,812,350	1,826,436	0.78	3,547,172	4,025,416	13.48
JOHOR	2,003,611	2,162,130	7.91	1,781,765	1,794,729	0.73	3,785,376	3,956,859	4.53
MELAKA	1,811,799	1,812,749	0.05	2,091,249	2,093,952	0.13	3,903,048	3,906,701	0.09
SARAWAK	2,469,671	2,473,309	0.15	889,707	895,267	0.62	3,359,378	3,368,576	0.27
KEDAH	1,612,873	1,640,341	1.7	1,170,380	1,212,428	3.59	2,783,253	2,852,769	2.5
SELANGOR	975,748	1,101,913	12.93	1,654,667	1,528,974	-7.6	2,630,415	2,630,887	0.02
PERAK	2,006,033	2,016,463	0.52	408,238	411,252	0.74	2,414,271	2,427,715	0.56
N.SEMBILAN	1,352,621	1,355,198	0.19	478,877	489,147	2.14	1,831,498	1,844,345	0.7
TERENGGANU	1,027,859	1,046,312	1.8	132,520	132,407	-0.09	1,160,379	1,178,719	1.58
KELANTAN	760,943	881,098	15.79	69,331	60,585	-12.61	830,274	941,683	13.42
LABUAN F.T	194,502	208,319	7.1	110,570	110,332	-0.22	305,072	318,651	4.45
PUTRAJAYA	100,783	98,394	-2.37	144,341	146,928	1.79	245,124	245,322	0.08
PERLIS	80,622	125,135	55.21	3,387	3,708	9.49	84,009	128,843	53.37
GRAND TOTAL	27,736,731	29,901,325	7.8	26,019,419	26,170,874	0.58	53,756,150	56,072,199	4.31

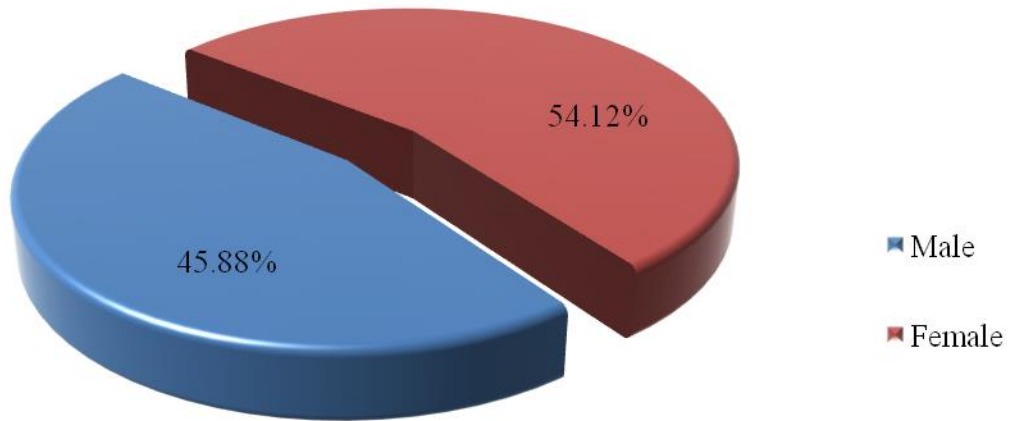
Appendix 2.1: Summary of Past Empirical Studies

Study	Country	Data	Major Findings
Awad & Ragowsky, 2008	USA	E-mail survey of over 3,000 randomly selected respondents from a nationally representative pool	Online trust affects intention to shop online more for women than for men.
Babin, Darden & Griffin, 1994	USA	A total 525 completed questionnaires were considered for final analysis	Distinct hedonic and utilitarian shopping value dimensions exist and are related to a number of important consumption variables.
Bansal & Voyer, 2000	Canada	Survey of 450 respondents at a Canadian Forces Base in eastern Canada	There is a negative effect of the seeker's expertise on the impact of perceived influence.
Bettman, 1973	USA	Data was collected using questionnaires from 123 housewives in the Los Angeles area	Inherent risk is important factor to consumers' choice when making a purchase.
Cheung, Luo, Sia & Chen, 2009	China	-	eWOM user will use the review in his/her purchasing decision if he/she perceives the eWOM to be credible
Doh & Hwang, 2009	South Korea	143 samples were collected in 3 universities in South Korea with self-administered questionnaires employing two product categories: movies and digital cameras.	A few negative messages can be helpful in promoting positive attitude toward Web site and credibility of eWOM messages.
Eroglu, Machleit & Davis, 2003	USA	Two pretests followed by an experiment to empirically test the model.	Confirm the hypothesized moderating effects of two individual traits, namely, involvement and atmospheric responsiveness.
Fan & Miao, 2012	Taiwan	First survey of 51 customers and second survey of 117 customers	Gender, a moderator, has an effect on the credibility of eWOM, which in turn, will affect the consumer purchasing decision.
Fan, Miao, Fang & Lin, 2013	Taiwan	435 responses for an online survey were collected	Source credibility, quality and quantity of eWOM positively influence perceived credibility and ultimately positively influence consumer purchase decision.
Ji & Zhang, 2009	China	Online and offline survey of 612 younger generation in Hang Zhou city	The message impression of eWOM and leader's comments have much influence on consumer's willingness of buying.
Liao & Cheung, 2001	Singapore	Online survey of 1000 internet users in Singapore and interviews with Brel Software Private Ltd., MOG and TV-Media	Singaporeans who use the internet more often are more willing to make purchases over the Internet.
Mathwick, Malhotra & Rigdon, 2001	USA	112 home shoppers were asked to sort items into the relevant dimensions of value, discarding those items that did not clearly fall into any one of these categories.	Consumer's transition from passive observer to active participant in the consumption experience, is moderated by a number of factors including market segment characteristics, product or service involvement and shopping goals.

eWoM's Influence on Booking Intention:
A Study of Hotels in Kuala Lumpur

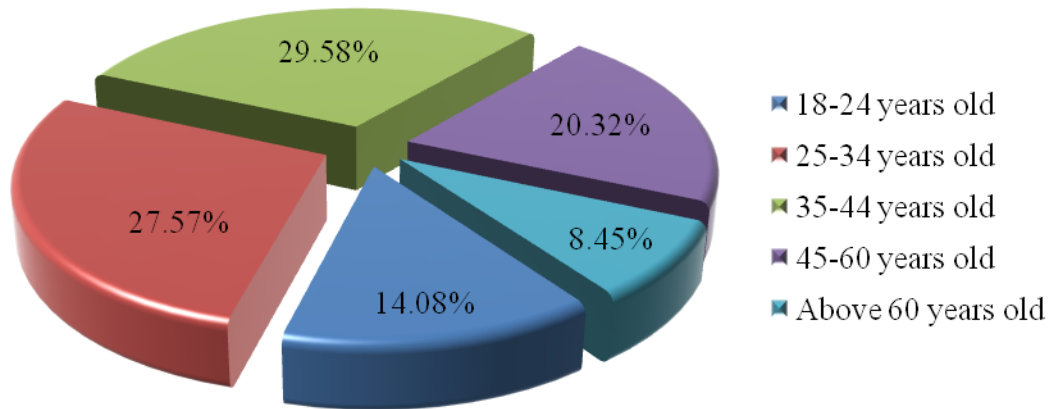
Meijer & Kleinnijenhuis, 2006	Netherlands	Media data and panel survey data on the salient beliefs and reputations held by news consumers	Negative reviews sometimes bring out positive responses in audiences.
Park, Lee & Han, 2007	USA	Questionnaires were distributed to customers using internet and e-devices.	Purchasing intention increases as the number of reviews increases. The quality of on-line reviews has a positive effect on consumers' purchasing intention.
Park & Lee, 2009	South Korea	Experimental treatments of 440 participants	eWOM effect is greater for negative eWOM than for positive eWOM.
Park, Wang, Yao & Kang, 2011	China	Personal survey of 209 students and business workers in two main cities in China	Customer susceptibility to interpersonal influence affects using experience of eWOM, eWOM credibility and effect of eWOM directly with high path loadings.
Prendergast, Tsang & Chan, 2010	Hong Kong	To test the hypotheses, a 2 (country of brand-Japan/Korea) x 2 (personal involvement – high/low) factorial design was adopted.	The impact of COB cues on purchase intention is moderated by personal involvement, with low involvement respondents being more sensitive to COB than high involvement respondents
Priester, Nayakankuppam, Fleming & Godek, 2004	USA	2 survey booklets of 117 participants	Only positive reviews will improve hotel attitude and increase hotel consideration.
Sorensen & Rasmussen, 2004	USA	New York Times' reviews of 175 hardcover fiction titles that were released from 2001 to 2003	Positive reviews have a more positive impact on book sales than negative review.
Sparks & Browning, 2010	Australia	An online survey was sent to 5500 people. The participants were asked to review a shopping website and complete the survey	The occurrence of recent positive reviews can over-ride or moderate the effect of a set of negative reviews, in respect of booking intentions.
Tseng & Hsu, 2010	Taiwan	Online survey of 473 of online community	The seeker's level of expertise negatively affects perceived influence.
Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009	Netherlands	E-mail survey of 168 participants from different parts of Netherlands	Although negative reviews lower consumer attitudes towards hotels, the enhanced hotel awareness compensates for this effect, yielding a near neutral net effect on consideration.
Wang & Chang, 2008	Taiwan	Survey of 360 high school students	Expert adolescents consulted much more eWOM than experienced and novice adolescents.

Appendix 4.1: Gender of Respondents



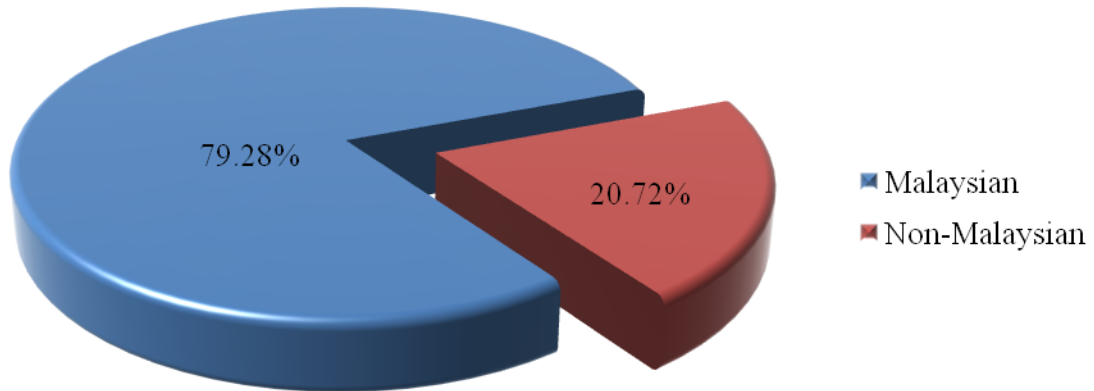
Source: Developed for the research

Appendix 4.2: Age of Respondents



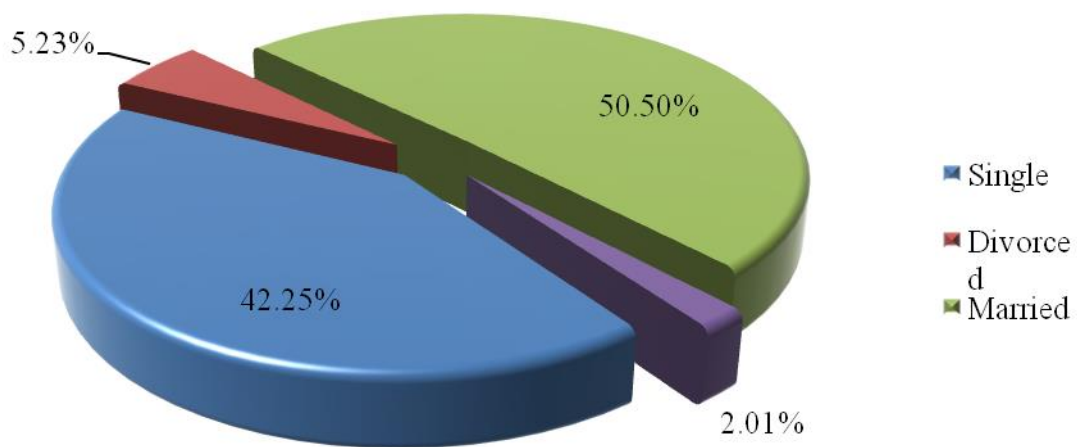
Source: Developed for the research

Appendix 4.3: Nationality of Respondents



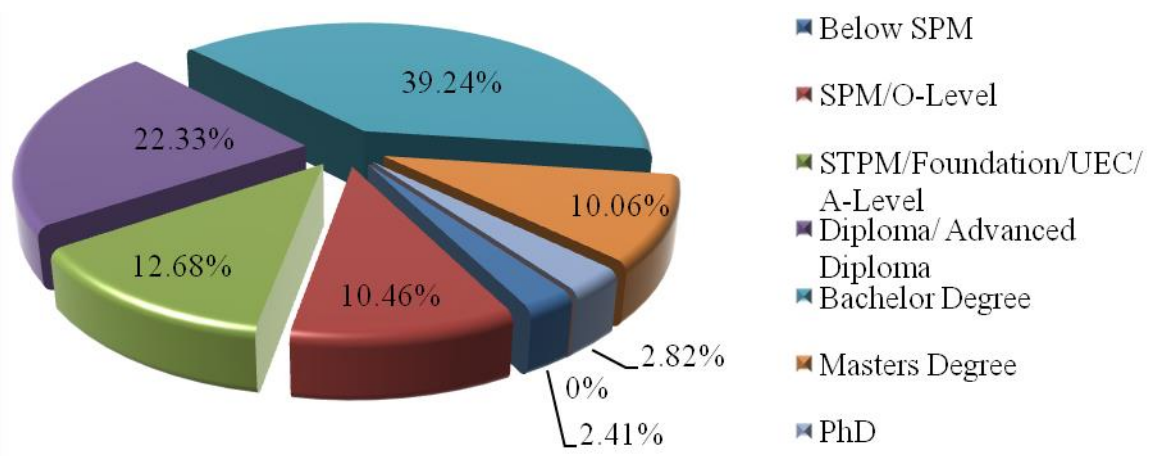
Source: Developed for the research

Appendix 4.4: Marital Status of Respondents



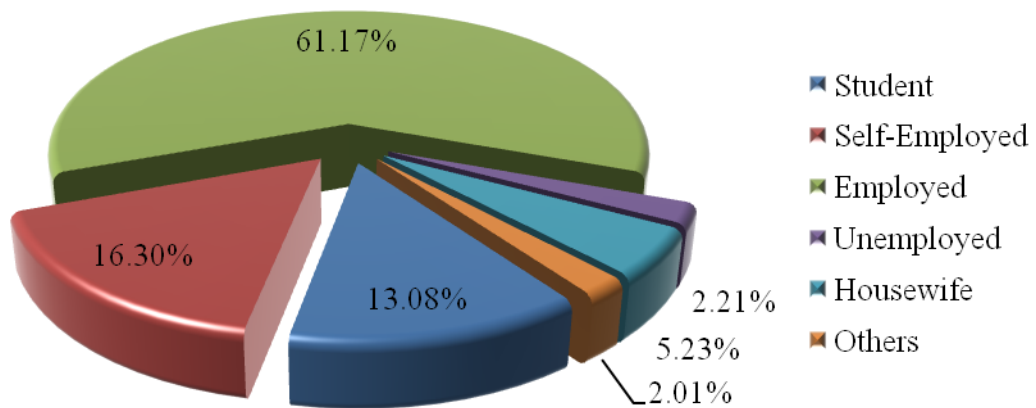
Source: Developed for the research

Appendix 4.5: Highest Education Completed



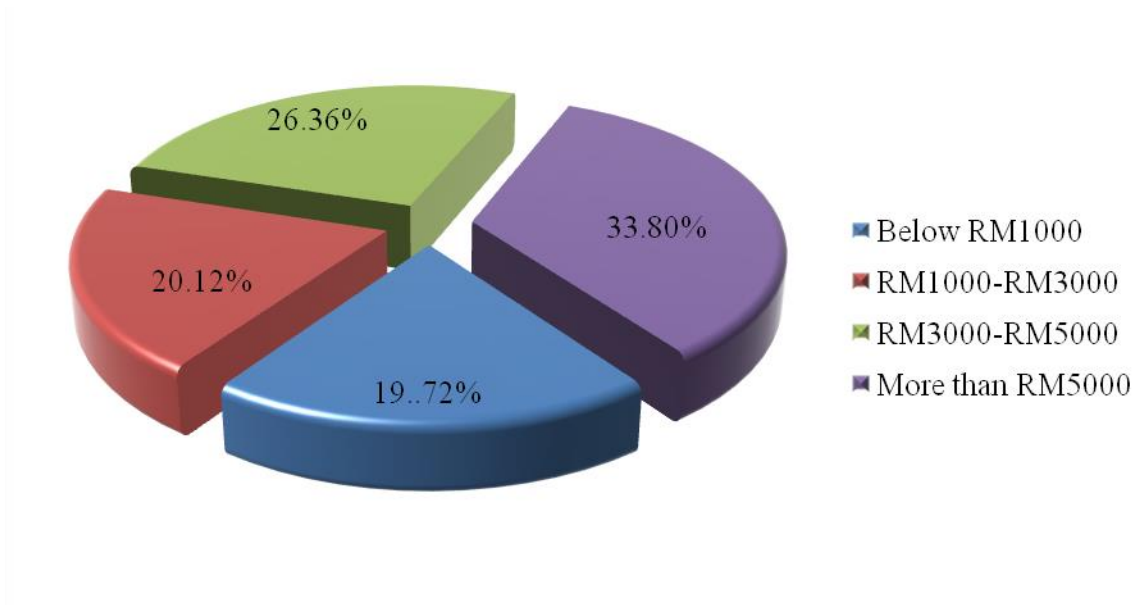
Source: Developed for the research

Appendix 4.6: Occupation of Respondents



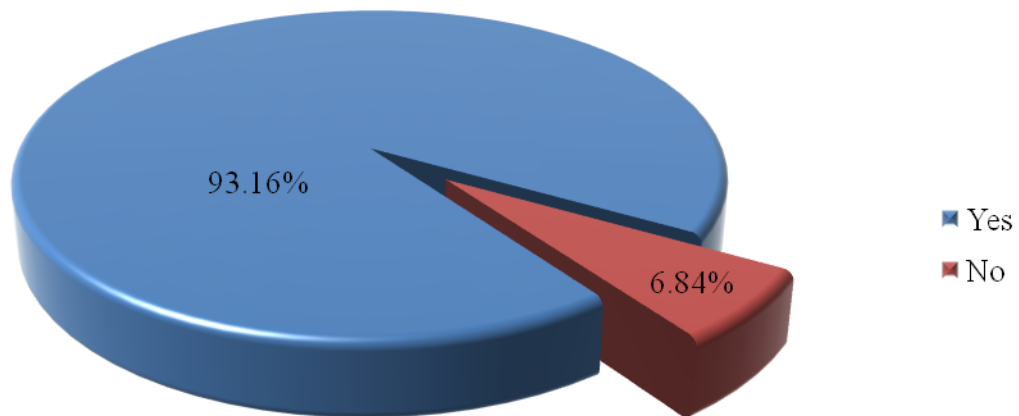
Source: Developed for the research

Appendix 4.7: Monthly Personal Income of Respondents




Source: Developed for the research

Appendix 4.8: Have Experience Using Hotel Booking Websites



Source: Developed for the research

Appendix 6.1 Permission Letter

 **UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN**
Wholly Owned by UTAR Education Foundation (Company No. 578227-M)

9th April 2014

To Whom It May Concern

Dear Sir/Madam

Permission to Conduct Survey

This is to confirm that the following students are currently pursuing their *Bachelor of Commerce (HONS) Accounting* program at the Faculty of Business and Finance, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) Perak Campus.

I would be most grateful if you could assist them by allowing them to conduct their research at your institution. All information collected will be kept confidential and used only for academic purposes.


The students are as follows:


<u>Name of Student</u>	<u>Student ID</u>
POON YEE LING	11ABB01388
LIM CHEE YI	11ABB00898
ADRIAN TAN YENN WEI	11ABB00867
DIANE YONG MAY KUEN	10ABB05220
COLLINS MAVUVUNI HIRIBAE	12ABB00484

If you need further verification, please do not hesitate to contact me.


Thank you.

Yours sincerely


.....
Mr Fong Choong Ee
Head of Department,
Faculty of Business and Finance
Email: fongce@utar.edu.my


.....
Ms Leong Lai Ying
Supervisor,
Faculty of Business and Finance
Email: leongly@utar.edu.my

Address: No.9, Jalan Bersatu 13/4, 46200 Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia
Postal Address: P.O. Box 11284, 50744 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



Appendix 7.1: Survey Questionnaire



UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN
Faculty of Business and Finance
BACHELOR OF COMMERCE (HONS) ACCOUNTING
FINAL YEAR PROJECT

**Electronic Word of Mouth's (eWoM's) Influence on Booking Intention: A Study of
Hotels in Kuala Lumpur
Survey Questionnaire**

Dear respondent,

We are final year undergraduate students of Bachelor of Commerce (Hons) Accounting, from Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR). The purpose of this survey is to find out eWoM's influences on booking intention among hotel patrons in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Thank you for your participation.

Instructions:

- 1) There are **TWO (2)** sections in this questionnaire. Please answer **ALL** questions in **ALL** sections.
- 2) Completion of this form will take you approximately 5 to 10 minutes.
- 3) The contents of this questionnaire will be kept **strictly confidential**.

Section A: Demographic Profile

In this section, we are interested in your background in brief. Please tick your answer and your answers will be kept strictly confidential.

1. Gender: Male Female
2. Age: 18-24years old 25-34 years old 35-44 years old
 45-60 years old Above 60 years old
3. Nationality: Malaysian Non-Malaysian
4. Marital Status: Single Divorced
 Married Others : _____

5. Highest education completed:

- Below SPM
- SPM/ O-Level
- STPM/ Foundation/ UEC/ A-Level
- Diploma/ Advance Diploma
- Bachelor Degree
- Master Degree
- PhD
- Others : _____

6. Occupation:

- Student
- Self-employed
- Employed
- Unemployed
- Housewife
- Others : _____

7. Monthly Personal Income:

- Less than RM1000
- RM1001-RM3000
- RM3001-RM5000
- More than RM5000

8. Do you have experience in using hotel booking websites? Yes No

Section B: eWoM's Influence on Booking Intention

This section is seeking your opinion regarding the factors that influence your booking intention. Please indicate the extent to which you agreed or disagreed with each statement using 5 points Likert scale.

(1) = strongly disagree; (2) = disagree; (3) = neutral; (4) = agree; (5) = strongly agree response framework.

Please circle one number per line to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

No	Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
IV1	Perceived eWoM Credibility (PC)					
PC1	The reviews about the hotel are believable.	1	2	3	4	5
PC2	The reviews about the hotel are factual.	1	2	3	4	5
PC3	The reviews about the hotel are credible.	1	2	3	4	5
PC4	The reviews about the hotel are trustworthy.	1	2	3	4	5

eWoM's Influence on Booking Intention:
A Study of Hotels in Kuala Lumpur

No	Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
IV2	Positive eWoM (PE)					
PE1	I will book a room if the reviews on the booking website recommended the hotel.	1	2	3	4	5
PE2	I will book a room if the reviews on the booking website said positive things about the hotel.	1	2	3	4	5
PE3	Positive reviews on the booking website increase my booking desire on the hotel.	1	2	3	4	5

No	Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
IV2	Negative eWoM (NE)					
NE1	I will book a room if the reviews on the booking website discouraged others to book a room at the hotel.	1	2	3	4	5
NE2	I will book a room if the reviews on the booking website said negative things about the hotel.	1	2	3	4	5
NE3	The negative reviews on the booking website will affect my decision on whether to choose the hotel.	1	2	3	4	5

No	Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
IV3	eWOM User's Expertise (UE)					
UE1	I am very knowledgeable about eWoM.	1	2	3	4	5
UE2	I often influence other people in their usage or opinions about eWoM.	1	2	3	4	5
UE3	My friends see me as a good source of information about eWoM.	1	2	3	4	5

eWoM's Influence on Booking Intention:
A Study of Hotels in Kuala Lumpur

No	Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
IV4	eWoM User's Involvement (UI)					
UI1	When I book a room online, I always read reviews that are presented on the website.	1	2	3	4	5
UI2	If I don't read the reviews presented on the website when I book a room online, I worry about my decision.	1	2	3	4	5

No	Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
DV	Booking Intention (BI)					
BI1	Based on the reviews, I will make a booking at the hotel.	1	2	3	4	5
BI2	Based on the reviews, I would recommend my friends to make a booking at the hotel.	1	2	3	4	5
BI3	I will rely on reviews the next time I need to book a hotel room.	1	2	3	4	5