THE EMERGENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN MALAYSIA: CUSTOMERS PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF AIRASIA'S WEBLOG

CHEAH SHU XU

MASTER OF COMMUNICATION

FACULTY OF CREATIVE INDUSTRY
UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN
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ABSTRACT

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Social media application (Weblog) is a recent computer-mediated communication (CMC) technology that is receiving and attracting the attention of both corporations and consumers. It becomes an important communication tool for both corporations and publics to provide and receive information on corporation, products and services, and relationship development. This advancement of technology has significantly changed the landscape of corporate communication especially in the tourism industry. Although the Weblog becomes an important communication tool, not every corporate Weblog is used effectively, nor has it been successfully accepted and adopted by the public. Furthermore, a similar information technology may be treated differently in its adoption. Therefore it is necessary to understand technology perceptions, adoption and use in a national context. In order to understand AirAsia's customer perceptions of the effectiveness of its weblog, this study focuses on AirAsia Berhad since it is the first corporation to use the Weblog to share travel experience and interact with the public. This study applies the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and previous other studies to examine the perceptions of ease of use, interactivity, and trustworthiness that helps create users' intention to use AirAsia's Weblog. These factors are defined as customers' perceptions of effectiveness for this study.

AirAsia's Weblog in this study is defined based on its features which are Weblog publishing software, Weblog comment system, and Weblog's blogroll and hyperlink. A quantitative approach method using Internet survey e-mail questionnaires was used for this study. Data was collected from 333 AirAsia's Facebook social media users. The Spearman correlation test was used to establish the research hypotheses in order to determine the relationship between customers' perceptions of perceived ease of use and AirAsia's Weblog publishing software; perceived interactivity and AirAsia's Weblog comment system; and perceived trustworthiness and AirAsia's Weblog blogroll and hyperlink. Results show that there is a significant positive and strong relationship between customers' perceived ease of use and AirAsia's Weblog publishing software; perceived interactivity and AirAsia's Weblog comment system; and perceived trustworthiness and AirAsia's Weblog blogroll and hyperlink. As such the research hypotheses in this study are supported.

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Approved by:

_____

(Dr. G.V. Nair)   Date:_____

Supervisor

Department of Mass Communication

Faculty of Creative Industries

Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman

FACULTY OF CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN

Date:_____

SUBMISSION OF DISSERTATION

It is hereby certified that **CHEAH SHU XU** (ID No: **09UJM05958**) has completed this dissertation entitled "**THE EMERGENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN MALAYSIA: CUSTOMERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF AIRASIA'S WEBLOG**" under the supervision of Dr. G. V. Nair (Supervisor) from the Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Creative Industries.

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I hereby declare that the dissertation is based on my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman or other institutions.

_____

Name: Cheah Shu Xu

Date:

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1. TAM - Technology Acceptance Model

2. SPSS - Statistical Package for the Social Science

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the past, corporations generally had only two choices when it came to attracting their customers' attention: by buying expensive advertisements, or by getting third-party ink from the media (Scott, 2011). Aside from these few traditional media, there were no other ways for corporations to reach their public. Traditional media was also the only way for various publics to get or receive any information on the products and services that they were interested in. Ever since the introduction of social media, however the world is witnessing one of the most explosive outbreaks of information ever experienced in human history (Bakar and Green, 2005).

According to Breakenridge (2008), social media is anything that uses the Internet to facilitate conversation between people, and it encompasses all the online technologies that people collaborate on, including their opinions, experiences, and their different perspectives. Thus, social media not only allows the corporation to reach their publics directly (Scott, 2011), but it also allows their customers to contribute, share, and access personal opinions and experiences from friends, relatives, and even strangers. As expressing one's views becomes easier with the help of social media applications, other social media users learn to accept and rely on these views when it comes to their purchase decisions, thereby influencing the number of customers of a business corporation (Mack et al., 2007). In short, this advancement in modern

technology has changed the corporate communication landscape in the areas of corporate communication channels and methods, message content and form, as well as communication feedback and information management (Ilhator, 2001).

Besides that, social media has also altered the relationship between corporations and their internal and external publics (Ilhator, 2001). Sledgianowski and Kulviwat (2009) agree and add that it contributes to the changes in authority and affiliation by enabling computer-mediated communication (CMC) between people with a common interest. It is noted as well that this modern technology holds tremendous promise for improving the communication that is an essential part of developing and sustaining relationships between the organisation and its public, especially when both have access to online media (Wright, 1998, 2001).

Yet another method to define the social media is to refer to it as a recent CMC technology that was created, shared, and commented on by a broader community of users (Gallaugher, 2009). This broader community of users that appeared after the introduction of the social media invokes a sharp contrast to the limited interaction that was prior to it. According to Kelleher (2009), social media possesses a unique ability to enroll new members at an astonishing rate, and it has resulted in the technology attracting the attention of business corporations to this effective and widely accepted communication tool. In line with these researchers' views, it is safe to presume that social media has become a very influential CMC technology in these recent times, particularly in respect of providing and receiving information on corporations, products and

services, as well as relationship development between the business firms and its publics.

Aside from being on the receiving end of attention from the business arena, social media has also significantly created impact in the corporate communication of the tourism industry. The tourism industry has been ranked as the number one industry in terms of online transaction volume, indicated mostly by the amount of online users who logged on to travel websites, especially for travel information as the Internet contains large amounts of information and is more interactive in assisting the customers in their search. As compared to the other types of media that are more limited in its interactivity, social media allows customers to easily find online opinions from people all around the world to help them make their purchase decisions (Mack et al., 2007).

Weblogs, in particular, are showing tremendous potential in helping the tourism industry grow. Strother et al. (2008) reported that among the many social media applications, weblog is the fastest growing communication vehicle, and a number of corporations in the travel industry like airlines and hotels are using weblogs to promote their brand and to foster a community of business travelers. Weblogs have become ubiquitous in recent years and more corporations have started using weblogs as their communication channel and as a communication tool for the public and organisations globally (Mack et al., 2007). According to Strother et al. (2008), corporations that employ the use of weblogs as their chief communication tool are gaining much popularity,

thereby encouraging other business firms to utilise it in the interaction with their own publics as well. The realisation of the advantages and benefits of this new technology has turned weblogs into a major part of the corporation communication arsenal. Schmallegger and Carson (2008) further explained the reasons for the increasing number of tourism organisations that are now launching travel weblogs as one of the main communication platform for its visitors or users, stating that weblogs make it easier for them to share their travel experiences, and at the same time, to enhance the relationship, reputation and credibility of the corporation among its customers. Other motivations that promote the use of weblogs include its easy-to-use features and its ability to create a two-way interaction between the corporation and its public. Not only can the users manipulate the system without requiring extensive technology skills and knowledge, it is also easier for the firms to build and maintain trust with their customers.

In spite of the numerous benefits of weblogs, however, Odden (2008) had indicated that not every corporate weblog is used effectively, nor has it been successfully accepted and adopted by all of the public. Li and Kirkup (2007) further asserted that people from different nations may have different perceptions of the uses of the computer and the Internet. This applies to information technologies as well. The same information technology may be received differently in different countries (Dong and Zhang, 2010). As such, it is necessary to first determine the feasibility of adopting and using the technology within the country. This is particularly true in the Malaysian context.

This study is designed to understand the customers' perceptions of the effectiveness of weblogs, and it focuses specifically on AirAsia Berhad. AirAsia Berhad is a Malaysia tourism company, also known as Asia's largest low fare, no frills airline and it operates scheduled domestic and international flights. In 1998, AirAsia Berhad launched its corporate weblog and dedicated a team to manage the weblog. AirAsia's weblog is a corporate weblog which allows its staff and users to upload their travel experience entries and interact with other users.

Although AirAsia.com is the third top Malaysian Internet property in Malaysian (calculated based on the total of unique visitors in June 2009), it is the first corporation that launched its corporate weblog in 1998 with the intention of utilising its features. It particularly wishes to create a communication platform where both their customers and staff are able to share information and their travel experiences, and to voice out their opinions openly with each other (The Star newspaper, 2009). Maybank.com and Mudah.my are, perhaps, the top two Malaysian Internet properties in Malaysia (calculated based on total of unique visitors in June 2009), but these two corporations do not have its own corporate weblog. As such, AirAsia Berhad is the best option in terms of research viability.

The research rationale behind the current study is based on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) which attempts to understand the user's technology usage and acceptance behavior. It explains, too, the determinants of computer acceptance and the impact of the user's beliefs, attitudes and

intentions towards the technology (weblog). This research paper also finds its foundation from previous studies that have been conducted by other researchers (such as Wattal et al., 2009; Holtz, 2006; Yang and Lim, 2009; Sledgianowski and Kulviwat, 2009; Gangadharbatla, 2009; Wu et al., 2008; and Chiou, 2004), all of which investigates how the user's perceptions of the effectiveness of ease of use, interactivity, and trustworthiness would influence his or her decision to accept and adopt a weblog. This current paper adapts key features of those studies for the Malaysian context and aims to examine the Malaysian customers' perceptions of the effectiveness of *perceived ease of use* of *AirAsia's weblog publishing software*, *perceived interactivity* of *AirAsia's weblog comment system*, and *perceived trustworthiness* of *AirAsia's weblog blogrolls and hyperlinks*. As such, AirAsia Berhad's weblog will be analysed based on features such as its weblog publishing software, comment system, as well as blogroll and hyperlinks.

The research methodology for this study uses a quantitative approach through Internet survey. Research questionnaires were emailed to the respondents through Facebook, and they would answer the questionnaires through Facebook messages. The survey was mailed only to Facebook members who are part of AirAsia's Facebook fan page. This is to make certain that the sample taken is one that would accurately reflect the population. Research respondents will first be asked to respond if they are Malaysians and have utilised the services of AirAsia in the demographic section of the questionnaire. This step will help the researcher of this study to determine if the respondents meet the sampling criteria, such as the respondents are

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Malaysian, AirAsia's customers, as well as AirAsia's weblog users. To ensure that the study will be able to obtain a sufficient number of research participants, questionnaires were emailed to different respondents in two different phases until the required number of respondents was reached.

Spearman correlation analysis method was used to determine and describe the strength and directions of the relationship between the customers' perceptions of the effectiveness and AirAsia's weblog, as well as to figure out the relationship between customers' perceptions of effectiveness of ease of use and AirAsia's weblog publishing software. It was also used to establish the relationship between customers' perceptions of the effectiveness of interactivity and AirAsia's weblog comment system, and the relationship between customers' perceptions of trustworthiness and AirAsia's weblog blogroll and hyperlinks.

1.1 Background of Study

According to Gallaugher (2009), the second generation of Internet-based applications (Web 2.0) is "a term broadly used to refer to Internet services that foster collaboration and information sharing" (p.4). It is a new Internet platform that allows users to build personalised content through participation and sharing (Wu et al., 2008) without being confined to any specific boundaries (O'Reilly, 2005; cited by Wu et al., 2008), thereby permitting users across nations to share opinions and experiences with each other. Murugesan (2007) further identified Web 2.0 as being more dynamic

and interactive as compared to its predecessor, the Web 1.0, as it allows users access to both the content of a website and also the opportunity to contribute to it. Web 2.0 allows developers of new web applications to draw on data, information, or any other services available on the Internet easily and quickly.

Not only that, according to Thackeray et al. (2008), the social media of Web 2.0 can engage customers directly in the creative process by producing and distributing information through collaborative writing, content sharing, and social networking. There are numerous Web 2.0 social media applications, such as Wikis, Facebook, weblogs, Really Simple Syndication (RSS) technology, podcasting, and streaming videos (Breakenridge, 2008). Among all the various types of social media applications mentioned above, the weblog is said to be the fastest growing communication vehicle used by the society (Strother et al., 2008), and therefore, this study has opted to examine customers' perceptions of its effectiveness.

Weblogs are created by users to share their personal ideas, experiences or information on the World Wide Web (WWW) (Wattal et al., 2009). It is a type of website that contains frequently updated "posts" with the most recent entry at the top of the page, and older ones automatically displayed beneath it in a reverse-chronological order (Brady, 2005) - a form of presentation that is achieved with the help of the convenient weblog publishing software (Quiggin, 2006). Blood (2004) emphasised on this simplicity of the weblog software automated process, adding that HTML knowledge was no longer necessary, and that bloggers merely need to type their message into a single form box

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field. Weblogs have been designed to facilitate simple and fast creation of web content without requiring much technical or programming skill, thereby enabling average people, even nontechnical users, to be able to use the application (Du and Wagner, 2006).

Indeed, the simplicity and ease of use of the weblog may have been one of the factors that contributed to its popularity amongst social media users. According to TAM, there are two main reasons as to why users accept a particular technology system; it is either due to the user's belief that the technology system is able to enhance his or her job performance, or to the fact that the technology system is easy to use. Wattal et al. (2009), in particular, stressed on the second reason, adding that the key feature in the acceptance of a particular technology and system lies in how easy it is for the users to utilise the technology or system. In defining the notion of ease of use, Sledgianowski and Kulviwat (2009) stated that perceived ease of use as the extent to which a person believes that using a technology will be free of effort, and researches have found that the user's perceived ease of use has a significantly positive effect on his or her intention to use social network sites. Therefore, a user's perceptions of effectiveness of ease of use can directly affect his or her acceptance and intention to use the particular technology or system.

Aside from being easy to use and not needing much technical or programming skills (Du and Wagner, 2006), weblogs are also effective multimedia communication tools that allow users to interact with each other (Holtz, 2006) share information, discuss, and contribute frequently-requested

information, especially among those who share similar viewpoints (Breakenridge, 2009). More than that, weblogs function as reflections of a blogger's personality as well. It exhibits a strong sense of the blogger's personality, passions, and point of views as he or she posts entries which readers can react to by commenting on it (Wattal et al., 2009). These comments are attached to the main post, and depending on the setting set by the blogger, other readers may be able to read and add their own comment to it (Wattal et al.). Thus creating direct interaction not only between the blogger and the commenters, but also between the commenters themselves (Du and Wagner, 2006). This comment system is aided even more by another feature of the weblog – the permalink. According to Herring et al. (2004), permalinks are "links to a permanent copy of the stored entry elsewhere in the weblog" (p.8), and it allows the user to link back to the particular entry for various reasons, usually to add or read comments, and to interact with others. As such, permalinks make it possible for users to easily link to a specific entry and continue the thread of conversation conducted there, thereby encouraging more interactivity within the thread (Tepper. 2003).

Ultimately, the amount of interactivity among the users of a weblog depends on the number of members who decide to use the weblog since there must be sufficient active participants if the weblog were to sustain a healthy level of interaction and discussion. If a particular site has enough participants contributing, then it means that a user would have a significant number of other members with whom he or she can interact. This, in turn, leads to an active level of communication between all the members of the weblog. Similarly, the

reverse may happen. If a user perceives that there are not enough active members that he or she can associate with, then he or she will lose the intention to adopt the particular site (Sledgianowski and Kulviwat, 2009). Also, users are more likely to become regular readers of a weblog if they are able to contribute comments. As such, it is safe to assume that the effectiveness of a weblog can be measured by the frequency of its comments and the level of interactivity among its users (Schuff et al., 2009).

Besides perceived ease of use and perceived interactivity, perceived trustworthiness is also another factor that influences the user's acceptance and adoption of a weblog. Yang and Lim (2009) defined the user's perceived trustworthiness for the weblog as a result of the expertise, professionalism and reliability exhibited by the source, all of which are able to influence one's level of confidence towards the communicator or information provider. Sledgianowski and Kulviwat (2009) stated that perceived trustworthiness has a significant effect on one's intention to use a particular site. A higher level of perceived trustworthiness towards a certain weblog would certainly encourage a user to accept and use it, and vice versa.

One method frequently used by bloggers to help build their users' perceived trust towards them is to include weblog features like blogroll and hyperlinks that link users to the other sections of the same weblog, or to various other websites. Murugesan (2007) defined "blogroll is a blogger's list of links to other weblogs or websites that he or she reads" (p. 35), whereas Rubin and Liddy (2006) explained hyperlinks as something that links the users

to bloggers' favorite sites when clicked on, stating that it can be used as a credibility assessment component. These features rapidly connect webpages and websites to and from one another, thus providing references for users (Wattal et al., 2009). To gain users' confidence, some corporate weblogs would provide a blogroll in the sidebar and include hyperlinks in the entries so that the users can link to other sites for more information or references (Agarwall and Liu, 2008). If the user's perceived trustworthiness in the weblog is raised, his or her intention to use it increases as well. Therefore, it is certain that the user's perceptions of trustworthiness of a weblog directly influences the user's intention to use the particular weblog.

All in all, before any form of technology can be perceived as effective, it has to be first accepted and used by users (Wattel et. al., 2009). Weblogs, too, must go through the same process, and this process is influenced by all the factors that have been discussed above. Therefore, a weblog that is widely accepted by society and is perceived effective should run on an efficient publishing software that allows its users to use it effortlessly and without needing specific technical skills. Not only that, it should allow comments to the blogger's entries, thus encouraging interaction with other users, and it should also permit the inclusion of links (in the form of blogroll and hyperlinks) to other weblogs or sites for weblog members who are looking for more information or references (Wattal et al., 2009).

In this study, the operational definition of customers' perceptions of effectiveness is based on the factors that significantly affect the user's intention

to use the social media sites, such as perceived ease of use, perceived interactivity, and perceived trustworthiness. The operational definition of AirAsia's weblog in this study, on the other hand, is based on its weblog features, such as weblog publishing software, comment system, and blogroll and hyperlinks.

To determine and describe the strength and directions of the relationship between the customers' perceptions of the effectiveness and AirAsia's weblog, and to figure out the relationship between customers' perceptions of effectiveness of ease of use and AirAsia's weblog publishing software; relationship between customers' perceptions of effectiveness of interactivity and AirAsia's weblog comment system; and relationship between customers' perceptions of effectiveness of trustworthiness and AirAsia's weblog blogroll and hyperlink, the Spearman correlation analysis method was used.

1.2 Problem Statement

Social networks are becoming increasingly popular, and many companies, groups, organisations, and customers are beginning to look into investing in social networking. They understand that in this modern technological era, people want to be able to reach the companies that they purchase their products or services from in order to connect with the people behind those companies. Social media applications are capable of fulfilling these needs. Thus, people nowadays are increasingly turning to social media to

discuss and collect further information about products or services that they are interested in (Breakenridge, 2008), and in many cases, make their purchase decision by relying on these online opinions (Mack et al., 2007).

Knowing that and wishing to enhance corporate relationship with their publics, a rising number of corporations have started to utilise weblogs as its corporate communication tool (Dye, 2007). However, many corporation weblogs petered out like a car out of gas, a clear indication that they had failed to use their weblogs effectively (Odden, 2008). Based on the above statement by Odden (2008), it is clear that not every corporation is capable of utilising weblogs effectively. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate if customers perceived the AirAsia's weblog as effective.

Many research studies about the acceptance of social media by corporations and publics have been done, but these researches were conducted in foreign countries. Some of the researchers who have conducted such studies include Ilhator (Communication style in the information age, 2001) and Mack et al. (Believe it or not: Credibility of blogs in tourism, 2007), who both did their research in the United States of America, and Ojala (Blogging: For knowledge sharing, management and dissemination, 2005), who conducted his research in London. Sledgianowski and Kulviwat, too, have carried out similar researches in New York (Using Social Network Sites: The Effects Of Playfulness, Critical Mass And Trust In A Hedonic Context, 2009), whereas Schmallegger and Carson focused their research in Australia (Blogs in tourism: Changing approaches to information exchange, 2008). However, as was

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mentioned earlier; different users in different nations will view computers and the Internet differently (Li and Kirkup, 2007). As such, it is necessary to conduct a research to determine customers' perceptions of effectiveness of AirAsia's weblog in a Malaysian context.

1.3 Significance of Study

Social media applications are a recent computer-mediated communication (CMC) technology that have the ability to enroll new members at an astonishing rate (Wright, 1998, 2001), and the use of social media is often the easiest way to connect with others who have common interests (Dye, 2007). For these reasons, social media applications are being widely used by the society. Among the various social media applications, weblogs, forums, Facebook, Myspace, and Twitter are the most useful and effective tools when a social media user wishes to discuss or review other people's opinions or comments (Dye, 2007). Thackeray, et al. (2008) suggested that the weblog, in particular, is a powerful tool for collecting valuable feedback, strengthening corporations' business relationship with their publics, and for holding discussions (Dye, 2007). As an increasing number of corporations begin to utilise the weblog as a corporate communication tool, corporations will need a guideline to help them use weblogs effectively. This study will be able to provide that guideline.

That aside, the findings of this study can also provide an insight into the social media users' perceptions of the Internet and its technology, as well as its

use in the Malaysian context. Through the study, corporations will have a better understanding of a Malaysian customer's opinion of weblogs. In addition to that, this study will be able to determine the customers' perceptions of effectiveness of weblogs in public interaction as well. Lastly, the study can be used as a foundation for future studies on customers' perceptions of the effectiveness of corporate weblogs in a Malaysian context.

1.4 Research Objectives

This research aims to study customers' perceptions of the effectiveness of AirAsia's weblog and the research objectives are:

RO1: To examine customers' perceptions of ease of use of AirAsia's weblog publishing software.

RO2: To examine customers' perceptions of interactivity of AirAsia's weblog comment system.

RO3: To examine customers' perceptions of trustworthiness of AirAsia's weblog blogroll and hyperlinks.

1.5 Research Hypotheses

Associated hypotheses of the current research study are as proposed:

H1: Customers' perceptions of ease of use has a significant positive relationship on the effectiveness of AirAsia's weblog publishing software.

H2: Customers' perceptions of interactivity has a significant positive relationship on the effectiveness of AirAsia's weblog comment system.

H3: Customers' perceptions of trustworthiness has a significant positive relationship on the effectiveness of AirAsia's weblog blogroll and hyperlinks.

1.6 Operational Definitions

1. **Blogroll –** "is a blogger's list of links to other weblogs or websites that he or she reads" (Murugesan, 2007, p. 35).

2. **Comment System –** "any reader can place a comment on a blog post and these comments are instantly available on the Web" (Murugesan, 2007, p. 35).

3. **Hyperlink –** "is another blog feature that links to a blogger's favorite sites, and can be used as a credibility assessment component" (Rubin & Liddy, 2006, p. 2).

4. **Perceived Ease of Use -** "the extent to which a person believes that using a technology will be free of effort" (Sledgianowski and Kulviwat, 2009, p. 77).

5. **Perceived Interactivity -** "the ability to interact with people who have similar viewpoints, share information, discuss, and contribute information" (Breakenridge, 2008, p. 190).

6. **Perceived Trustworthiness -** "the result of the expertise, professionalism, and credibility shown by the source, and is believed to influence the perceptions of one's credibility about the communicator" (Yang and Lim, 1998, p. 346).

7. **Permalink –** "links to a permanent copy of the entry stored elsewhere on the weblog" (Herring, et al., 2004, p.8).

8. **Social Media** - "anything that uses the Internet to facilitate conversation between people, and it encompasses all the online technologies that people collaborate on, including their opinions, experiences, as well as sharing different perspectives" (Breakenridge, 2008, p.xvii and p. 71); "content that is created, shared, and commented on by a broader community of users" (Gallaugher, 2009, p. 4).

9. **Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) –** "an information system theory that explains how users come to accept a particular technology, their attitude, and usage behavior" (David et al., 1989, p.982).

10. **Web 2.0 –** "a new Internet platform that allows users to build personalised content through participation and sharing" (Wu et al.,

2008, p. 1477); "a term broadly referring to Internet services that foster collaboration and information sharing" (Gallaugher, 2009, p. 4).

11. **Weblog -** "one of the social media applications" (Breakenridge, 2008, p. 71); "a new information technology that can be used to create and maintain relationship with customers, build corporate brand, provide product information, maintain positive communication, enhance corporate visibility, and build a positive corporate image" (Strother et al., 2008, p. 1); "is essentially a diary of personal reflections that is shared on the WWW by the author" (Wattal et al., 2009, p. 2).

12. **Weblog Publishing Software –** "a single form box field into which bloggers typed whatever they wanted" (Blood, 2004, p. 54).

1.7 Organisation of Study

This current study contains five chapters, and the summary for each chapter is described as follows:

Chapter One begins by outlining the introduction of the current study. This chapter consists of the background of the study, the problem statement, the significance of the study, the research objectives, the research hypothesis, the operational definitions, and the organisation of study.

Chapter Two discusses and defines the customers' perceptions of the effectiveness for the current study. In defining the above subjects, this chapter touches on the issue of customers' assessment of the effectiveness of perceived ease of use, perceived interactivity, and perceived trustworthiness as well. This chapter also briefly addresses the subject of Web 2.0 social media, weblog and weblog features, as well as AirAsia's weblog. The weblog features such as weblog publishing software, the comment system, and the blogroll and hyperlinks, are discussed in relation to AirAsia's weblog.

Chapter Three presents the research methodology and procedures of the current study. This chapter provides a comprehensive understanding of the vital details of the research, such as the research variables, the population and sampling method, the procedures, the questionnaire design and measurements, the data analysis procedures, the validity and reliability test for the pilot test, as well as the pilot test data analysis of the study. This chapter also includes a brief section on research ethics.

Chapter Four, on the other hand, records the results obtained from the statistical computation and analysis of the data collected. This chapter includes the analysis and discussion of the demographic profile of the research respondents, and a reliability test for each of the variables. It also touches on the hypothesis testing of the relationship between perceived ease of use and AirAsia's weblog publishing software, the relationship between perceived interactivity and AirAsia's weblog comment system, as well as the relationship

between perceived trustworthiness and AirAsia's weblog blogroll and hyperlinks.

Chapter Five wraps up with discussions and conclusions of the findings and the implications of the study. Research limitations and recommendations for future studies are also mentioned in this chapter.

Finally, references and appendices are included at the end of the dissertation.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this literature review, previous studies done on users' perceptions of the effectiveness of weblog are discussed. For the purpose of this study, the customers' perceptions of effectiveness is operationally defined as perceived ease of use, interactivity and trustworthiness. AirAsia's weblog, on the other hand, is operationally defined as the weblog publishing software, the comment system, and the blogroll and hyperlinks. Further elaboration on this definition, as well as explanation for the terms 'Web 2.0 social media', 'weblog and weblog features' are also be provided in this literature review. Additionally, this literature review elaborates on and discusses the customers' perceptions of the effectiveness of perceived ease of use, perceived interactivity, and perceived trustworthiness.

2.1 Customer Perceptions

According to Koontz (2001), customer is the actual or prospective purchaser of products or services. In other words, customer is a person who buys goods or services produced by another person or company. Assael (1998) further defines customers' perceptions as the selection, organisation, and interpretation of marketing and environmental stimuli into a coherent picture, while Goldstein (2010) defined perceptions is a conscious sensory experience. Harell (1986; cited by Foxall et al., 2002) further explained customers'

perceptions as the process of recognising, selecting, organising and interpreting stimuli in order to make sense of the world around us. Foxall et al. further add that the perceptions of a weblog depends in part on the stimuli that are given meaning by the customer while different perceptions of a weblog can account for different attitudes and behaviors toward it.

According to the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), a user's perceptions of a particular technology will influence or affect that user's acceptance of that technology as well as their intention of using it. TAM explains that one's behavior and the intent to behave is a function of one's attitude toward the behavior and their perceptions about the behavior. Sledgianowski and Kulviwat (2009) further explain that the user's computer usage behavior and computer usage is affected by behavioral intentions, beliefs, and attitude of the end-user. In the social media applications context, the user's perceptions are an influential factor in the successful adoption of the technology and the user's acceptance of the weblog. The way the user uses the weblog is determined ultimately by his or her perceptions of a weblog (Lui et al., 2006). However, Lui et al. add that before any value can be gotten out of a weblog, the user must first participate in the weblog. In other words, the acceptance, adoption, and intended usage of a particular weblog depends on the user's perceptions towards it. However, before the user gets the full value out of the weblog and perceives it as effective he or she must participate in the weblog.

O'Malley and McCraw (1999) mention that a particular technology or system will only be adopted, accepted, and perceived as effective if the user perceives that the technology or system is able to enhance his or her job performance and is easy to use. O'Malley and McCraw further indicated that the perceived effectiveness of a technology or system is dependent on the perceived characteristics of the technology. The user's perceptions of a particular technology's usefulness and its ease of use is determined by the user's acceptance and intention to use it (Davis, 1989). Both perceptions have a fundamental effect on a user's initial trust, and a user's perceptions will directly affect his or her intention to use the technology. Consequently, the user must use or participate in a particular weblog before they perceive it as effective. The user's acceptance, adoption, and intention to use the weblog is affected by whether the user perceives the weblog to be easy to use as well as useful in enhancing his or her job performance.

Besides TAM, studies by other researchers like Wattal et al. (2009), Davis (1989), Breakenridge (2008), Mack et al. (2008), Mah (2009), as well as Schmallegger and Carson (2008) on users' perceptions of the social media application (weblog) and users' usage behavior and users' usage intention are also taken into account in this study. Gangadharbatla (2009) also found out that information technologies that were perceived as easy to use were strong determinants of the user's intention to use that technology. Hence, the customers' perceptions of ease of use, interactivity and trustworthiness are used to define the customers' perceptions of the effectiveness for this current study.

2.2 Definition of Effectiveness

As mentioned earlier, before the user gets any value out of a weblog and perceive it as effective, the user must participate or get involved in that particular weblog (Lui et al., 2006). According to Wattal et al. (2009), "the use and acceptance of a weblog are often spread through a group of highly interested individuals who introduce the technology within their social networks" (p. 2). As the weblog is perceived to be easy to use and learn (Wattal et al), it is widely adopted and accepted by society (Ilhator, 2001). Adoption is defined as the decision to make full use of an innovation as the best course of action available. If technologies like the weblog are adopted and accepted by society, their effectiveness will be influenced (Wattal et al., 2009).

Although weblogs are widely adopted and accepted by the society, it is impossible to suggest that every corporate weblog is adopted, accepted, and used by the society (Odden, 2008). Odden further explained that one of the most common reasons for the corporate weblog not being adopted, accepted, and used is its lack of content or postings; the corporation lacks participation in the conversations within the blogging community. In other words, the lack of contents and regular updates on the corporate weblog would be seen as lacking in participation and interaction with its users, and therefore the weblog will not be adopted, accepted and used by users.

Holtz (2006) indicated that Internet web-based tools (such as social media applications) have been proven as effective because they allow people to

publish, interact and collaborate easily, and are also perceived as technologies that are easy to use. Davis (1989) also stated that the ease of use of a particular technology is a strong determinant of an individual's usage and acceptance of it. The easier a system is, the greater the user's sense of efficacy (Bandura, 1982; cited by David et al., 1989) regarding his or her ability to carry out the sequences of behavior needed to operate the system.

Based on the findings and analyses of researchers like Bandura (1982), Lepper (1985), David et al. (1989), Schmallegger and Carson (2008), Scott (2007), Gangadharbatla (2009), and Sledgianowski and Kulviwat (2009), one of the factors that influences users' intention to use and accept a particular weblog is the perceptions that it is easy and simple to use, effortless to learn, and where the software operation steps are easy to remember.

In addition, Schmallegger and Carson (2008) also suggested that the weblog has burst onto the content scene because the social media software is an easy, simple, and efficient way to get personal opinions out into the market. With the weblog publishing software being easy to use, anyone can easily learn how to use the software, upload entries (or posts), or comment on a particular entry easily (Scott, 2007). TAM also identifies that the user may use a particular technology if he or she perceives it as easy to use and simple to manipulate (Davis, 1989). The findings of the researches that have been done by David et al. (1989) and Sledgianowski and Kulviwat (2009) also showed that "perceived ease of use has a significant positive effect on users' intention

to use a technology" (p. 79). Therefore, the weblog is perceived as effective if users perceive it as easy to use.

According to Holtz (2006), the weblog gives users a voice to express their opinions and communicate with many other users who share a common interest. Nardi et al. (2004) claimed that the weblog not only supports rich information but is also rated highly in interactivity. Weblogs typically "encourage two-way interaction through feedback mechanisms" (Schuff et al., 2009, p. 5), and the two-way interactive characteristic of the Internet is an important characteristic of Web 2.0 social media that facilitates the appearance of new forms in closely connected social world (Chen, 2009). Although interactivity is an important feature of the new media technology, Markus (1987; cited by Ilie et al., 2005) stated that the concept of critical mass is also very important in the context of interactive communication media. In the context of social media, critical mass is the point where enough users have adopted an innovation, and the adopters perceive the site as having a significant number of members with common interest that they can associate with (Sledgionowski and Kulviwat, 2009). Both researchers further added that if a current or potential user of the social media perceives that there are not enough active members who users can associate or interact with, the perceived critical mass has not been achieved, and as such, perceived interactivity of the site has not been achieved either.

Moreover, Sundar et al., (2003) stated that interactivity is measured using the number of functional features that are included in the particular

website or weblog, such as a feedback system and audio or video downloads. Most weblogs contain primarily textual information, although uploaded audio and video titles have become more popular due to increasing bandwidth and download capacities (Schmallegger and Carson, 2007). However, the most obvious form of the weblog in tourism appears to be travellers sharing personal travel stories and online recommendations in the form of diaries or product reviews. The features of the weblog enable the users to share experiences and communicate with others who have common interests, and giving feedback has become one of the needs of users in the tourism industry today. Therefore, if the corporation weblog is to be perceived as interactive amongst users, it should cater to this need.

Breakenridge (2007) further added that the customers nowadays want to communicate directly or interact with the corporation and other users, get to its brand and services or product information, and ask questions regarding its products or services. According to Schmallegger and Carson (2008), there are various forms and appearances of tourism weblogs today. However, in its broadest definition, tourism weblogs provide commentary and personal thoughts on a particular subject (such as a specific trip to a destination). Schmallegger and Carson added that "tourism weblogs intend to be interactive in nature and allow readers to post their comments" (p. 101). The user is not only able to read others' travel experiences, but also allowed to express or voice their opinions, discuss, and communicate with others in the tourism weblog. An effective weblog relies on two-way symmetrical communication that involves utilising organisation-public dialogue, bringing mutual betterment

for both parties (Yang and Lim, 2009). The process of ongoing interactions with others, bloggers and their audiences allows for the ability to share and discuss the ideas and perspectives of the various parties freely, thereby increasing the interactivity function of the weblog at the same time.

However, not every weblog enables interactivity amongst users (Yang and Lim, 2009). Yang and Lim pointed out that there are weblogs that seldom have updates, posts, features pretentious stories, or lacks active users to participate in the conversations. This has resulted in less interactivity, and the weblogs were less accepted, less adopted and not often used by users. Most corporations are not aware of how effective the feedback and interaction will be for its weblog and do not provide the comment system on its weblog. This is one of the reasons why some business weblogs fail (Odden, 2008). Gaining feedback and comments are a big part of weblogs, and it creates a communication channel between readers and the corporation (Odden), with the interactivity facility being a key factor that is fostered by the process of ongoing interactions with others in the weblog (Yang and Lim, 2009). Therefore, the weblog will be accepted by the user if he or she perceives that it is interactive, has enough users they can associate or interact with, allows users to post comments or opinions easily, provides instant feedback, and allows for suggestions to be given freely.

Besides perceived ease of use and perceived interactivity, Yang and Lim (2009) declared that effectiveness is also defined as the trustworthiness of the weblog. Yang and Lim added that trust is important to organisational life in

every situation. Previous researchers such as Nicholson et al. (2001) defined "trust as confidence in the other party's reliability and integrity" (p. 4). Shankar, Urban, and Sultan (2002) further stated that there are two types of trust exist, which are offline trust that involves the offline activities of the organization (such as direct sales, and other communication) and its relationships with its customers, and online trust that involves the organization's business activities in the electronic medium, and in particular, its website. Authors further added although online trust is similar to offline trust in many ways, there are some important distinctions. In offline trust, the object of trust is typically a human or an entity (organization); whereas in online trust, the technology (mainly in Internet) itself is a proper object of trust (Marcella, 1999). However there are some degrees of commonality of trust elements between the online and offline environment and these areas of commonality may include product quality and organization reputation (Shankar, et al., 2002).

According to Mark et al. (2008), the usefulness of the weblog as a marketing communication channel depends on how the customers perceive and trust its online sources. The trustworthiness of the blogger is no different from the trustworthiness of the source because a blogger is ultimately the source of a message in the weblog context (Yang and Lim, 2009). Perceived trustworthiness of the weblog is a result of the expertise, professionalism, and trustworthiness of the source, and it is believed to influence the perceptions of one's trust about the communicator. Sledgianowski and Kulviwat (2009) also stated that perceived trustworthiness is the perceptions that a third-party can

rely upon with confidence to perform their role responsibilities in a fiduciary manner. Researchers like Burhoom and Hale (1984; cited by Yang and Lim, 2009) identified one's trustworthiness as based on "one's belief in another's honesty, sincerity, beneficence and so forth" (p. 347). Thus, a user's perceptions of trustworthiness in weblogs refers to the user's perceptions towards the trustworthiness of weblogs' information sources.

Perceived trustworthiness refers to the user's perceptions of bloggers (the information providers) as being honest, responsible, professional, understanding, and concerned about their users. These factors are important when assessing future relationships between blogger and users. According to Yang and Lim (2009), there are four dimensions of trust in the corporate weblog: competence, dependability, integrity, and transparency. Competence refers to the ability of a party to perform his or her duties and obligations with capability (Huang, 2001), and it includes characteristics such as professional conduct or expertise (Butler, 1991; Gabarro, 1978; Mishra, 1996; cited by Yang and Lim, 2009; White, 2005). A second dimension of trust is dependability and refers to a relational partner's reliability based on predictability, consistency, or responsibility in action and words (Gabarro, 1978; Mishra, 1996; Schlenker et al., 1973; cited by Yang and Lim, 2009). Integrity, on the other hand, refers to the blogger's characteristics of concern, care, or understanding of their relational partners (Yang and Lim, 2009). The final dimension of trust is transparency, and it refers to a relational partner's perceived willingness to share ideas and information freely, frankly, and honestly (Butler, 1991; Gabarro, 1978; Mishra, 1996; cited by Yang and Lim,

2009). According to Yang and Lim (2009), each of the four dimensions of trust is useful in assessing the users' trust in a particular weblog. For example, the dependability of a weblog cannot be achieved without regular updates, continued trust in the information provided, sincere responses to its inquiries, and consistency or responsibility in the blogger's act and words. Yang and Lim (2009) further declared that the integrity of a blogger's motivation (the blogger's characteristics of concern, care, or understanding) is an important attribute that gives rise to the trust among weblog visitors. Transparency is also an important dimension as weblog visitors generally want to engage in direct and candid or honest communication with the organisations (Scoble and Israel, 2006; cited by Yang and Lim, 2009). Therefore, the weblog is perceived as trustworthy if the user perceives it as honest (transparency), responsible (dependability), professional (competence), understanding and concerned for its users (integrity).

Chiou (2004) also found out that the customers' perceived trustworthiness of an Internet service provider has a significant direct effect on their intention to use and remain loyal to the service. Therefore, perceived trustworthiness in a weblog is the provider's ability in performing their fiduciary responsibility to influence users   to use the particular site (Sledgionowski and Kulviwat, 2009) and in creating members' loyalty in using the services of the particular weblog. Sledgionowski and Kulviwat (2009) also found out that the greater the trust in a social media site, the greater the direct effect on the intent to use the weblog. In other words, the user will adopt, accept, and use a particular weblog if he or she perceives it as trustworthy.

In line with the review above, there are three main factors that have a significant positive effect on the user's intention to use the weblog: perceived ease of use (the user believes that using a technology will be effortless), perceived interactivity (the user perceives the site has a significant number of members that they can associate or interact with), and perceived trustworthiness (the user perceives that the information provider is trustworthy). As perceived ease of use, perceived interactivity, and perceived trustworthiness have a significant influence on the user's decision to adopt, accept, and use a weblog, they are accepted as the operational definition of effectiveness for this study.

2.3 Web 2.0 Social Media

Previously, Internet websites (Web 1.0) only allowed one-way communication through static web pages in a sense, websites publishers communicated with users as if they were lecturing the users of the website. Now, Web 2.0 allows for sharing, linking, collaborating, and including user-generated content, with users engaging collectively in a conversation that leads to the generation of online content-collective intelligence (Thackeray et al., 2008). According to Murugesan (2007), "Web 2.0 is the second phase in the Web's evolution" (p. 34) and O'Reilly (2007), who first introduced the concept of Web 2.0, defined it as a network platform, spanning all connected devices. Murugesan (2007) also indicated that "Web 2.0 harnesses the Web in a more interactive and collaborative manner, emphasising peers' social interaction and

collective intelligence, and presenting new opportunities to leverage the Web and engage its users more effectively and easily" (p. 34).

According to Gallaugher (2009), the term Web 2.0 is often applied to websites or Internet services that foster social media or other sorts of peer productions. Web-based efforts that foster peer productions are often referred to as social media (Gallaugher); social media is anything that uses the Internet to facilitate conversations between people. It encompasses all online technologies people collaborate on: this includes their opinions and experiences, as well as the sharing of different perspectives (Breakenride, 2007). It also provides users with the technology to both produce and distribute information. These technologies allow for collaborative writing, content sharing, social networking, social bookmarking, and syndication (Dawson, 2007; O'Reilly, 2005; Smart, 2006; cited by Thackeray et al., 2008). Social media is about listening and, in turn, engaging people on their level (Breakenride, 2007). Sledgianowski and Kulviwat (2009) declared that it enables computer-mediated communication between people with common interests. Social media provides members with an easily used and convenient medium for communicating with others (Urista et al., 2007), and this new information technology has altered the corporate relationship between the corporation and their internal and external publics (Ilhator, 2001). Dye (2007) further pointed out that social media has created a new generation of individuals whose identities are defined by their connections and the content they produce online.

The needs and wants of individual users can be fulfilled constantly and instantaneously (Urista et al., 2007). Urista et al. added that before Web 2.0 and social media came in, people used a combination of face-to-face human interaction as well as mass media such as television, radio, and movie to fulfill their needs and wants. Often, these gratifications were delayed due to factors which include inaccessibility, unresponsiveness, programming and scheduling. Urista et al. further indicated that the distinction between the usage of media in the past and what is seen today with the advent of social media is distinct mainly due to the fact that they empower individuals to play an active role in sending messages to others through social networks. This active role by the users is revolutionary and it changes the traditional model of mass media effects.

In the new model, individuals can be instantly gratified by their use of social media applications through both mediated social contact and through selective and on-demand access to other media content provided as part of social media applications' service. The Uses and Gratification Theory (U&G), a mass media theory that views the members of the audience as actively utilising media contents rather than being passively acted upon by the media, also identifies that media users are goal-directed and seek out media and information or message that can satisfy their needs (Johnson and Kaye, 2003). The Web 2.0 social media allows users to interact with corporations instantly to get information and to share their opinions and experiences. Thus, in the Internet environment, users are more actively engaged in the communication compared to other traditional media (Weiser, 2000).

Web 2.0 social media applications includes a large number of tools used for online communication, such as instant messaging (e.g. MSN Messenger, Yahoo Messenger), text chat (e.g. Internet Relay Chat), Internet forums, weblogs, Wikis (e.g. Wikipedia), social network services (Facebook), social guides, social bookmarking, social citations, social libraries, and virtual worlds (Breakenride, 2007; Carmer, 2009; Warr, 2008). Among various types of social media applications, Strother et al. (2009) declared that "the weblog is one of the most dynamic and fastest growing personal communication vehicles on the Internet" (p. 1), with an increasing number of corporations using weblogs as new communication tools to reach out to their publics. Since more and more corporations are using weblog to reach and interact with their customers, especially in the tourism industry, this study focuses on understanding customers' perceptions of the effectiveness of AirAsia's weblog.

2.3.1 Weblog and Weblog Features

According to Wattal et al. (2009), a "weblog is essentially a diary of personal reflections that is shared on World Wide Web (WWW) by the author" (p. 2) and is one of the numerous social media programs or applications (Breakenride, 2007). Cross (2002; cited by Urista et al., 2007) also defined the weblog as a site with dated entries that its editors visit regularly. It is a simple personal webpage in a journal format which uses weblog publishing software that automatically puts new entries at the top of the page and shifts the old entries into archives after a specified time or when the number of posts becomes too large for convenient scrolling (Quiggin, 2006). Furthermore, it is

an online journal which is written in a conversational style and encourages interaction and online discussion, similar to early online communities of the Internet that allow users to leave and share their comments or opinions with others (Scammell, 2006).

A weblog is almost always written by one person who wants to communicate with the world, share their experiences, and interact with others who share a common interest (Scott, 2009). Many weblogs are posted by individuals and relate to areas of personal concern (Strother et al., 2008). However, there are some group weblogs (where the posts or entries are uploaded by several people) and even corporate weblogs that are written by a department or an entire company (without individual personalities at all). AirAsia's weblog is one of the group weblogs with entries that are written by both its staff and customers.

According to Murugesan (2007), weblog entries (also known as posts) are made in journal style and are usually displayed in reverse chronological order. This ensures that the viewer of the weblog is exposed to the most recent post, which is the most current information that the corporation wishes to deliver (Schmidt, 2007). An entry might contain texts, images, or links to other weblogs or webpages, as well as other media related to its topic (Murugesan, 2007). Nardi et al. (2004) noted that "blog posts are primarily textual, but they may contain photos or other multimedia content" (p. 222) as well, such as audio and video. It serves as a timely mechanism to disseminate news about products and services, and interact directly with potential customers

(Scammell, 2006), enabling users to be exposed to the latest entry and comment.

In the late 1990s, several companies released software designed for automatic weblog publishing, thus making weblogs easy to use. It quickly became the most widely used blogging tool (Blood, 2004) and has been developed to make blogging much easier and more widely accessible and effective (Nardi et al., 2004). Blood (2004) added that the automated weblog publishing software is a process that is simple to use and any web generalist could do it by hand: the bloggers are able to type whatever they want into the single box field and do not require any knowledge of HTML. It can be used by almost everyone as the publishing software enables faster and easier content modification that does not require technical knowledge (Herring et al., 2004). Agarwall and Liu (2008) also mentioned that a weblog lets users generate contents easily, and bloggers would not need to worry about the low level programming details therefore able to focus instead on the content. The number of bloggers and popularity of weblogs that continue to increase are also due to the fact that the weblog publishing software is easy and effortless to use (Herring et al., 2004). Therefore, through the weblog publishing software that does not require any technical or technological knowledge and skills, the blogger is able to publish or upload entries easily.

Cross (2002; cited by Urista, Dong, and Day, 2007) also noted that weblogs can be used to communicate with a wide array of groups including the general public, friends, and family. Many users are using weblogs to project

their thoughts and feelings on a huge array of topics. According to Herring, et al. (2004), the weblog is frequently characterised as socially interactive and community-like in nature, and it allows readers to post comments to individual entries, giving rise to "conversational" exchanges on the weblog itself. Schmidt (2007) further indicated that the user is also allowed to comment on any of the individual posts found on the weblog. These posts are identified by a unique URL which can be used by the author or blogger to respond to the comments that are left by users. After the users post their comments on the entry these comments will be instantly available on the web. As such, the users and the bloggers are able to interact instantly through the comment system (Murugesan, 2007). It becomes an advantage of the weblog which combines the immediacy of up-to-the-minute posts and feedback (Wattal et al., 2009). The weblog is a powerful tool for collecting valuable feedback and strengthening the corporate relationship with the publics or users, as well as for sharing comments and interacting among users (Strother et al., 2008).

Furthermore the permalink feature also provides users with easy access to a wide range of opinions on a topic; without permalinks, users would not be able to point to discussions and interact with others on specific topics easily and reliably (Tepper, 2003). Tepper (2003) added that the permalink is a link that is attached to an entry on the publication, as well as categories and other lists of weblog postings that always bring the users to that entry. Permalinks give each weblog entry a permanent location by assigning a distinct URL to it (Blood, 2004), and also allow the distribution of conversation and interaction (Marlow, 2004). Researchers like Efimova and Fiedler (2004) also noted that a

weblog usually allows users "to add comments or link back to a particular entry by using its permalink" (p. 2). It points directly to a particular entry and comment which enables users to provide feedback on that entry, thereby ensuring the continuation of interaction among the users who participated in that particular entry (Brady, 2005). Marlow (2004) added that the weblog comment system serves as a simple and effective way for bloggers and users to leave comments to interact with each other. Therefore, the comment system is an important feature in creating a real-time two-way interaction among users.

In additions, a weblog allows the blogger to link the entry to other weblogs and webpages (Rubin and Liddy, 2006). The list of links that link to other related weblogs or websites that the blogger reads or refers to is known as blogroll (Agarwall and Liu, 2008) and is included in the side bar of the weblog (Brady, 2005). Certain entries have an attached link to other weblogs or websites known as hyperlinks (Murugesan, 2007). Some weblogs include a link to a webpage to create some amount of trust (Agarwall and Liu, 2008), and a weblog's "blogroll" or "hyperlinks" to its blogger's favorite sites can also be used as a trustworthiness assessment component (Rubin and Liddy, 2006). Rubin and Liddy (2006) added that these features act as citations or references to relevant pages on the web and therefore serve as a "web of trust". Ali-Hasan and Adamic (2007) also indicated that a blogroll and hyperlinks act as information citations or references for readers by the blogger to demonstrate and establish information trustworthiness, and these links also contribute to the trustworthiness of the weblog (Agarwall and Liu, 2008). Furthermore, according to Kritikopoulos et al. (2006), the community or users of weblog can

be related by type or topic through the hyperlinks. These links are also used as suggestions or recommendations for users to obtain more information and as information references. Therefore, both the blogroll and hyperlinks are able to enhance the trustworthiness of the weblog.

2.3.2 AirAsia's Weblog

AirAsia Berhad is a Malaysian tourism company that utilises the Web 2.0 social media application (weblog) as one of its corporate communication tools to establish a corporate relationship between the company and its publics. AirAsia's weblog is a group weblog which is managed by its corporate staff in which the corporation dedicates a team to manage AirAsia's weblog. Moreover, AirAsia's weblog allows its users to upload their travel experience entries on its weblog to share travel information and interact with other users. This can be seen through the numerous updates and postings by AirAsia's staff, blog team, and even its customers and users.

AirAsia's weblog provides weblog publishing software for users to publish their travel experiences entry with, and it consists of a title box and a content box (figure 2.1). The title box is for the user to type the entry's title, and the content box is for the entry's content. The user is allowed to type whatever he or she wants without having to understand HTML. AirAsia's weblog publishing software consists of several multimedia options such as links, videos, and the ability to add images, which allow users to publish an entry with other multimedia contents such as videos and pictures.

Every entry on the AirAsia's weblog has two links known as the category link and the comment link (Figure 2.2). The category link is attached to a particular entry to determine the category the entry is posted in, thereby allowing the user to directly link to the specific entry through the categories list at the weblog sidebar. According to Tepper (2003), a link that is attached to a particular entry and categories lists, and brings the user to that entry is known as a permalink. It has been proven that AirAsia's weblog provides permalinks which allow its users to add comments or link back to a particular entry. Another link at the bottom of every entry is the comment link which allows the user to leave comments as well as read other users' comments. Through the categories list at the weblog's sidebar, as well as the categories link and comment link at the bottom of every entry, AirAsia's weblog provides a comment system that allows its users to interact with other social media users.

AirAsia's weblog not only provides permalinks and comment links, but also a list of links at the sidebar for its user to link to other webpages (such as AirAsia.com, AirAsia on Facebook, AirAsia on YouTube, AirAsia on Koolred, AirAsia on Wikipedia, and Job at AirAsia) (Figure 2.3). Agarwall and Liu (2008) explained that a list of links that allows its user to link to other weblogs or websites is known as a blogroll. Some entries provide a link for its user to link to other weblogs or websites (Figure 2.3), and Agarwall and Liu (2008) explained that this link is known as a hyperlink. AirAsia's weblog provides a blogroll and hyperlinks for its user to link to other websites to obtain more information.

In conclusion, AirAsia's weblog allows users to utilise its weblog publishing software that lets them publish other multimedia content, together with the textual content. Furthermore, a permalink and a comment system are attached to every entry on the weblog, which allows users to directly link to a specific entry and to leave comments and interact with other users. AirAsia's weblog also provides a blogroll in its sidebar and a hyperlink that is attached to the entry, allowing users to link to other weblogs or websites to obtain more information. This indicates that AirAsia's weblog consists of weblog publishing software, a comment system, and blogroll and hyperlinks as discussed earlier at the weblog and weblog features.

Figure 2.1 AirAsia's weblog publishing software
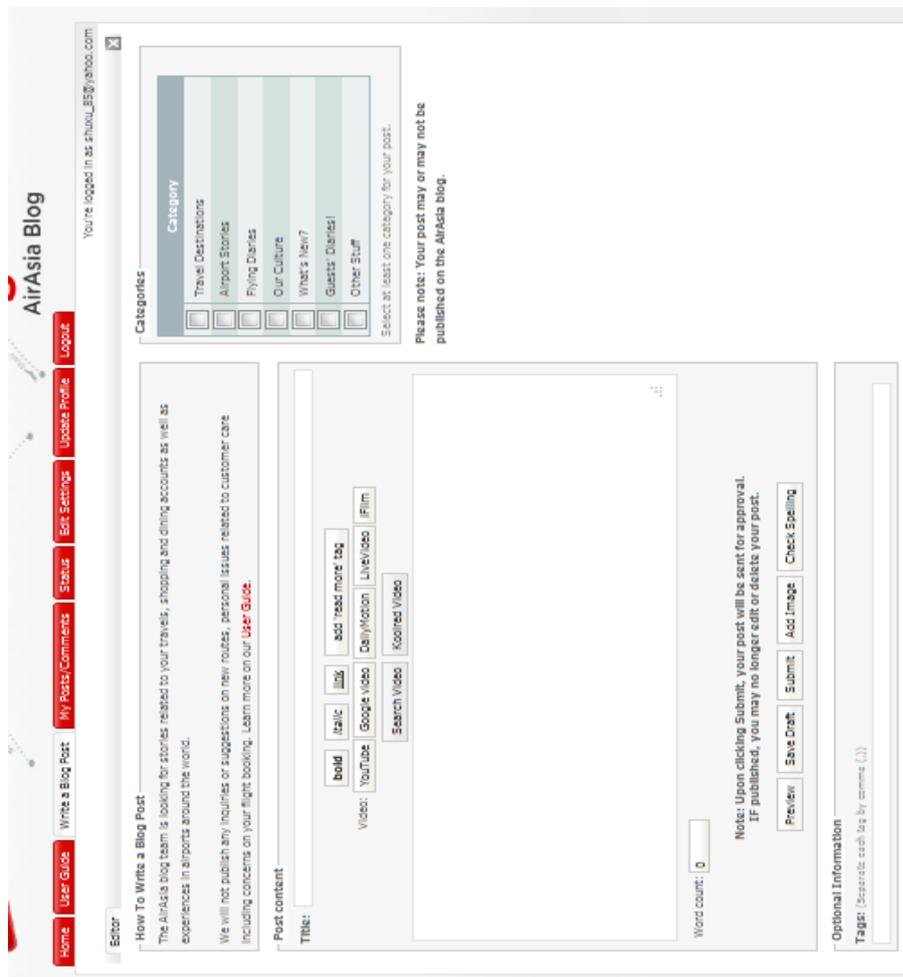
Figure 2.2 AirAsia's weblog permalink and comment system

Categories

All (1405)

Travel Destinations (244)

Airport Stories (99)

Flying Diaries (150)

Our Culture (145)

What's New? (256)

Guests' Diaries! (220)

Other Stuff (291)

Archives

July 2011 (2)

June 2011 (25)

May 2011 (9)

April 2011 (7)

March 2011 (9)

February 2011 (6)

January 2011 (6)

December 2010 (18)

November 2010 (10)

October 2010 (18)

September 2010 (14)

August 2010 (11)

More...

View other great blog entries here

Alright let's cut to the chase, what great prizes does Koolred have in store for us this time? The top five prizes include luxurious hotel stays at Pullman Putrajaya Lakeside, Hotel Istana Kuala Lumpur and Melia Kuala Lumpur Hotel in Malaysia. Oh and it doesn't stop there as there are Consolation Prizes to give away too: Take your stress away with free spa vouchers at the Sompoton Spa; have a feast with dining vouchers from Songket Restaurant and relax with free hot bed therapy sessions at Ecoparadise.

So don't miss out on your chance of earning yourself one of these amazing prizes in this simple contest!

Hurry now, contest ends on 28 June 2011. Good luck!

By Benette Lee

Tags: airasia, blog, contest, destination, food, koolred, malaysia, prize, thailand, win
Posted in Airport Stories | Leave a comment »

Figure 2.3 AirAsia's weblog blogroll and hyperlinks
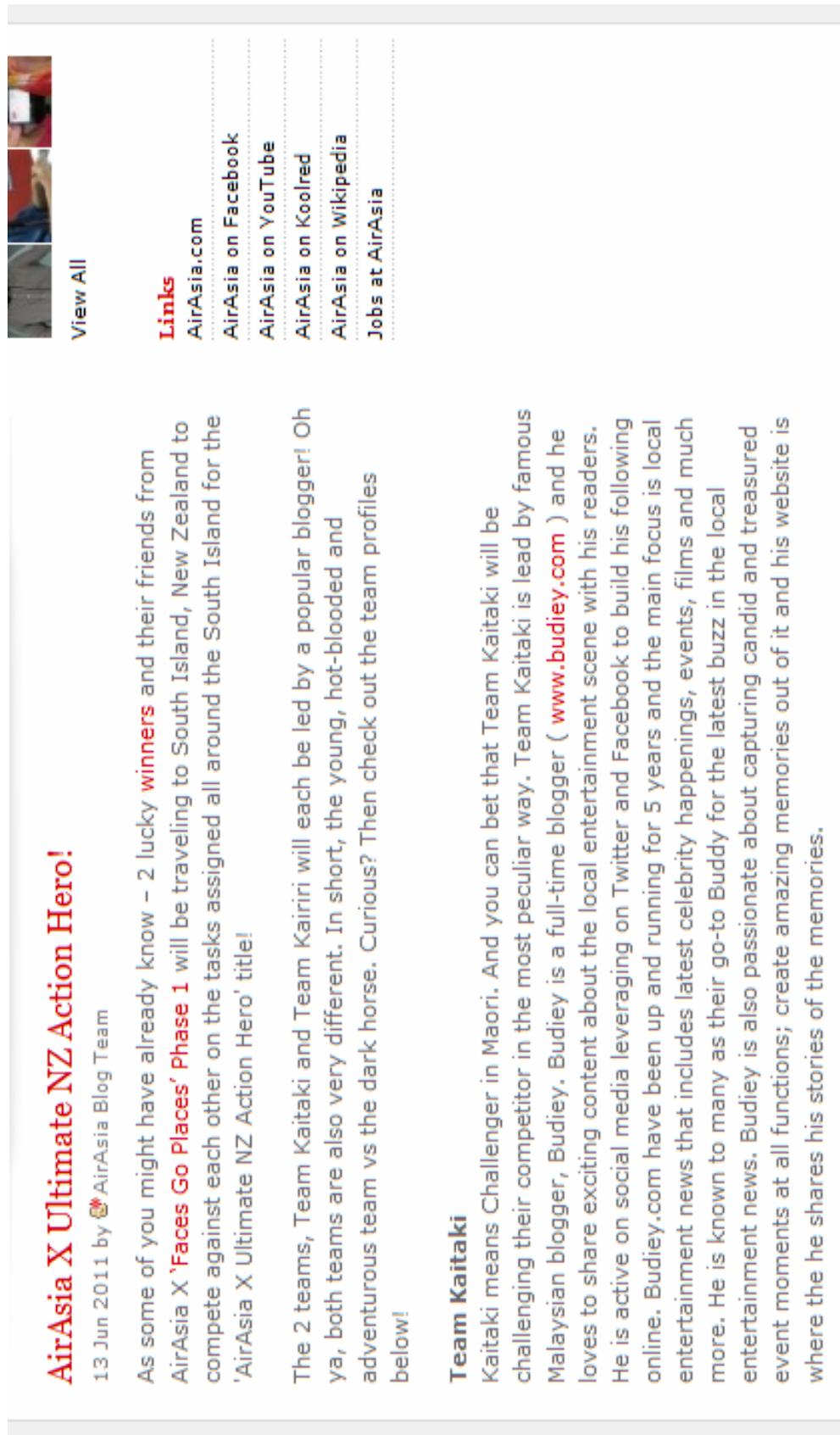
AirAsia X Ultimate NZ Action Hero!

13 Jun 2011 by AirAsia Blog Team

As some of you might have already know – 2 lucky winners and their friends from AirAsia X 'Faces Go Places' Phase 1 will be traveling to South Island, New Zealand to compete against each other on the tasks assigned all around the South Island for the 'AirAsia X Ultimate NZ Action Hero' title!

The 2 teams, Team Kaitaki and Team Kairiri will each be led by a popular blogger! Oh ya, both teams are also very different. In short, the young, hot-blooded and adventurous team vs the dark horse. Curious? Then check out the team profiles below!

Team Kaitaki

Kaitaki means Challenger in Maori. And you can bet that Team Kaitaki will be challenging their competitor in the most peculiar way. Team Kaitaki is lead by famous Malaysian blogger, Budiey. Budiey is a full-time blogger (www.budiey.com) and he loves to share exciting content about the local entertainment scene with his readers. He is active on social media leveraging on Twitter and Facebook to build his following online. Budiey.com have been up and running for 5 years and the main focus is local entertainment news that includes latest celebrity happenings, events, films and much more. He is known to many as their go-to Buddy for the latest buzz in the local entertainment news. Budiey is also passionate about capturing candid and treasured event moments at all functions; create amazing memories out of it and his website is where the he shares his stories of the memories.

View All

Links
AirAsia.com
AirAsia on Facebook
AirAsia on YouTube
AirAsia on Koolred
AirAsia on Wikipedia
Jobs at AirAsia

2.4 Chapter Summary

Customers' perceptions of a weblog depends, in part, on the stimuli given by the customers (Foxall et al., 2002), and customers' behavior towards the weblog is shaped by their perceptions (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). TAM also indicates that a user's computer usage behavior is influenced by the user's beliefs and their perceptions towards the technology. TAM further adds that if the user believes and perceives the particular technology as effortless to use and able to enhance his job performance, he will intend to use and adopt the particular technology. TAM is a model that explains how the user accepts the technology and is especially designed to explain the user's computer usage behavior, readily extending to any type of technology. Therefore, the TAM model is adopted for this study to understand if AirAsia's weblog's customers have accepted and adopted its weblog.

Also, as was mentioned earlier, the TAM model justifies a user's acceptance of computer technology based on the technology's perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness in enhancing his or her job performance. It bears mentioning that this study will only investigate the element of perceived ease of use as the focus of this research lies in examining the users' perceptions to AirAsia's weblog. Perceived usefulness of the weblog cannot be examined here because AirAsia's weblog is not useful to them in terms of enhancing his or her job performance. As such, the element of perceived usefulness in the TAM model is omitted from this study.

Previous studies (such as Bandura, 1982; Lepper, 1985; David et al., 1989; Schmallegger and Carson, 2008; Scott, 2007; Gangadharbatla, 2009; Jankowski and Hansen, 1996; Morris and Ogan, 1996; Sims, 1997; Ha and James, 1998; Sundar et al., 2003; Yang and Lim, 2009; Gefen et al., 2003; Chen and Rea, 2004; Mark et al., 2008; Huang, 2001; Gabarro, 1978; White, 2005; Schlenker et al., 1973; Chiou, 2004) found out that there are several factors that have a significant positive influence on user's acceptance, adoption and usage of a particular technology or site, which are perceived ease of use, perceived interactivity, and perceived trustworthiness. Thus, perceived ease of use, perceived interactivity and perceived trustworthiness are adopted as the operational definition for effectiveness in this study. Weblog features such as weblog publishing software, comment system, and blogroll and hyperlinks are adopted as the operational definition for AirAsia's weblog.

The weblog, among various types of other social media applications, is the fastest growing application used and adopted by society. One of the main reasons for its popularity is due to the publishing software used by the weblog. As weblog publishing software does not require any technical knowledge and skills, it allows the users to interact and share their experiences and opinions through the comment system. Not only that, it also enables users to link to other weblogs or websites from the weblog's blogroll and hyperlinks so that they can obtain more information.

The following chapter discusses the methodological procedures and approaches, and explains the measures taken for data gathering as well as data analysis.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter introduces and explains the dependent and independent variables of the current study. This chapter also provides an understanding of the research procedures, the questionnaire design and measurement, the statistical techniques, and the methods that were used in the study to find out about Malaysian customers' perceptions of the effectiveness of AirAsia's weblog. Customers' perceptions of the effectiveness is defined as perceived ease of use, perceived interactivity, and perceived trustworthiness. AirAsia's weblog, on the other hand, is defined based on the weblog's key features, such as the weblog publishing software, the comment system, and the blogroll and hyperlinks. Therefore, the research objectives for this study are as follow:

1. To examine customers' perceptions of ease of use of AirAsia's weblog publishing software.

2. To examine customers' perceptions of interactivity of AirAsia's weblog comment system.

3. To examine customers' perceptions of trustworthiness of AirAsia's weblog blogroll and hyperlinks.

The research questionnaire was designed to achieve all the research objectives stated above, consisting of seven sections to clarify and investigate different issues, which included research respondent's demographic profile, customers' perceptions of the effectiveness of perceived ease of use, perceived interactivity, perceived trustworthiness, AirAsia's weblog publishing software, AirAsia's weblog comment system, and AirAsia's weblog blogroll and hyperlink.

In this study, the quantitative approach was used to generate general results of customers' perceptions of the effectiveness of AirAsia's weblog. Non-probability sampling was chosen for the selection of research respondents as the samples of the study were gathered without employing the guidance of mathematical probability. Amongst the various types of non-probability sampling, this study used purposive sampling because the research sample that was chosen must meet certain characteristics and criteria, such as the respondent must be a Malaysian, a customer of AirAsia, as well as a user of AirAsia's social media.

Spearman correlation analysis method was used to determine and describe the strength and directions of the relationship between the customers' perceptions of the effectiveness and AirAsia's weblog, as well as to figure out the relationship between customers' perceptions of effectiveness of ease of use and AirAsia's weblog publishing software. It was also used to establish the relationship between customers' perceptions of the effectiveness of interactivity and AirAsia's weblog comment system, and the relationship

between customers' perceptions of trustworthiness and AirAsia's weblog blogroll and hyperlinks. The Spearman correlation method was chosen for the analysis of the findings of the study because Likert scales, also known as the ordinal scale, were used in the research questionnaires. The Spearman correlation method was specially designed for the analysis of ordinal scale data (Pallant, 2007), and therefore, it is the most appropriate analysis method to use in this research.

3.1 Research Variables

The independent variables in this study are the customers' perceptions of the effectiveness of perceived ease of use, perceived interactivity, and perceived trustworthiness. The dependent variables, on the other hand, are AirAsia's weblog publishing software, AirAsia's weblog comment system, and AirAsia's weblog blogroll and hyperlinks.

In order to determine if AirAsia's customers perceived its weblog as effective, a conceptual model has been developed. This conceptual model focuses on the customers' perceptions of *perceived ease of use* of *AirAsia's weblog publishing software*, *perceived interactivity* of its *comment system*, and *perceived trustworthiness* of its *blogroll and hyperlinks*. If AirAsia's customers' perceived ease of use of AirAsia's weblog publishing system, perceived interactivity of its comment system, and perceived trustworthiness of its blogroll and hyperlinks, then the study could consider AirAsia's weblog as effective.

Figure 3.1 Research Conceptual Model: Customers' Perceptions of Effectiveness of AirAsia's Weblog.
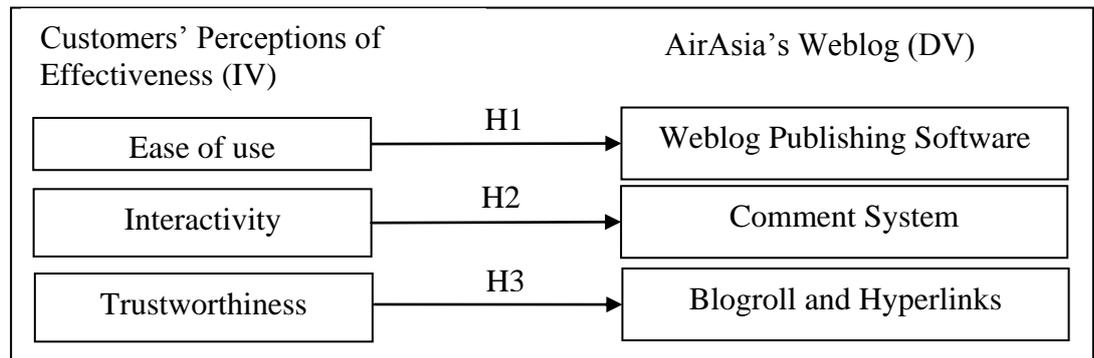
3.2 Population and Sampling Methodology

In order to achieve the research objectives of this study, the positivist approach (also known as quantitative approach) was used. According to Malhator (2001), the quantitative approach is able to generate general results of a sample's behavior, and since this current study seeks to determine the customers' perceived effectiveness of AirAsia's weblog, it is the most suitable approach to use. It can help to determine their perceptions of perceived ease of use in regards to AirAsia's weblog publishing software, perceived interactivity of AirAsia's weblog comment system, and perceived trustworthiness of AirAsia's weblog blogroll and hyperlinks.

This study also employed the non-probability sampling method to help determine the respondents required because this method is a sampling technique where the samples are gathered in a process that does not give all individuals in the population equal chances of being selected (Malhator, 2004). Wimmer and Dominick (2006) further explained that non-probability sampling is conducted without following the guidance of mathematical probability, and

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it has the disadvantage of not knowing if those included in the sample are representative of the overall population. However, the most crucial and defining characteristic of non-probability sampling, regardless of what form it takes, is that the choices of people or events included in the sample are not randomly selected. It is unnecessary to randomly select individuals in this type of sampling because manipulation and control are not the chief purposes of the exercise (Malhator, 2004). The researcher further adds it is also important to keep in mind that using the non-probability sampling method does not imply that the researcher will be completely oblivious to the sampling frame. It merely means that the researcher will not have enough information about the frame to conduct probability sampling.

Yet another matter of importance about non-probability sampling is the various types of method that the umbrella term encompasses. Some of the examples of non-probability sampling include available sample, volunteer sample, purposive sample, and quota sample. Purposive sampling was used for this study because the research sample chosen was selected for a specific purpose, namely the particular criteria that are relevant to the topic of the study, and that the selected sample frame must possess. According to Wimmer and Dominic (2006), "a purposive sample is a sample deliberately chosen to be the representation of a population, and it also includes subjects or elements selected for specific characteristics or qualities, eliminating those who fail to meet these criteria" (p. 91). As such, the selection of the sample of this study is criteria-based instead of being mathematically-guided.

The advantage of purposive sampling is that the sampling has been selected with a particular purpose in mind, and those who do not fulfill the criteria are already eliminated. As the sample of the study has already been carefully selected with purpose, the results collected are usually more accurate than those achieved with alternative forms of sampling. In this sense, purposive sampling might be more informative than other sampling methods (Wimmer and Dominic, 2003).

After having settled on the type of sampling method, it is only prudent to decide on the sample size. There are several approaches to help determine the accurate sample size, such as using a census for small populations, imitating a sample size of similar studies, using publishing table, and applying formulas to calculate a sample size (Israel, 1999). In the current study, the appropriate sample size of the study was determined by using the publishing table. According to Israel (1999), the publishing table provides the sample size for a given set of criteria, and it is reflected in the number of obtained responses, not the number of surveys mailed. Therefore, research questionnaires were continuously mailed out to research respondents by phases until the targeted sample size was collected.

Based on the number of subscribers found in the fan list of AirAsia's Facebook page in 2010, the size of the population for this research is noted to be a total of 2,000 Malaysian users. According to Yamane (1967; cited by Israel, 1999), if the size of population is 2,000, an appropriate sample size should be set at 333 to achieve the precision rate of $\pm 5\%$ (Table 3.1). This

current study has chosen to maintain the precision rate of $\pm 5\%$ as it is often regarded as sufficiently accurate.

Table 3.1. Sample size for ±3%, ±5%, ±7% and ±10% Precision Levels Where Confidence Level is 95% and P=.5. (Yamane, 1967; cited by Israel, 1999).

Size of population	Sample Size (n) for Precision (e) of:			
	±3%	±5%	±7%	±10%
900	A	277	166	90
1,000	A	286	169	91
2,000	714	**333**	185	95
3,000	811	353	191	97
4,000	870	364	194	98

a = Assumption of normal population is poor (Yamane, 1967). The entire population should be sampled.

A total of 865 questionnaires were emailed out to Malaysian subscribers of AirAsia's Facebook page. The recipients of the email were informed of the purpose of the questionnaire and were asked if they would be willing to participate in the survey. They were also assured that the survey will be used solely for academic purposes (Appendix A).

The first section of the questionnaire was prepared to help the researcher verify if the respondent has met with the three criteria required of a suitable respondent for the study, that is, the respondent must be Malaysian, an AirAsia customer, and a user of AirAsia's weblog. The collected data was only analysed if the respondent has fulfilled the above mentioned criteria.

To summarise, Malaysian subscribers of AirAsia's Facebook were purposively selected as the research sampling because they are the actual individuals who will utilise its social media to interact with each other and the

corporation. This group was also selected because the respondents can only be contacted through Facebook and its message feature.

3.3 Research Procedures

In the current study, the subscribers of AirAsia's Facebook page were purposively selected as the research sample. Questionnaires were only emailed to research respondents who met with the necessary criteria. In order to collect the 333 responses required, the questionnaires were emailed in phases. In the first phase, research questionnaires were emailed to the first 500 selected research respondents. The researcher then waited for feedback from the respondents to determine if the targeted amount of acceptable questionnaires was received. The researcher then moved on to the second phase. In the second phase, another 500 research questionnaires were emailed to a different batch of research respondents. The process was continued until a total number of 333 responses were collected.

Along with the questionnaires sent out, the selected research respondents were given a short notification to inform them that the survey was conducted only for academic purposes, and that their personal information will be kept confidential. That aside, a brief instruction was provided to make sure that the respondent will only select the appropriate scale that is most relevant to them (Appendix B).

Occasionally, a follow-up email was sent to remind and to motivate the selected research respondents to return the completed research questionnaires to the researcher (Appendix C).

3.4 Questionnaire Design and Measurement

A structured questionnaire was developed to examine customers' perceptions of the effectiveness of AirAsia's weblog. The questionnaire for the study consists of seven sections, each of which investigates information about a specific topic. According to the allocated sections, the questionnaire enquired about the demographic information of the respondents (5 items), perceived ease of use (5 items), perceived interactivity (5 items), perceived trustworthiness (5 items), AirAsia's weblog publishing software (5 items), AirAsia's weblog comment system (5 items), and AirAsia's weblog blogroll and hyperlinks (5 items) respectively.

In the current study, perceived ease of use, perceived interactivity, and perceived trustworthiness are treated as the operational definition of the customers' perceptions of the effectiveness. The measurement items for all the three variables above are based on the measurement items mentioned in prior studies done by Ilie et al. (2005), Sledgianowski and Kulviwat (2009), and Chiou (2004). These measurement items were rephrased slightly by adding the term 'AirAsia's weblog' where relevant to ensure that the items are rendered applicable and reflect the current research content. Weblog publishing software, comment system, and blogroll and hyperlinks, on the other hand,

were used to define AirAsia's weblog. These measurement items are based on the descriptions of these features by previous researchers such as Blood (2004), Herring et al. (2004), Agarwall and Liu (2008), Mcintosh (2005), Schmidt (2007), Murugesan (2007), Wattal et al. (2009), Tepper (2003), Rubin and Liddy (2008) and Kritikopoulos et al (2006). As mentioned before, these items were rephrased slightly by adding the term 'AirAsia's weblog' to ensure that they are as clear and as specific as possible.

All the measurement items employed in this study consistently use a 7-point Likert scale, moving from a range of strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, somewhat agree, to strongly agree. Since the 7-point Likert scale has been used before in previous studies done by researchers such as Davis et al. (1992; cited by Sledgianowski and Kulviwat, 2009) and IIie et al. (2005), it was easier for the researcher to reconstruct and administer this already-established scale, ensuring the ease of comprehension on the part of the respondents.

The questionnaire was also accompanied by specific instructions, as requesting the respondents to select the scale in questionnaire to indicate the extent of his or her agreement or disagreement to it. Through these instructions, the researcher hoped to reduce and minimise the probability of possible mistakes. It is then feasible for an accurate calculation of customers' perceptions of the effectiveness of AirAsia's weblog to be determined from the collected data.

3.4.1 Information on Respondent

The measurement items examining the research respondents' demographic details were contained in the first section of the questionnaire, and they are:

1. Gender of the respondent

2. Age of the respondent

3. Nationality

4. How often does the respondent visit AirAsia's weblog

5. Is the respondent an AirAsia customer

The initial two questions inquiring about the gender and age of the respondents were included in the questionnaire to help the researcher determine the general demographic composition. The remaining three items, on the other hand, were included in this section because this study is focused on researching the perceptions of the effectiveness AirAsia's weblog on the part of Malaysian users. As such, it is important to find out if the respondent responding to the questionnaire is a Malaysian and an AirAsia customer, as well as to determine the frequency he or she visits AirAsia's weblog.

3.4.2 Independent Variables

To examine customers' perceptions of the effectiveness of AirAsia's weblog, this study focuses on three independent variables: (i) perceived ease of use, (ii) perceived interactivity, and (iii) perceived trustworthiness.

i.   *Perceived Ease of Use*

Perceived ease of use is one of the variables inspected under the second section of the research questionnaire. It was measured using a set of measurement items that had been listed in a previous study done by Davis et al. (1992; cited by Sledgianowski and Kulviwat, 2009). The items can help to ascertain if AirAsia's weblog is easy to use, possesses functions that can be picked up quickly and effortlessly, is simple to utilise, and is easy to remember in terms of its uses. The measurement items for perceived ease of use are as follows:

1. AirAsia's weblog is easy to use.

2. I quickly learned how to use AirAsia's weblog.

3. AirAsia's weblog is simple to use.

4. I easily remember how to use AirAsia's weblog.

5. It was easy to learn how to use AirAsia's weblog.

ii.   *Perceived Interactivity*

Perceived interactivity was examined in the third section of the research questionnaire. To study this variable, the researcher has utilised a similar set of measurement items that was listed in a previous study done by Ilie et al. (2005). However, it had to be modified slightly to reflect the context of the current study, and one extra question was added to find out if the respondent was using the AirAsia's weblog to communicate with other users. The measurement items for perceived interactivity are as follows:

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1. Many people I communicate with use AirAsia's weblog.

2. The people I communicate with will continue to use AirAsia's weblog in the future.

3. The people I communicate with using AirAsia's weblog will continue to use this weblog in the future.

4. Of the people I communicate with regularly, many use AirAsia's weblog.

5. I use AirAsia's weblog to communicate with others.

iii.   *Perceived Trustworthiness*

Perceived trustworthiness was the final independent variable to be examined in this study and it appears in the forth section of the research questionnaire. The perceived trustworthiness construct was generated based on the measurement items that had been mentioned in a previous study done by Chiou (2004). It attempts to measure and represent the user's feelings towards honesty, responsibility, understanding, caring and professionalism shown by the site's service provider. The measurement items for perceived interactivity are as follows:

1. I feel that AirAsia's weblog is honest.

2. I feel that AirAsia's weblog is responsible.

3. I feel that AirAsia's weblog understands its customers.

4. I feel that AirAsia's weblog cares about me.

5. I feel that AirAsia's weblog is very professional.

3.4.3 Dependent Variables

In terms of the dependent variables for this study, the researcher has focused on three features from AirAsia's weblog, namely (i) AirAsia's weblog publishing software, (ii) AirAsia's weblog comment system, and (iii) AirAsia's weblog blogroll and hyperlinks.

i.   AirAsia's Weblog Publishing Software

In order to measure customers' perceptions of AirAsia's weblog publishing software, a set weblog publishing software measurement items was prepared. Respondents were required to respond to 5 items to determine whether AirAsia's weblog publishing software is simple to use (Blood, 2004), capable of publishing a weblog entry (or post) easily (Mcintosh, 2005), allows modification of the content of the weblog easily (Herring et al., 2004), does not require much technical knowledge and skills on the part of the users (Agarwall and Liu, 2008), and permits the uploading of photos and other multimedia content such as video and audio onto the weblog (Mcintosh, 2005). The measurement items to evaluate AirAsia's weblog publishing software are as follows:

1. I feel AirAsia's weblog publishing software is simple to use.

2. I can publish my entry (or post) at AirAsia's weblog easily.

3. AirAsia's weblog is easy for me to edit my weblog entry (or post).

4. I can focus on the content as no technical knowledge and skills are required.

5. AirAsia's weblog allows me to publish photos and other multimedia content (such as audio and video).

ii.   *AirAsia's Weblog Comment System*

The effectiveness of AirAsia's weblog comment system was measured by 5 measurement items, and it was done by finding out if the weblog allows readers to post comments to individual entries (Herring et al., 2004). A speedy comment system is especially important because if comments that have been posted on the weblog are instantly available on the Web, readers and bloggers will be able to interact instantly through the system without having to rely on other media (Murugesan, 2007). It also allows the blogger or author to respond to the comment left by the user by an unique URL (Schmidt, 2007) called permalink. Permalink is a kind of link that always brings users to a specific entry (Tepper, 2003), and without permalinks, it would be impossible for users to link to discussions of specific topics as easily and as reliably. Consequently, permalinks are important for users to access a wide range opinion on a topic (Tepper, 2003). The measurement items for AirAsia's weblog comment system are as follows:

1. I can place comments on every individual entry (or post) at AirAsia's weblog.

2. I am able to interact instantly with other users on the AirAsia's weblog.

3. AirAsia's weblog provides a unique URL which can be used to respond to the comment left by the user.

4. Every weblog entry (or post) at AirAsia's weblog is attached with a permalink that I can directly link to a specific entry.

5. I am able to access a wide range opinions on a specific topic easily and reliably at AirAsia's Weblog.

iii.   *AirAsia's Weblog Blogroll and Hyperlinks*

AirAsia's weblog blogroll and hyperlinks is the final dependent variable in this study, and it was investigated in the last section of the research questionnaire through 5 measurement items. These measurement items were based on the weblog features of blogroll and hyperlinks that had been discussed and explained by previous researchers such as Agarwall and Liu (2008), Rubin and Liddy (2008), and Kritikopoulos et al. (2006). A blogroll is a list of links that is included at the weblog's sidebar to link to other weblogs or websites, whereas hyperlinks are links that are embedded in the entry to perform the same function (Agarwall and Liu, 2008). Blogroll and hyperlinks act as citations or information references to relevant pages on the Web, and therefore, they can be used to help prove the authenticity of the information included in the page. This would help to enhance the user's sense of trust towards the particular weblog (Rubin and Liddy, 2008). The measurement items to assess the effectiveness of AirAsia's weblog blogroll and hyperlinks are as follows:

1. AirAsia's weblog provides blogroll (a list of links on the sidebar) that I can link to other websites or weblogs.

2. I use the blogroll (a list of links on the AirAsia's website sidebar) as information references.

3. Some of AirAsia's weblog entries provide a link (hyperlink) that I can directly link to other websites or weblogs.

4. Blogroll and hyperlinks are able to prove the weblog information credibility.

5. Blogroll and hyperlinks enhance my trustworthiness of AirAsia's weblog.

3.5 Data Analysis Procedures

In order to achieve the research objectives and to test the research hypotheses of the study, Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) 17.0 was used for the statistical analysis and data management collected from 333 respondents. According to Carmer and Howitt (2004), SPSS is a computer application that provides statistical analysis of data, and it allows for in-depth data access and preparation, analytical reporting, graphics, and modeling. Prvan et al. (2002, cited by Basturk, 2005) further indicated that SPSS will carry out almost all statistical analysis required at a professional level, and it is particularly good for the analysis of questionnaire data.

To determine if the measurement items asked were related to the current study, factor analysis was used to measure the variables and to examine the respondents' score for each variable for the study. A pilot test was conducted before the distribution of the research questionnaires so as to ensure

the reliability of the measurement items and to make sure that the items had its require effect on the current study.

Aside from SPSS, there are a number of different statistic analysis methods available as well, and the choice of which method to use depends on the level of measurement required and the nature of the data (Pallant, 2007). Spearman correlation analysis method was used to determine and describe the strength and directions of the relationship between the customers' perceptions of the effectiveness and AirAsia's weblog, as well as to figure out the relationship between customers' perceptions of effectiveness of ease of use and AirAsia's weblog publishing software. It was also used to establish the relationship between customers' perceptions of the effectiveness of interactivity and AirAsia's weblog comment system, and the relationship between customers' perceptions of trustworthiness and AirAsia's weblog blogroll and hyperlinks. AirAsia's weblog can be perceived as effective by its customers if their perceived ease of use in regards to its weblog publishing software, perceived interactivity of its weblog comment system, and perceived trustworthiness of its weblog blogroll and hyperlinks are found to exist.

The Spearman correlation method was used as it was designed for ordinal (ranked) data (Pallant, 2007). An ordinal scale consists of a set of categories that are organised in an ordered sequence, and it is often referred to as a Likert scale (Gravetter and Wallnau, 2005). Since the level of measurement of the research questionnaire is a 7-point Likert scale, the Spearman correlation analysis method was chosen to analyse the data in this

study. Simple linear regression was run to see where the significance of the variable lies.

3.6 Validity and Reliability Test for Pilot Test

To test the reliability of the research questionnaire, a pilot test was conducted to measure the Cronbach's alpha value for all of the measurement items. Thirty research respondents were recruited from the same research sample frame, and these thirty respondents were not included in the final research findings. According to Bruin (2006), a reliability coefficient of 0.70 or higher is considered as acceptable in social science research situation, and the Cronbach's alpha score for customers' perceptions of effectiveness of ease of use for AirAsia's weblog publishing software was 0.905 (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2 Reliability Test for Pilot Test on Customers' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Perceived Ease of Use for AirAsia's Weblog Publishing Software

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.905	10

*Note: The sample size (n) is 30

Statistical Results for Reliability Analysis (Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted)

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
q1	46.57	31.357	.705	.892
q2	46.40	31.903	.684	.894
q3	46.23	32.254	.679	.894
q4	47.10	27.955	.851	.882
q5	46.67	31.954	.754	.889
q16	46.43	32.944	.746	.891
q17	47.27	33.375	.522	.904
q18	46.80	33.545	.597	.899
q19	46.07	34.478	.490	.905
q20	46.67	34.506	.638	.898

The Cronbach's alpha score for customers' perceptions of the effectiveness of perceived interactivity in regards to AirAsia's weblog comment system was 0.887 (Table 3.3), whereas the score for customers' perceptions of the effectiveness of perceived trustworthiness for AirAsia's weblog blogroll and hyperlinks was 0.872 (Table 3.4). As can be seen, all of the scores were higher than the acceptable 0.70. As a result, these three scales have been proven to possess high internal consistency (reliability), and therefore, it is not necessary to delete any of the items to improve the reliability score of the scale.

Table 3.3 Reliability Test for Pilot Test on Customers' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Perceived Interactivity for AirAsia's Weblog Comment System

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.887	10

*Note: The sample size (n) is 30

Statistical Results for Reliability Analysis (Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted)

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
q6	43.97	25.551	.679	.876
q7	43.80	28.648	.719	.869
q8	43.97	28.102	.647	.874
q9	43.60	30.179	.500	.884
q10	44.13	30.671	.521	.882
q21	43.27	29.513	.703	.871
q22	43.60	30.386	.696	.873
q23	43.50	31.707	.472	.885
q24	43.53	30.257	.599	.877
q25	43.43	27.840	.802	.863

Table 3.4 Reliability Test for Pilot Test on Customers' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Perceived Trustworthiness for AirAsia's Weblog Blogroll and Hyperlink

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.872	10

*Note: The sample size (n) is 30

Statistical Results for Reliability Analysis (Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted)

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
q11	43.27	23.513	.742	.850
q12	43.37	24.792	.620	.860
q13	42.90	24.438	.571	.862
q14	43.97	21.964	.541	.872
q15	43.30	24.838	.635	.859
q26	42.70	24.286	.663	.856
q27	43.07	23.789	.556	.863
q28	42.97	24.378	.627	.859
q29	42.97	23.137	.665	.854
q30	43.50	22.810	.533	.868

3.7 Pilot Test Data Analysis

Factor analysis is a technique that is effective for identifying groups or clusters of variables (Malhotra, 2004), and it was used to construct a questionnaire to measure underlying variables and to get an idea of how respondents scored for each variable for the current study. Through the factor analysis output, the Rotated Component Matrix showed that question 30 was

categorised in the third factor alone, and it has to be separated from question 26, question 27, question 28, and question 29. These 5 questions were all designed under the dependent variable of AirAsia's weblog blogroll and hyperlinks (Table 3.5). As the Spearman correlation analysis method was used to test the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables, question 30, which was categorised in the third factor, had to be omitted from the questionnaire. Only then the relationship between two variables - perceived trustworthiness and AirAsia's weblog blogroll and hyperlinks could be analysed and measured.

Table 3.5 Rotated Component Matrix for Perceived Trustworthiness and AirAsia's Weblog Blogroll and Hyperlinks

Rotated Component Matrix[a]

	Component		
	1	2	3
q15	.909		
q13	.833		
q14	.791		
q12	.662		.633
q29		.868	
q28		.830	
q27		.795	
q26		.722	.550
q30			.840
q11	.583		.697

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 9 iterations.

3.8 Research Ethics

In order to obtain research respondents for this study, the research questionnaire was emailed to subscribers of AirAsia's Facebook page through Facebook's message feature. Respondents were informed that this survey was conducted as part of the researcher's study, and that their participation was voluntary. Respondents were also assured that all information obtained will be strictly confidential and for academic purposes only. Respondents were required to email the questionnaire back to the researcher upon the completion of the survey. A reminder email was sent to the respondents to encourage them to participate in this research.

3.9 Chapter Summary

The researcher has adopted the quantitative approach for this study, utilising Internet surveys to help examine customers' perceptions of the effectiveness of AirAsia's weblog. Conducting surveys through the Internet was the best option for the researcher as it was the only method that permitted direct and speedy contact with the respondents since the researcher was unable to meet the users personally. The research questionnaire was sent to the research respondents through the respondents' Facebook message function.

In order to determine the reliability of measurement items, a pilot test was conducted beforehand, and it was found that the Cronbach's alpha value for customers' perceptions of the effectiveness of perceived ease of use in

regards to AirAsia's weblog publishing software was 0.949, whereas the score for perceived interactivity of AirAsia's weblog comment system was 0.887. The value for perceived trustworthiness of AirAsia's weblog blogroll and hyperlinks, on the other hand, was 0.872. The scores showed that the measurement items used in the questionnaire are of high internal consistency (reliability), and that it was unnecessary to delete any of the items to improve the reliability score of the scale.

However, the Rotated Component Matrix showed that question 30 had to be removed from the section that was examining the perceived trustworthiness of AirAsia's weblog blogroll and hyperlinks. This is because the Spearman correlation is only capable of measuring the relationship between two variables.

The following chapter discusses the research findings of the study in an analysis of the results.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The purpose of this study is to determine customers' perceptions of the effectiveness of AirAsia's weblog in three areas: perceived ease of use, perceived interactivity, and perceived trustworthiness against the weblog's features namely the publishing software, the comment system, and the blogroll and hyperlinks. The Spearman correlation analysis method was used to determine and describe the strength and directions of the relationship.

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

The research respondents for this study are 333 Malaysian social media users who use AirAsia's weblog. Of the 333 respondents, 156 were male and 177 were female, meaning 46.8% of the total respondents were male while 53.2% were female. More than three quarters of the total respondents (88.9%) were under 30 years old while the other 11.1% were between 31 to 40 years old. There were no respondents aged 40 years old and above (refer to Table 4.1).

About 41.1% of the respondents surveyed rarely visits AirAsia's weblog. 24 % of the respondents visit the site about once a week, 17.7% about 1 to 2 times a month, and 11.1% about 2 to 3 times a week. A very small percentage of respondents (6%) visits the site almost everyday (refer to Table

4.1). As the current research study focuses on the Malaysian context, only AirAsia's Facebook social media users who are Malaysians were invited to participate in this research survey. Only data collected from AirAsia's Malaysian customers' were accepted as the sample group for this study (refer to Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Frequency Distribution of Demographics

Variable	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender				
Male	156	46.6	46.8	46.8
Female	177	52.8	53.2	100.0
Age				
Below 30	296	88.4	88.9	88.9
31 – 40	37	11.0	11.1	100.0
41 – 50	0	0	0	0
51 and above	0	0	0	0
Nationality				
Malaysian	333	99.4	100.0	100.0
Foreigner	0	0	0	0
Expatriate	0	0	0	0
Visit Frequency				
Almost everyday	20	6.0	6.0	6.0
About 2-3 times a week	37	11.0	11.1	17.1
About once a week	80	23.9	24.0	41.1
1-2 times a month	59	17.6	17.7	58.9
Rarely	137	40.9	41.1	100.0
AirAsia's Customer				
Yes	333	99.4	100.0	100.0
No	0	0	0	0

*Note: The sample size (n) is 333

4.2 Reliability Test

Each variable (perceived ease of use, perceived interactivity, perceived trustworthiness, AirAsia's weblog publishing software, AirAsia's weblog comment system, and AirAsia's weblog blogroll and hyperlinks) were tested using the Cronbach's Alpha test to measure the internal consistency. As the values for each variable exceeded the recommended value of 0.70 suggested by Bruin (2006), it shows a very good reliability coefficient that represents good internal consistency.

Table 4.2 Reliability Test of Customers' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Perceived Ease of Use of AirAsia's Weblog Publishing Software

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.905	10

*Note: The sample size (n) is 30

Table 4.3 Reliability Test of Customers' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Perceived Interactivity of AirAsia's Weblog Comment System

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.887	10

*Note: The sample size (n) is 30

Table 4.4 Reliability Test of Customers' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Perceived Trustworthiness of AirAsia's Weblog Blogroll and Hyperlink

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.868	9

*Note: The sample size (n) is 30

4.3 Hypothesis Testing

The purpose of hypothesis testing in this study was to determine and describe the strength and directions of the relationships between the customers' perceptions of the effectiveness of AirAsia's weblog. This method was also used to analyse the relationship between customers' perceived ease of use and AirAsia's weblog publishing software; perceptions of effective interactivity and AirAsia'weblog comment system; and the relationship between customers' perceptions of trustworthiness and AirAsia's weblog blogroll and hyperlinks. Another purpose was to observe if the findings of this study matched the proposed hypotheses. In order to examine the hypotheses of the study and verify the relationships among the variables, Spearman correlation was used to analyse and measure the collected data as the scale of measurement used in the questionnaire was of the ordinal scale. The Spearman correlation analysis method is a preferred analysis method when one or both of the variables are of the ordinal scale (Morgan et al., 2007). The ordinal scale is also commonly referred to the Likert-scale (Gravetter and Wallnau, 2005).

4.3.1 Perceived Ease of Use of AirAsia's Weblog Publishing Software

Research Hypothesis One:

Customers' perceptions of ease of use has a significant positive relationship on the effectiveness of AirAsia's weblog publishing software.

The Spearman correlation analysis method was used and the SPSS output for the Spearman correlation between the variables of perceived ease of use (independent variable) and AirAsia's weblog publishing software (dependent variable) is shown in Table 4.5. Results show that the significant value (1-tailed) was ρ =0.000. Since the significant value is lesser than the alpha value of 0.05, it indicates that there is a significant relationship between customers' perceptions of effectiveness of perceived ease of use and AirAsia's weblog publishing software.

The correlation coefficient (r) of r = .721 also reinforces the existence of a positive relationship between customers' perceptions of the effectiveness of perceived ease of use and AirAsia's weblog publishing software. According to Cohen (1988; cited by Pallant, 2007), the correlation coefficient (r) value of 0.50 to 1.0 signify a strong positive relationship. It can, therefore, be concluded that there is a significant positive and strong relationship between perceived ease of use and AirAsia's weblog publishing software: r = .721, ρ (one-tailed) < .05 (Table 4.5). Therefore, Research Hypothesis One is supported.

Table 4.5 Spearman Correlation between Perceived Ease of Use and AirAsia's Weblog Publishing Software

Correlations		AirAsia's Weblog Publishing Software
Perceived ease of use	Spearman's rho	0.721
	Sig. (1-tailed)	0.000
	N	333

Simple linear regression was conducted to determine the difference in significance levels. As the linear regression showed that there were many significant factors, simple linear regression was run to determine the effect of an independent variable on a dependent variable, which is how well users have perceived the ease of use of AirAsia's weblog publishing software. The result is statistically significant - $F = 529.53$, $\rho < .05$. This means that customers' perceived ease of use has a significant effect on AirAsia's weblog publishing software (refer to Table 4.5.1).

Table 4.5.1 Simple Linear Regression for Customers' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Perceived Ease of Use and AirAsia's Weblog Publishing Software

ANOVA[b]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2698.673	1	2698.673	529.533	.000[a]
	Residual	1686.883	331	5.096		
	Total	4385.556	332			

a. Predictors: (Constant), PEOU
b. Dependent Variable: WPS

Model Summary Table for Customers' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Perceived Ease of Use and AirAsia's Weblog Publishing Software

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.784[a]	.615	.614	2.25750

a. Predictors: (Constant), PEOU

4.3.2 Perceived Interactivity of AirAsia's Weblog Comment System

Research Hypothesis Two:

Customers' perceptions of interactivity has a significant positive relationship on the effectiveness of AirAsia's weblog comment system.

The Spearman correlation analysis method was used to test the research hypothesis and the SPSS output for Spearman correlation between customers' perceptions of the effectiveness of perceived interactivity (independent variable) and AirAsia's weblog comment system (dependent variable) as shown in Table 4.6. The results show that the significant value (1-tailed) was ρ =0.000. Since the significant value is lesser than the alpha value of 0.05, it indicates that there is a significant relationship between customers' perceptions of the effectiveness of perceived interactivity and AirAsia's weblog comment system.

Furthermore, the correlation coefficient (r) was r = .738. As the r value is not in the negative, it indicates that the customers' perceptions of the effectiveness of perceived interactivity and AirAsia's weblog comment system have a positive relationship. According to Cohen (1988; cited by Pallant, 2007), the correlation coefficient (r) value of .738 indicates that both variables - perceived interactivity and AirAsia's weblog comment system has a strong positive relationship.

Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a significant positive and strong relationship between perceived interactivity and AirAsia's weblog comment system: r = .738, ρ (one-tailed) < .05 (refer to Table 4.6), and as a result, Research Hypothesis Two is supported.

Table 4.6 Spearman Correlation between Perceived Interactivity and AirAsia's Weblog Comment System

Correlations

		AirAsia's Weblog Comment System
Perceived Interactivity	Spearman's rho	0.738
	Sig. (1-tailed)	0.000
	N	333

Simple linear regression was conducted to investigate how well AirAsia's weblog comment system was perceived as being interactive by its users. The result for this hypothesis was statistically significant - $F = 863.15$, ρ < .05. It showed that customers' perceptions of the effectiveness of perceived interactivity (independent variable) had a significant effect on AirAsia's weblog comment system (Table 4.6.1).

Table 4.6.1 Simple Linear Regression for Customers' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Perceived Interactivity and AirAsia's Weblog Comment System

ANOVA[b]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2350.365	1	2350.365	863.154	.000[a]
	Residual	901.311	331	2.723		
	Total	3251.676	332			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Pinteractivity
b. Dependent Variable: CS

Model Summary Table for Customers' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Perceived Interactivity and AirAsia's Weblog Comment System

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.850[a]	.723	.722	1.65015

a. Predictors: (Constant), PInteractivity

4.3.3 Perceived Trustworthiness of AirAsia's Weblog Blogroll and Hyperlinks

Research Hypothesis Three

Customers' perceptions of trustworthiness has a significant positive relationship on the effectiveness of AirAsia's weblog blogroll and hyperlinks.

Spearman correlation was used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between the customers' perceptions of the effectiveness of trustworthiness and AirAsia's weblog blogroll and hyperlinks. The resulting SPSS output is shown in Table 4.7. Results of this method show that the significant value (1-tailed) between the customers' perceptions of trustworthiness and AirAsia's weblog blogroll and hyperlinks was $\rho = 0.000$. Since the significant value is lesser than the alpha value of 0.05, it indicates that there is a significant relationship between customers' perceptions of the effectiveness of perceived trustworthiness and AirAsia's weblog blogroll and hyperlinks.

Since the correlation coefficient (r) for customers' perceptions of the effectiveness of trustworthiness and AirAsia's weblog blogroll and hyperlinks was r = .609, and the r value was not in the negative, it can be deduced that both the variables share a positive relationship. According to Cohen (1988; cited by Pallant, 2007), the correlation coefficient (r) value of .50 to 1.0 indicates that perceived trustworthiness and AirAsia's weblog blogroll and hyperlinks have a strong positive relationship.

It can be concluded that there is a significant positive and strong relationship between perceived trustworthiness and AirAsia's weblog blogroll and hyperlink: r = .609, ρ (one-tailed) < .05 (Table 4.7) which supports Research Hypothesis Three.

Table 4.7 Spearman Correlation between Perceived Trustworthiness and AirAsia's Weblog Blogroll and Hyperlink

Correlations		
		AirAsia's Weblog Blogroll and Hyperlink
Perceived Trustworthiness	Spearman's rho	0.609
	Sig. (1-tailed)	0.000
	N	333

Simple linear regression was conducted to investigate how trustworthy AirAsia's weblog blogroll and hyperlinks was perceived to be. Results show that $F = 274.11$, $\rho < .05$, which means perceived interactivity (independent variable) has a significant effect on AirAsia's weblog comment system (Table 4.7.1).

Table 4.7.1 Simple Linear Regression for Customers' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Perceived Trustworthiness and AirAsia's Weblog Blogroll and Hyperlinks

ANOVA[b]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1658.286	1	1658.286	274.108	.000[a]
	Residual	2002.470	331	6.050		
	Total	3660.757	332			

a. Predictors: (Constant), PT
b. Dependent Variable: BandH

Model Summary Table for Customers' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Perceived Trustworthiness and AirAsia's Weblog Blogroll and Hyperlinks

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.673[a]	.453	.451	2.45963

a. Predictors: (Constant), PT

4.5 Summary of Hypothesis Tests

This study is conducted to examine customers' perceptions of the effectiveness of AirAsia's weblog. The theoretical basis of the study is derived from the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and prior studies (such as David, 1992 (cited by Sledgianowski & Kulviwat, 2009); IIie, et. al, 2005; and Chiou, 2004) which have been adapted into this study to reflect and explain the user's technology acceptance, adoption and usage of a particular weblog. As stated by Wattal et al. (2009), before any form of technology is deemed to be effective, it must first be accepted and adopted by the end users; therefore,

perceived ease of use, interactivity, and trustworthiness are used to define the customers' perceptions of the effectiveness for this study.

Based on the results of the Spearman correlation for perceived ease of use and AirAsia's weblog publishing software, both variables are significantly correlated and have a positive and strong relationship. This proves that there is a significant positive and strong relationship between perceived ease of use and AirAsia's weblog publishing software. Therefore, Research Hypothesis One is supported (refer Table 4.8).

Similarly, the Spearman correlation SPSS output for perceived interactivity and AirAsia's weblog comment system has revealed that both the variables are significantly correlated and have a positive and strong relationship. It can be concluded that there is a significant positive and strong relationship between perceived interactivity and AirAsia's weblog comment system. Research Hypothesis Two is also supported (refer Table 4.8).

Based on the results of the Spearman correlation for perceived trustworthiness and AirAsia's weblog blogroll and hyperlinks, it can be deduced that both variables are also significantly correlated and have a positive and strong relationship. Thus, there is a significant positive and strong relationship between perceived trustworthiness and AirAsia's weblog blogroll and hyperlinks. Based on this, Research Hypothesis Three is supported (refer Table 4.8).

Table 4.8 Summary of Hypotheses Tests

Hypothesis	Spearman's rho	Supported/ Not Supported
H1: Perceived ease of use has a significant positive relationship on effectiveness of AirAsia's weblog publishing software.	0.721	Supported
H2: Perceived interactivity has a significant positive relationship on the effectiveness of AirAsia's weblog comment system.	0.738	Supported
H3: Perceived trustworthiness has a significant positive relationship on the effectiveness of AirAsia's weblog blogroll and hyperlink.	0.609	Supported

4.5 Chapter Summary

Before the research hypotheses were tested, a factor analysis was used to analyse the reliability of these variables (perceived ease of use and AirAsia's weblog publishing software, perceived interactivity and AirAsia's weblog comment system, and perceived trustworthiness and AirAsia's weblog blogroll and hyperlink). The Cronbach's Alpha for perceived ease of use and AirAsia's weblog publishing software was 0.905. For perceived interactivity and AirAsia's weblog comment system, the value was 0.887, and for perceived trustworthiness and AirAsia's weblog blogroll and hyperlinks, the value was 0.868. As all the values exceeded the recommended level of 0.70 (Bruin, 2006), there is no doubt that each of the variables show good reliability coefficients that represent good internal consistency.

In this study, the Spearman correlation analysis method was used to analyse and test the research hypotheses. Based on the Spearman correlation SPSS output for perceived ease of use and AirAsia's weblog publishing software, both variables have a significant positive and strong relationship - $r = .721$, ρ (1-tailed) $< .05$. Results of the Spearman correlation SPSS output for perceived interactivity and AirAsia's weblog comment system also showed that there is a significant positive and strong relationship between both variables - $r = .738$, ρ (1-tailed) $< .05$. The Spearman correlation SPSS output, too, shows that there is a significant positive and strong relationship between perceived trustworthiness and AirAsia's weblog blogroll and hyperlinks - $r = .609$, ρ (1-tailed) $< .05$. It can be seen that there is a significant positive and strong relationship between customers' perceptions of the effectiveness of perceived ease of use and AirAsia's weblog publishing software, perceived interactivity and AirAsia's weblog comment system, and perceived trustworthiness and AirAsia's weblog blogroll and hyperlinks. Therefore, Research Hypothesis One, Two and Three are supported.

CHAPTER 5

FINDING AND CONCLUSION

The objectives of this study are *to examine customers' perceptions of the ease of use of AirAsia's weblog publishing software; customers' perceptions of the interactivity of AirAsia's weblog comment system;* and *customers' perceptions of the trustworthiness of AirAsia's Weblog blogroll and hyperlinks.* In this study, customers' perceptions of the effectiveness is defined as *perceived ease of use*, *perceived interactivity*, and *perceived trustworthiness*, whereas AirAsia's weblog is defined as *weblog publishing software, comment system*, with a *blogroll and hyperlinks*.

To examine customers' perceptions of AirAsia's weblog in a Malaysian context, research samples were selected with specific purposes and criteria. The respondents were Malaysians, customers of AirAsia, and users of AirAsia's social media. Purposive sampling was used to select the research respondents. Malaysian users of AirAsia's Facebook fan page were selected as respondents of the study because they are the primary users who used AirAsia's social media to interact with others and the corporation. Therefore, the Malaysian users of AirAsia's Facebook social media were chosen to be participants of this study's research. The Spearman correlation analysis method was used to determine and describe the strength and directions of the relationship.

5.1 Findings

The finding of the study was analysed by using the Spearman correlation analysis method and simple linear regression with the purpose of determining customers' perceptions of the effectiveness of AirAsia's weblog. The primary contribution of this study is that the findings match and support the hypotheses that were proposed earlier in the study. The hypotheses are:

H1: Customers' perceptions of ease of use has a significant positive relationship on the effectiveness of AirAsia's weblog publishing software.

H2: Customers' perceptions of interactivity has a significant positive relationship on the effectiveness of AirAsia's weblog comment system.

H3: Customers' perceptions of trustworthiness has a significant positive relationship on the effectiveness of AirAsia's weblog blogroll and hyperlinks.

5.1.1 Research Hypothesis 1: Customers' perceptions of ease of use has a significant positive relationship on the effectiveness of AirAsia's weblog publishing software.

This research hypothesis was tested using Spearman correlation and simple linear regression. The Spearman correlation results between perceived ease of use and AirAsia's weblog publishing software demonstrated that both variables have a significant positive and strong relationship, where r = .721, ρ

=0.000, and the significant level is less than the alpha value of .05. The results of simple linear regression also showed that perceived ease of use have a significant effect on AirAsia's weblog publishing software, where $F = 529.53$, $\rho < .05$.

The findings of the study is consistent with previous research studies done by Sledgianowski and Kulviwat (2009), where perceived ease of use has a significant positive effect on the intention to use social media. Moreover, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and David et al. (1989) also had a similar statement about perceived ease of use, saying that it is a significant determinant of people's intention to use and accept a particular technology system. Wu et al. (2008) also stated that users' acceptance towards a weblog will greatly increase if users perceive a particular weblog as easy to use. In other words, the user will adopt, accept and use the weblog if he or she perceives the weblog as easy to use.

AirAsia's weblog publishing software has provided title boxes and content boxes for its users to type and publish their entries (or posts). By including a 'submit' button and other convenient features, users do not need to have technical knowledge and skills to upload entries. Moreover, AirAsia's weblog consists of multimedia options that allow its users to publish weblog entries together with other multimedia content such as pictures. Blood (2004) further indicated that weblog publishing software is easy to use and does not require technical expertise. Consequently, this explains the reasons why

Malaysian customers of AirAsia perceive its weblog publishing software as easy to use.

5.1.2 Research Hypothesis 2: Customers' perceptions of interactivity has a significant positive relationship on the effectiveness of AirAsia's Weblog comment system.

To test the second research hypothesis, the Spearman correlation analysis method and simple linear regression were used to test the collected data. The results of Spearman correlation showed that both variables – perceived interactivity and AirAsia's weblog comment system have a significant positive and strong relationship where r = .738, ρ =0.0000, which is lesser than the alpha value of 0.5. Furthermore, the results of simple linear regression demonstrated that customers' perceptions of interactivity has a significant effect on AirAsia's weblog comment system, where F = 863.15, ρ < .05.

According to Sundar et al. (2003), interactivity was simply measured as the number of functional features included in the weblog, such as a feedback form. An effective weblog can also be measured based on its frequency of comments, which demonstrates that weblog users do participate in the weblog (Schuff et al., 2009), indicating that the weblog has enough active members that users can interact with (Sledgianowski and Kulviwat, 2009).

The findings of this study is consistent with the previous study done by Sledgianowski and Kulviwat (2009), where they proposed that perceived interactivity is important to determine the effectiveness of the weblog, and that it has a significant positive effect on intention to use and accept the weblog. If the user perceives a weblog as having enough active members that he or she can associate or interact with, he or she will accept and use that particular weblog. Interactivity of the weblog is a key factor that is fostered by the process of ongoing interactions with others in the weblog entries (Yang and Lim, 2009). According to Odden (2008), one of the reasons for the failure of some corporate weblog is that the weblog does not provide the feedback mechanism. Feedback mechanisms are extremely important as feedback and comments are a big part of the weblog, and it creates communication or interaction between readers and corporation.

Drawing on AirAsia's weblog as a point of reference, it is observable that all of its weblog entries (or posts) contain a category link and a comment link. The category link (also known as a permalink) allows users to link that particular entry to another specific entry easily, thus encouraging and facilitating the discussion between them. The comment link, on the other hand, allows users to leave their own comments as well as to read the comments left by other users. AirAsia's weblog comment system and permalink feature are consistent with those discussed by previous researchers such as Tepper (2003), Blood (2004), Marlow (2004), Efimova and Fiedler (2004), Brady (2005), and Rubin and Liddy (2006), all of whom were mentioned in Chapter 2. These elements make it possible for AirAsia's weblog users to voice out their

opinions and to interact with those who share common interests with them. This in turn, explains the rate of perceived interactivity indicated by the Malaysian customers, as noted in the findings of the study.

5.1.3 Research Hypothesis 3: Customers' perceptions of trustworthiness has a significant positive relationship on the effectiveness of AirAsia's weblog blogroll and hyperlinks.

This research hypothesis was tested by using the Spearman correlation analysis method and simple linear regression. Spearman correlation showed that customers' perceptions of the effectiveness of perceived trustworthiness has a significant positive and strong relationship with AirAsia's weblog blogroll and hyperlinks, where r = .609, ρ =0.000, which is less than the alpha value of .05. The results of simple linear regression ($F = 274.11$, $\rho < .05$), too, indicated that perceived trustworthiness has a significant effect on AirAsia's weblog blogroll and hyperlinks.

The findings of this research are consistent with those found in previous studies done by Chiou (2004) and Sledgianowski and Kulviwat (2009), where it was observed that customers' perceived trust has a direct effect on their intention to use social media sites. The researchers found that the greater the trust a user has in a weblog, the greater is his or her intention to use that weblog. Users will not adopt and use a weblog that they perceive to be untruthful (Sledgianowski and Kulviwat, 2009). The researchers further indicated that perceived trustworthiness is important in determining the

effectiveness of a weblog as the publics' intention to use and accept any particular weblog will increase if users perceive the weblog as trustworthy.

In order to instill a sense of trustworthiness among its customers, AirAsia's weblog provides a list of links (blogroll) in its sidebar. Occasionally, weblog entries (or posts), too, provide links (hyperlinks) to other websites as sources for more information and as information references. This step of action taken by AirAsia matches the observation by researchers such as Agarwall and Liu (2008), Yang and Lim (2009), Chiou (2004), Nicholson et al. (2001), and Sledgianowski and Kulviwat (2009). Consequently, it is able to explain the Malaysian customers' level of perceived trustworthiness towards AirAsia's weblog in terms of its weblog blogroll and hyperlinks.

5.2 Research Limitations and Recommendations for Future Studies

As with most researches, this study has a few limitations which bear mentioning before one generalises the results to include other contexts or recommends suggestions to help improve future studies.

Firstly, the focus of the current study has been narrowed down to concentrate only on the Malaysian context, thus excluding foreign users of AirAsia's social media from the study. As such, this research is unable to determine the perceptions of effectiveness of all of AirAsia customers towards its weblog, regardless of their nationalities. In order to gain an unbiased and global analysis of customers' perceptions of AirAsia's weblog, it is important

to include the international users of AirAsia's social media. Due to this reason, researchers interested in conducting similar studies in the future should consider including all the users of AirAsia's social media as respondents.

Secondly, the research methodology employed in this study is the quantitative approach, where respondents were required to complete a research questionnaire by choosing the answer that most resembles their views for each question. Although convenient, this method does not allow the respondents to provide in-depth information and include their own opinions towards AirAsia's weblog. To have a better understanding of customers' perceptions of the effectiveness of AirAsia's weblog, future studies should combine both the quantitative and qualitative research approach. The combination of both approaches will be able to give future researchers an in-depth insight into customers' perceptions of AirAsia's weblog.

Third, the focus of the current study has been narrowed down to concentrate only on the customers' perceptions of the effectiveness (perceived ease of use, perceived interactivity, and perceived trustworthiness) of AirAsia's weblog, thus excluding other factors that might influence customers' perceptions to use the weblog, such as age, gender, and education level. Therefore to have a better understanding of customers' perceptions of the effectiveness towards the AirAsia's weblog, future studies should include other factors that might have significant effect on customers' perceptions and intention to use the weblog.

Fourth, further studies should not only include factors that might have significant effect on customers' perceptions and intention to use the weblog, but should also consider other social media applications like twitter, forum, facebook, and Myspace. Therefore, the Malaysian corporations will have a better understanding of the ways to utilise all forms of social media applications effectively.

5.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study was able to meet all the three research objectives put forward by testing the proposed research hypotheses. The hypotheses were confirmed through the research findings, indicating that customers' perceptions of ease of use, interactivity, and trustworthiness do have a significant positive relationship with the effectiveness of AirAsia's weblog publishing software, comment system, and blogroll and hyperlinks, respectively.

As it is, the findings of this study can be very beneficial to Malaysian corporations that use, or intend to use weblogs to interact with its public. The analysis of AirAsia's weblog in this research will benefit other corporations and help them have a better understanding of the ways to utilise a weblog effectively. It will also aid them in finding out more about their customers' opinions towards their weblogs, thus giving them the opportunity to improve on their weblog to be easy to use, interactive and trustworthy. This study also assists the Malaysian corporations to enhance their customers' perceptions of

the effectiveness of the weblogs. As such, corporations operating in Malaysia should find this research extremely helpful in providing a better understanding of the ways to effectively utilise weblogs.

Through this, it is hoped that Malaysian corporations will be able to successfully fulfill the demands of its social media users and influence more users to use and participate in their weblogs. When that happens, it is a sign that Malaysian corporations have effectively utilised weblogs as a tool to deliver its corporate information to their publics directly and easily.

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APPENDIX A – Cover Letter and Survey Questionnaire

Dear Valued Respondents,

I am a student of Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR), who is currently pursuing the Master of Communication program. I am conducting a survey on the title *"The Emergence of Social Media in Malaysia: Customers' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of AirAsia's Weblog"*.

I would be most grateful if you could take some time to compete the enclosed questionnaire and indicate the most appropriate response for each question. The estimated time needed to complete this questionnaire would be about 20 minutes, kindly complete the questions after reading the instructions carefully. There is no definite right or wrong answer. The validity of this study highly depends on your ingenuous and trustful response.

Please be assured that this is a confidential survey and all information gathered from this survey would be used strictly for academic purpose only. Your time and cooperation is highly appreciated. It is important to have your participation. Thank you.

Demography:

1. Gender   :1. Male   2. Female

2. Age   :1. Below 30   2. 31-40   3. 41-50   4. 51 and above

3. Nationality   :1. Malaysian   2. Foreigner   3. Expatriate

4. How often do you visit the AirAsia's Weblog?
1. Almost everyday   2. About 2-3 times a week   3. About once a week
4. 1-2 times a month   5. Rarely

5. Are you AirAsia's customer?
1. Yes   2. No

Perceived Ease of Use:

Participant is required to rate on a scale of 1 to 7.

(1 Strongly disagree, 2. Somewhat disagree, 3. Disagree, 4. Neutral, 5. Agree, 6. Somewhat agree, 7. Strongly agree).

Direction: Indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the statements listed below by placing an 'X'.

		Place an 'X' for your choice						
		Strongly Disagree 1	Somewhat Disagree 2	Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Agree 5	Somewhat Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7
1.	AirAsia's weblog is easy to use.	Strongly Disagree 1	Somewhat Disagree 2	Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Agree 5	Somewhat Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7
2	I quickly learned how to use AirAsia's weblog.	Strongly Disagree 1	Somewhat Disagree 2	Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Agree 5	Somewhat Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7
3.	AirAsia's weblog is simple to use.	Strongly Disagree 1	Somewhat Disagree 2	Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Agree 5	Somewhat Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7
4.	I easily remember how to use AirAsia's weblog.	Strongly Disagree 1	Somewhat Disagree 2	Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Agree 5	Somewhat Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7
5.	It was easy to learn how to use AirAsia's weblog.	Strongly Disagree 1	Somewhat Disagree 2	Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Agree 5	Somewhat Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7

Perceived Interactivity

		Place an 'X' for your choice						
		Strongly Disagree 1	Somewhat Disagree 2	Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Agree 5	Somewhat Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7
1.	Many people I communicate with use AirAsia's weblog.	Strongly Disagree 1	Somewhat Disagree 2	Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Agree 5	Somewhat Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7
2	The people I communicate with will continue to use AirAsia's weblog in the future.	Strongly Disagree 1	Somewhat Disagree 2	Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Agree 5	Somewhat Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7
3.	The people I communicate with using AirAsia's weblog will continue to use this weblog in the future.	Strongly Disagree 1	Somewhat Disagree 2	Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Agree 5	Somewhat Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7
4.	Of the people I communicate with regularly, many use AirAsia's weblog.	Strongly Disagree 1	Somewhat Disagree 2	Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Agree 5	Somewhat Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7
5.	I use AirAsia's weblog to communicate with others.	Strongly Disagree 1	Somewhat Disagree 2	Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Agree 5	Somewhat Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7

Perceived Trustworthiness:

		Place an 'X' for your choice						
1.	I feel that AirAsia's weblog is honest.	Strongly Disagree 1	Somewhat Disagree 2	Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Agree 5	Somewhat Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7
2	I feel that AirAsia's weblog is responsible.	Strongly Disagree 1	Somewhat Disagree 2	Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Agree 5	Somewhat Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7
3.	I feel that AirAsia's weblog understands its customers.	Strongly Disagree 1	Somewhat Disagree 2	Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Agree 5	Somewhat Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7
4.	I feel that AirAsia's weblog cares about me.	Strongly Disagree 1	Somewhat Disagree 2	Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Agree 5	Somewhat Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7
5.	I feel that AirAsia's weblog is very professional.	Strongly Disagree 1	Somewhat Disagree 2	Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Agree 5	Somewhat Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7

AirAsia's Weblog Publishing Software

		Place an 'X' for your choice						
1.	I feel AirAsia's weblog publishing software is simple to use.	Strongly Disagree 1	Somewhat Disagree 2	Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Agree 5	Somewhat Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7
2	I can publish my entry (or post) at AirAsia's weblog easily.	Strongly Disagree 1	Somewhat Disagree 2	Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Agree 5	Somewhat Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7
3.	AirAsia's weblog is easy for me to edit my weblog entry (or post).	Strongly Disagree 1	Somewhat Disagree 2	Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Agree 5	Somewhat Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7
4.	I can focus on the content as no technical knowledge and skills are required.	Strongly Disagree 1	Somewhat Disagree 2	Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Agree 5	Somewhat Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7

5.	AirAsia's weblog allows me to publish photos and other multimedia content (such as audio and video).	Strongly Disagree 1	Somewhat Disagree 2	Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Agree 5	Somewhat Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7

AirAsia's Weblog Comment System

		Place an 'X' for your choice						
1.	I can place comments on every individual entry (or post) at AirAsia's weblog.	Strongly Disagree 1	Somewhat Disagree 2	Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Agree 5	Somewhat Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7
2	I am able to interact instantly with other users on the AirAsia's weblog.	Strongly Disagree 1	Somewhat Disagree 2	Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Agree 5	Somewhat Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7
3.	AirAsia's weblog provides a unique URL which can be used to respond to the comment left by the user.	Strongly Disagree 1	Somewhat Disagree 2	Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Agree 5	Somewhat Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7
4.	Every weblog entry (or post) at AirAsia's weblog is attached with a permalink that I can directly link to a specific entry.	Strongly Disagree 1	Somewhat Disagree 2	Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Agree 5	Somewhat Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7
5.	I am able to access a wide range opinions on a specific topic easily and reliably at AirAsia's weblog.	Strongly Disagree 1	Somewhat Disagree 2	Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Agree 5	Somewhat Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7

AirAsia's Weblog Blogroll and Hyperlink

		Place an 'X' for your choice						
1.	AirAsia's weblog provides blogroll (a list of links on the sidebar) that I can link to other websites or weblogs.	Strongly Disagree 1	Somewhat Disagree 2	Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Agree 5	Somewhat Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7
2	I use the blogroll (a list of links on the AirAsia's webside sidebar) as information references.	Strongly Disagree 1	Somewhat Disagree 2	Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Agree 5	Somewhat Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7
3.	Some of AirAsia's weblog entries provide a link (hyperlink) that I can directly link to other websites or weblogs.	Strongly Disagree 1	Somewhat Disagree 2	Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Agree 5	Somewhat Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7
4.	Blogroll and hyperlinks are able to prove the information's credibility.	Strongly Disagree 1	Somewhat Disagree 2	Disagree 3	Neutral 4	Agree 5	Somewhat Agree 6	Strongly Agree 7

Finish.

Thanks for your participation.

APPENDIX B - Cover Letter and Survey Questionnaire In Facebook Email
Format

Cheah Joey   May 10

Dear Zhukaeta,

I am a student of Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR), who is
currently pursuing the Master of Communication program. I am
conducting a survey on the topic "The Emergence of Social Media in
Malaysia: Customers' Perception of the Effectiveness of AirAsia's
Weblog". Please kindly spend 20 minutes to complete the questions and
read the instruction carefully. I would be appreciated if you're
participating and completed the research questionnaire (research
questionnaire as below). It is important to have your participation.
Thank you.

This is for only academic purpose and your information will be keep as
confidential.

Kindly return your complete answers questionnaire for me before 13th
May, 2011.

Thank you and have a nice day.

Regards,
Joey

P.S: Attached herewith AirAsia's Weblog URL http://blog.airasia.com/
_____
*Please choose the answer that relate to you and copy and paste the
answer and send it back to the researcher. Thanks.

Demography:

1. Gender :1. Male 2. Female
2. Age :1. Below 30 2. 31-40
3. 41-50 4. 51 and above

3. Nationality :1. Malaysia 2. Foreigner 3. Expatriate

4. How often do you visit the AirAsia's Weblog?
1. Almost everyday 2. About 2-3 times a week
3. About once a week 4. 1-2 times a month 5. Rarely

5. Are you AirAsia's customer?
1. Yes 2. No

Perceived Ease of Use:
Participant is required to rate on a scale of 1 to 7.
(1 Strongly disagree, 2. Somewhat disagree, 3. Disagree, 4. Neutral, 5.
Agree, 6. Somewhat agree, 7. Strongly agree).
*Direction: Indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the
statements listed below by highlight or copy and paste the answer and
send it back to the researcher.

1. AirAsia's Weblog is easy to use.
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

2. I quickly learned how to use AirAsia's Weblog.
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

3. AirAsia's Weblog is simple to use.
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

4. I easily remember how to use AirAsia's Weblog.
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

5. It was easy to learn how to use AirAsia's Weblog.
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

Perceived Interactivity
1. Many people I communicate with use AirAsia's Weblog.
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

2. The people I communicate with will continue to use AirAsia's Weblog in
the future.
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

3. The people I communicate with using AirAsia's Weblog will continue to
use this Weblog in the future.
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

4. Of the people I communicate with regularly, many use AirAsia's
Weblog.
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

5. I use AirAsia's Weblog to communicate with others.
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

Perceived Trustworthiness
1. I feel that AirAsia's Weblog is honest.
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

2. I feel that AirAsia's Weblog is responsible.
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

3. I feel that AirAsia's Weblog understands its customers.
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

4. I feel that AirAsia's Weblog cares about me.
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

5. I feel that AirAsia's Weblog is very professional.
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

AirAsia's Weblog Comment System
1. I can place comments on every individual entry (or post) at AirAsia's
Weblog.
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

2. I am able to interact instantly with other users on the AirAsia's
Weblog.
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

3. AirAsia's Weblog provides a unique URL which can be used to respond
to the comment left by the user.
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

4. Every Weblog entry (or post) at AirAsia's Weblog is attached with a
permalink that I can directly link to a specific entry.
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

5. I am able to access a wide range opinions on a specific topic easily
and reliably at AirAsia's Weblog.
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

can link to other Websites or Weblogs.
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

2. I use the blogroll (a list of links on the AirAsia's Webside side bar) as
information references.
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

3. Some of AirAsia's Weblog entries provide a link (hyperlink) that I can
directly link to other Websites or Weblogs.
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

4. Blogroll and hyperlink are able to prove the information's credibility.
Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

Finish.
Thanks for your participation.

Cheah Joey   May 12

Reminder Email: Give me a hand, please :) TQ

Dear Zhukaeta,

Greetings!

This is a reminder email incase you forgot to replay to my survey. It would be greatly appreciated if you could full up the survey before 13th May, 2011 (Friday). Your participation is very important for me to complete my survey and thesis. Thanks you in advance for the corporation and help.

Thanks and have a nice day.

Regards,
Joey

ZegWei Teoh May 11

*Please choose the answer that relate to you and copy and paste the answer and send it back to the researcher. Thanks.

Demography:

1. Gender :1. Male

2. Age :1. Below 30

3. Nationality :1. Malaysia

4. How often do you visit the AirAsia's Weblog? 3. About once a week

5. Are you AirAsia's customer?
1. Yes

Perceived Ease of Use:
Participant is required to rate on a scale of 1 to 7.
(1 Strongly disagree, 2. Somewhat disagree, 3. Disagree, 4. Neutral, 5. Agree, 6. Somewhat agree, 7. Strongly agree).
*Direction: Indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the statements listed below by highlight or copy and paste the answer and send it back to the researcher.

1. AirAsia's Weblog is easy to use.
Strongly Disagree 7 Strongly Agree

2. I quickly learned how to use AirAsia's Weblog.
Strongly Disagree 6 Strongly Agree

3. AirAsia's Weblog is simple to use.
Strongly Disagree 6 Strongly Agree

4. I easily remember how to use AirAsia's Weblog.
Strongly Disagree 5 Strongly Agree

5. It was easy to learn how to use AirAsia's Weblog.
Strongly Disagree 6 Strongly Agree

Perceived Interactivity
1. Many people I communicate with use AirAsia's Weblog.
Strongly Disagree 6 Strongly Agree

2. The people I communicate with will continue to use AirAsia's Weblog in the future.
Strongly Disagree 5 Strongly Agree

3. The people I communicate with using AirAsia's Weblog will continue to use this Weblog in the future.
Strongly Disagree 5 Strongly Agree

4. Of the people I communicate with regularly, many use AirAsia's Weblog.
Strongly Disagree 5 Strongly Agree

5. I use AirAsia's Weblog to communicate with others.
Strongly Disagree 5 Strongly Agree

Perceived Trustworthiness
1. I feel that AirAsia's Weblog is honest.
Strongly Disagree 4 Strongly Agree

2. I feel that AirAsia's Weblog is responsible.
Strongly Disagree 3 Strongly Agree

3. I feel that AirAsia's Weblog understands its customers.
Strongly Disagree 4 Strongly Agree

4. I feel that AirAsia's Weblog cares about me.
Strongly Disagree 3 Strongly Agree

5. I feel that AirAsia's Weblog is very professional.
Strongly Disagree 3 Strongly Agree

AirAsia's Weblog Publishing Software
1. I feel AirAsia's Weblog publishing software is simple to use.
Strongly Disagree 6 Strongly Agree

2. I can publish my entry (or post) at AirAsia's Weblog easily.
Strongly Disagree 6 Strongly Agree

3. AirAsia's Weblog is easy for me to edit my Weblog entry (or post).
Strongly Disagree 5 Strongly Agree

4. I can focus on the content as no technical knowledge and skills are
required.
Strongly Disagree 7 Strongly Agree

5. AirAsia's Weblog allows me to publish photos and other multimedia
content (such as audio and video).
Strongly Disagree 6 Strongly Agree

AirAsia's Weblog Comment System
1. I can place comments on every individual entry (or post) at AirAsia's
Weblog.
Strongly Disagree 6 Strongly Agree

2. I am able to interact instantly with other users on the AirAsia's
Weblog.
Strongly Disagree 6 Strongly Agree

3. AirAsia's Weblog provides a unique URL which can be used to respond
to the comment left by the user.
Strongly Disagree 6 Strongly Agree

4. Every Weblog entry (or post) at AirAsia's Weblog is attached with a
permalink that I can directly link to a specific entry.
Strongly Disagree 5 Strongly Agree

5. I am able to access a wide range opinions on a specific topic easily
and reliably at AirAsia's Weblog.
Strongly Disagree 5 Strongly Agree

AirAsia's Weblog Blogroll and Hyperlink
1. AirAsia's Weblog provides blogroll (a list of links on the side bar) that I
can link to other Websites or Weblogs.
Strongly Disagree 6 Strongly Agree

2. I use the blogroll (a list of links on the AirAsia's Webside side bar) as
information references.
Strongly Disagree 4 Strongly Agree

3. Some of AirAsia's Weblog entries provide a link (hyperlink) that I can
directly link to other Websites or Weblogs.
Strongly Disagree 5 Strongly Agree

4. Blogroll and hyperlink are able to prove the information's credibility.
Strongly Disagree 4 Strongly Agree