

# An Observation on Website Features Towards Air Asia e-Ticketing Website in the Context of Online Purchasing

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**Abstract**— During the past ten years the impact of the internet on channel selection has been dramatic and pervasive throughout the business world. Yet strong arguments can be made that few industries have been as invasively affected as has the airlines industry. Currently travellers increasingly choose the websites to search for flight ticket or other things. This paper provides a report of website observation towards website features that influenced customer to purchase flight ticket online. The study focused on Air Asia e-ticketing website. Hence, the websites features was considered based on the three stages in online purchasing cycle (pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase).

**Keywords**—airline industry; e-ticketing; e-service, online transaction; website observation.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, website has become popular platform in the online environment including online purchasing. They used website for presenting information and delivering the informational services. Website become part of company strategic planning for generating revenue ranging from corporate sector, government ministries to municipal, nonprofit organizational, semi-company and more (Farrah Diana, Maslin & Noorman, 2015).

With the modern technology and Internet in the late 20th century, many sectors including Airline companies have turned to IT in decreasing the cost of product or services. In order to improve their business profit and approach such as management skill, business planning and decision making (Buhalis, 2017). Recently we become witness to a major changes into a global community which is based on the Internet. In a society group, everyone would access to knowledge and learning. Not only in society but also in business industry especially airline. Nowadays, the airline industry is one of the most transformed in the website marketplace (Dutta & Segev, 2015).

Basically, airline customers are coming back to purchase ticket online because of the satisfaction feeling that they experienced in their previous purchasing. Airline e-ticketing website especially Air Asia website features would be organised into the following factors such as search capabilities, promotion and pricing, loyalty program, privacy and security, online payment, seat arrangement, trust, in-flight features and so on (Dutta & Segev, 2015). So, from these basic features, customers were considered as most important factors that need to review before make a purchase.

In Malaysia, Air Asia is the first to initiate the e-ticketing website. This meets their core value of low costs carrier. According to Kiong et al. (2014), about 20% of online purchasers bought air tickets using internet which is via website. This helps the company to increase the popularity in internet and also minimize the costs.

This paper attempts to explore website observation measures specifically for website features towards Air Asia e-ticketing website in online transaction cycle including pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase stages.

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Airline e-ticket**

e-Ticketing by definition is a combination of issuing and delivering the ticket from a single operation (Kiong et al, 2014). An e-ticketing website is an electronic document without a physical paper, most of airlines companies is using this the most. In this new era, most of the companies are using website to sell the air ticket to their customers.

Over the past decade, the growth of computer-related technologies and the wider acceptance of the Internet led to changes in internet user behaviours. Besides, e-commerce has increased highly in order to develop a new marketplace for many industries, such as travel and tourism, entertainment, hotel, transportation, and also airline industry (June & Meiga, 2012). Thus, e-ticketing has been considered as an important contribution in the e-Commerce field.

An e-ticketing model allows customer to enter information directly into the airline's company database. Customers or users are allow to check-in without showing a paper ticket. Thus technology enables the company to reduce costs in terms of printing mailing and reduce the need of man power in terms of decreasing the employee work (Kiong et al, 2014).

### **Online Transaction Cycle**

In the context of e-commerce, the transaction cycle plays an important role in examining the level of satisfaction among online customers or internet users. Basically, by integrating technology and business marketing, airline e-ticketing covers all the aspects of online customers based on transaction cycle.

According to Khalifa and Shen (2005), this online transaction cycle was introduced by Lu and Finberg (2002), and Lu (2003) where consists the part of e-business components that concerned more on attracting and keeping the customer into online transaction. Besides, Lu and Finberg (2002; 2003) explained the online transaction cycle is actually relate to the customer's online experience. From customer's online experience, the customer will share their experience before make a purchase, during purchasing and after purchasing. Furthermore, these features is relate to the website design, function in online transaction cycle

This online transaction cycle, generally, focuses on the level of satisfaction towards e-commerce functionality, demonstrating all possible website features with each transaction stage (Khalifa & Shen, 2005; 2008; Lu, 2003; Lu & Finberg, 2002; Alhiou 2009; 2011).

In a similar vein, other studies like Khalifa and Shen (2005; 2008), Lu (2003), Lu and Finberg (2002), and Alhiou (2009; 2011) asserted that in order to investigate and examine the relationship between website features and customer satisfaction, the transaction cycle is the most suitable for consideration. Moreover, based on past literature, this transaction cycle is the conceptualization of overall satisfaction in customer lifecycle (Khalifa & Shen, 2008).

### **Pre-purchase**

According to Anderson (2001) was cited in Iftikhar and Aatur (2008) described, the pre-purchase is one of the activities like searching for the product information or how to purchase product online if customer is not familiar doing online transaction and e-mail address has provided to make further communication between both company and customer. They added, company will attract new or existing customer by give a discount and promotion methods like advertisement and search engines on the websites.

### **Purchase**

At purchase transaction, customers come out with their own decision to completing this online purchasing process. Alhaiou et al (2009; 2011) highlighted the important factor in this phase is security and privacy because this element will effect a customer's decision.

### **Post- Purchase**

Ross (2005) described that the customer service has play an important role because they will make an online assessment to customer so that company will know about level of customer satisfaction using their online service. Customer service also is more to the communication place between customer and management side to answer the entire question and to interact with customers.

### **Website Observation**

In the early year 1990s, World Wide Web (WWW) phenomenon been introduced and website become the main platform of sharing information over the internet. Initially, the website development was static which is only contains a plain hypertext markup language (HTML) to structure the information and also to be viewed by the user. Then, when the technology growing, the evolution start with social web which is the user can interact more with the website by using keyword search tools. Then, in 2010, a semantic website was keep evolve and the usage of website become poplular and more meaningful in term of processing and delivering information. In addition, in 2020 onwards, website evolution been forecast to go for intelligence website where all the web document like website embedded with natural language and semantic search been apply (Farrah, Maslin & Noorman, 2015).

Website features is one of the important factors that determine the success of the website of any type. It is related to the design aspects of the websites that make sense to people who use them. It is not only allows users to navigate easily and conveniently but also helps them find the information they wanted within a particular website. According to Shahizan and Feng (2001), many studies shows that web features including website design, search capabilities, information content, usability of website problems has caused companies a lot of money as well as potential customers. For example in Rowland (2000) study, he revealed that an online retaioler in UK suffers huge losses due to low number of website users and visitors, despite spending millions on doing website advertising.

As a result, the company announced down sizing the job and huge price reductions. Hence, based on previous study, the norm of 1:3 experinced users find online shopping are defficult because of not enough knowledge on it. This

argument highlights the need for website designers and developers to put some effort and money on improving the website features that can affects the web usability (Shahizan & Feng, 2001).

Besides, observing the web features is not as easy as one would predict. In order to observe, web developers and designers should consider a lot of things including the criteria to be used for the website observation. With this in mind, the following objectives will consider for this study:

- Identify the generic criteria of website features
- Classify the critetria
- Deffrentiate between objective and subjective criteria,

According to Taylor (2011), the word observation itself can be defined as “one of the method of gathering data by watching behaviour, event or noting physical characteristic in the natural or manual form”. Taylor (2011) described an observations can be conduct in two ways which is direct or indirect method. To be specific, Taylor (2011) explained, direct observation involved the activity of watching interaction, behaviours, motion, graphics and also information. While indirect observations are occur when people watch and job down the result of interactions, motions, processes or behaviour towards particular scope.

### **Website Features**

Websites features particularly refer to the website design. “the design of website has created attention in the human computer interaction (HCI) literature” (Kiong et al, 2014). It is a characteristic for user interaction with computer for developing various user-centered products. There are a few method in analysing the website design which is including the website observation.

There are few elements included in web features that analyse the functionality of the website. For example, website user-friendly, interface design and responsiveness. Besides, airline company specifically Air Asia also will place some common navigation function tool to enable public in accessing the website. Some examples for navigation tools are button, bar and pop out special price and promotion (Ainin et al, 2015).

As websites becoming the major interface for airline industry, marketers are now more focusing into the website environment rather than the usability. “Graphical design, layout and actual content are prime components in making the page easier to use” (Kiong et al, 2014). In term of speed, the responsiveness of the website also fall under web features. It is because the website can provide to customer when they searching some information such as looking for best price for air ticket in an airline website.

### **Payment Method**

Airline e-ticketing website normally provides two types of payment method. For example card payment (credit card) and cash payment (debit card). Users usually choose a payment method which is easy to use, but also mature in security system. This is because users are expecting the website to protects their personal data, provide for secure

payment and maintain the privacy of online communication. Any airline companies which providing an e-ticketing website is always trying to maintain and enhance the payment method (Kiong et al, 2014). Besides, customers will evaluate the usefulness and ease of use of a particular website including the information search, internet subscription and payment methods (Chia, 2009). Thus, with this statement it shows how other factors influence the online e-ticketing usage toward airline company.

### **Security and Privacy**

Another important website features and aspect that affects e-ticketing usage in airline is security and privacy. According to Chia (2009), the security is the website ability to protect customers' personal information on the internet. The website must have the ability to protect every customer information such as credit card number, bank information and the other personal information. It is because the users need to know that the data collected from online transaction process does not expose into third party.

Kiong et al (2014) said, online customer will concern more on security, liability and privacy of any online transaction. The company needs to develop a positive perception for the customers. The website should be presented in professionally way and be reliable. The airline companies specifically have to put effort for developing the good image of security and also privacy on their company website.

Beside, another study highlighted the security also concerns in e-commerce in data transaction security such as user authentication (Farrah, Maslin & Noorman, 2015). User authentication can be defined as gaining a customer positive security engagement towards airline company. Hence, data and transaction security is more on the duration of online purchasing process. When the customer receive a good perception of security, it is will increase the number of customers in airline company.

### **III. METHODOLOGY**

The method chosen for this study was website observation. Website observation can be defined as "gathering data by watching behaviour, features, events or noting physical characteristic in their natural setting" (Dragulanesai, 2017). In addition, the reason why website observation need to be conducted is because to develop a measurement that provides an estimation of the quality and value of current websites.

In this study, the both indirect and direct methods were applied in order to receive a better understanding towards Air Asia website. Since this study was attempt to investigate on online transaction part towards airline websites, so the web features of the website were job down. This step suggested by Taylor (2011). Furthermore, the name of the web features was considered based on past literature of David (2014). Based on past study, most of researchers explained that website design, searching information, pricing and security is part of web features (Jayaraman et al., 2011; Johan & Dion, 2013; Rafidah, 2014; and David, 2014).

#### IV. FINDINGS

Website observation was conducted to help the researcher in gaining better understanding of e-ticketing websites in Malaysia, besides assisting the researcher to develop the instruments for the main survey. The website observation was analysed by browsing the Air Asia Berhad ([www.airasia.com](http://www.airasia.com)).

Table 1 shows the results of the website observation for Air Asia e-ticketing websites in Malaysia.

Table 1 Results of Website Features Observation

Website Features	AirAsia
Search capabilities	√
Web check-in	√
Manage my booking	√
Privacy & security policy	√
E-booking	√
E-baggage	√
Travel insure protection	√
Promotion	√
Loyalty programme	√
Holiday package	√
Price list	√
Flight schedule	√
Personal details form	√
Booking summary	√
E-payment	√
Debit method	√
Credit method	√
FAQs	√
Seat allocation	√
Contact us	√

Based on the results derived from website observation, the common features were search capabilities, web check-in, privacy and security policy, e-booking, e-baggage, travel insure protection, promotion, price list, loyalty programme, flight schedule, personal details form, booking summary, e-payment method with credit card, seat allocation, and contact us, but with different design, colour, and layout. This result were similar with the several past studies of Sulaiman et al; (2008); Rafidah (2014), Jayaraman et al., (2014) and Johan & Dion (2013).

From the observation did towards Air Asia website, all the common features played an important role to achieve the company goals directly to attract more customers. Other features, such as manage my booking, holiday package, e-payment with debit card method, and FAQs, were excluded from all the airline websites due to company goals. Elkhani et al., (2013) explained pricing, promotion and information is fell under website information category. In addition, customers will search the information online before place a booking. Elkhani et al., (2013) and Andy & Bright (2013) also found that by implement a good website features can help companies in attracting customer to purchase their product.

## V. DISCUSSION

The main output of this study is a comprehensive list of website features that include in Air Asia e-ticketing website based on the observation conducted.

## VI. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

In the conclusion, nowadays technology world, virtual community has been considered as an important criterion for attracting and maintaining long term relationship with customers., thus many companies for enhancing their performance need to put the online shopping environment in the center of their focus.

The results shows that Air Asia e-ticketig website had most all the user requirement in the context of online transaction including the three stages which is pre-purchase stage, purchase stage and post-purchase stage.

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