CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSIONS

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CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Introduction
This study investigated the current issues facing hoteliers in relation to their exploitation of EDCs to develop an EDC performance evaluation toolkit for hoteliers. This chapter reviews the different objectives and how each objective was achieved using different research methods. The major findings are summarised in section 8.2 which is followed by the main contribution of the research to theory (section 8.3) and practice (section 8.4). Limitations and future research opportunities are identified in section 8.5. Final thoughts are presented in section 8.6 and conclusion in section 8.7

8.2 Review of Objectives and Major Findings
The research objectives were achieved using different methods and two different methodologies. These methods were demonstrated according to the order of objectives. The summary of practical objectives was illustrated in Figure 8.1.

Objective 1: Undertake a critical review of literature on different electronic distribution channels (EDCs) applied in hotels and the issues facing hoteliers in relation to EDC exploitation and EDC evaluation.

Literature relating to specific aspects of ED, EDCs and EDC management, e.g. complexity and quality of information shown on EDCs were critically reviewed using systematic keyword searches of a range of electronic and paper-based
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Figure 8.1: Summary of Practical Objectives Operationalisation

Objective 2
Critique the hospitality distribution environment to explore the current and future distribution channels and the interaction between channels.

Objective 3
Investigate the current issues experienced by affiliated and non-affiliated hotels in Wales in their exploitation of EDCs and synthesise best practice into an EDC evaluation flowchart.

Objective 4
Discuss the EDC evaluation flowchart and the key issues experienced by the hoteliers with an expert panel comprising academics and an industry panel to produce a final EDC management model.

Objective 5
Develop the final EDC management model into an EDC performance evaluation toolkit aimed at addressing the current issues facing hoteliers in relation to their exploitation of EDCs.
resources (e.g. journals, books, reports, websites, conference proceedings) to represent the ED environment in hotels.

Various issues related to EDC management and EDCs’ definitions were presented - in some cases new definitions were developed (e.g. electronic distribution definition - ED) to achieve a better understanding of these terms. In addition, ‘scale of disintermediation’ was produced to present a tool to identify hoteliers’ e-distribution strategies (see figure 8.2). A theoretical EDC management model, including a summary of the major elements of evaluating EDC performance in hospitality, was presented at the end of chapter three as a framework which was used to produce an initial EDC management model (see figure 8.3).

**Figure 8.2: The Scale of Disintermediation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypermalintermediation</th>
<th>Re-intermediation</th>
<th>Selective re-intermediation</th>
<th>Exclusive Distribution</th>
<th>Disintermediation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Number of EDCs

Increasing Disintermediation
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Quality of Hotel Information shown on EDCs

EDC Selection Criteria
- Geography and accessibility to consumers
- Ease of using
- Transaction Speed
- Update Speed
- Traffic Levels
- Integration
- Security
- Initial Capital cost
- History of distribution (operation and financial History)
- Level of Cooperativeness
- The EDC reputation and image
- The rate level of profit growth

EDC Evaluation Criteria
- Revenue
- Number of Bookings
- Level of cost
- Customer loyalty
- Overhead costs
- Efficiency
- Flexibility
- Market share
- Strategic alignment
- Speed
- Ability to control the quality and inventory
- Channel ability to address the current market segment
- Data maintenance
- Channel reputation
- Security
- Traffic levels

Hotelier should evaluate EDCs on regular intervals

Figure 8.3: Theoretical EDC Management Model
Objective 2: Critique the hospitality distribution environment to explore the current and future distribution channels and the interaction between channels.

Various models have been developed of the hospitality distribution environment (e.g. Nassar, 2002; O’Connor and Frew, 2002; O’Connor and Piccoli, 2003). As a result of the rapid development of the technology underpinning ED the majority of these models are out of date and were found to have a number of gaps which highlighted the need for designing a model which represents the hospitality distribution environment and the interaction between channels.

Desk sources were critically reviewed to produce an initial model for distribution in hotels. The model was developed through two phases. The first phase included publishing it in different conferences and collecting audience feedback to design a revised model. The second phase was composed of a series of interviews, with Welsh hoteliers and expert panel members, which were analyzed and assisted in developing a new hotel product distribution model (Figure 8.4). The following objectives were achieved using a slightly different process to produce the main contribution.
**Figure 8.4: The New Hotel Product Distribution Model**

Key terms:
- **VTCs**: Virtual Travel Communities e.g. trip advisors.
- **DMO**: Destination Management Organizations.
- **TIC**: Tourist Information centres.
- **DMS**: Destination Management Systems.
- **Representative company website**: as a term included online hotel representative companies and representative companies websites E.g. classicbritain.com, Activehotels.com, Laterooms.com. **Other Web intermediaries**: E.g. eBay.com, priceline.com, Travelsupermarket.com, uk.travel.yahoo.com. **GDS**: Global Distribution System e.g. Sabre, Galileo. **Switch**: E.g. Pegasvs. **Online travel agencies**: expedia.com, lastminute.com, TravelRes.com.
- **CRS/CRO**: central Reservation Systems/Offices. **Mobile Phone Companies**: e.g. Three.
Objective 3: Investigate the current issues experienced by affiliated and non-affiliated hotels in Wales in their exploitation of EDCs and synthesize best practice into an EDC performance evaluation flowchart.

The investigation was made by using a comparative (multi-evidence) case study methodology (Yin, 2003; Creswell, 2007) which used semi-structured interviews and website analysis to achieve this objective. Triangulation and discourse analysis supported the website analysis to validate the results and to produce meaningful interpretation (Gillen and Petersen, 2007; Kalof et al., 2008).

The findings were summarised in the initial EDC management model (see Figure 8.5) which included an initial EDC performance evaluation flowchart (see Figure 8.6). A detailed demonstration of the initial EDC performance evaluation flowchart (see chapter five Table 5.16) included the best practices synthesized from the comments elicited from the Welsh hoteliers and the literature review.
**Figure 8.5: Initial EDC Management Model**

**EDC Selection Criteria**
- Reservation numbers
- Cost of Distribution
- Opportunity to communicate directly with the customer
- The brand name
- Quality of information shown on different EDCs
- Feedback
- Ease of use
- Updating of information
- Opportunity to increase customer loyalty
- Online promotions
- Good feelings toward EDCs

**Complexity**
- Train your managers
- Train your staff
- Recruit a dedicated person to deal with EDCs
- Choose the right channel that fits the hotel goals
- Check your EDCs regularly and report any problems and learn how to solve it in future
- Try to convince your owner of the problems that could occur without a dedicated person to deal with EDCs
- Use EDCs effectively
- Try their website before signing the contract to prevent any future defaults and to assess its easiness for managers and staff

**Quality of Hotel Information Shown on EDCs**
- Check it regularly
- Update your information on the system
- Make sure the hotel or the EDC provided the customer with information about price, location and quality of services provided
- Inform the EDC about any defaults or inaccuracy in hotel information

**Price Transparency**
- Restriction on commissions and discounts
- Restricted number of rooms offered
- Disintermediation (try to approach it)
- Changing Rates according to the demand

**Communication with EDC companies**
- Have EDC company contact details. Especially the person responsible for your business
- Examine their communication and report any defaults.
- Try to have your deposit in advance and the customer contact details to limit contacting EDCs

**Building Customer relationships**
- Emails
- Loyalty programs (it may not suitable for independent)
- Online promotions
- Customer feedback

**The channels Which are Expected to Grow in the Future**
- Hotel Website (more features and personal services)
- Online travel agencies
- Mobile phone companies
- DMS
- Websites based on GDSs
- DTV companies
- GDS
- Web intermediaries
- Representative company website
- Websites based on switch Company

**Initial EDC Performance Evaluation Flowchart**
Figure 8.6: The Initial EDC Performance Evaluation Flowchart

- Hotel to supply correct information
- Whose fault is it?
- Contact the search engine
- Contact the EDC companies to remedy fault
- The EDC is at fault
- The hotel is at fault

---

- Does the hotel name appear on different search engines?
- Yes
- No

- Does the hotel name appear high on the search engine?
- Yes
- No

- Is the information on the hotel accurate, complete, and attractively presented?
- Yes
- No

- How many reservations has the hotel received through this EDC?
- Acceptable
- Not acceptable

- How much does it cost to appear on this EDC?
- Acceptable
- Not acceptable

- Number of reservations from each EDC
- Record/Evaluate

- List of costs for representation on each EDC
- Record/Evaluate

---

KEY:
- process
- data
- decision
terminator
Objective 4: Discuss an EDC performance evaluation flowchart and the key issues experienced by the hoteliers with an expert panel comprising academics and an industry panel to produce a final EDC management model.

The key issues experienced by the hoteliers and the initial EDC performance evaluation flowchart which result from the Welsh hotel case study findings (first phase of research) were in need for development and generalization. To achieve that, semi-structured interviews and a self-administered survey were held with or distributed to different stakeholders, who composed the industry panel and the expert panel. The industry panel consisted of managers who belonged to: non-affiliated hotels; EDC companies; marketing consortia head offices and chain headquarters. Non-affiliated hoteliers were involved only in developing the initial EDC performance evaluation flowchart as they were involved in pointing out the issues which came out the Welsh hotel case study (first phase of research).

Three different sets of questions were designed in this phase using two different methods: semi-structured interviews with an expert panel and non-affiliated hoteliers managers; a self-administered questionnaire was used to get the information from the majority of the industry panel. Two different self-administered questionnaire forms were designed. The reason behind this was the different nature of business between EDCs companies and affiliation companies (marketing consortia and chain hotels). At the same time different
issues used to be handled differently between hotels and EDCs companies, and hotels and affiliation head offices.

In developing the initial EDC performance evaluation flowchart all industry panel participants were asked. Independent hoteliers were involved in this issue, especially as they were not involved in the first phase to examine an EDC evaluation performance evaluation flowchart. The other types of hoteliers were represented in developing this flowchart as chain head quarters and marketing consortia all participated. This flowchart was part of the final EDC management model (Figure 8.7) which summarised the results of chapter six. Additionally the findings stressed the necessity of developing a toolkit to be more helpful for different types of hotels.
Figure 8.7: The Final EDC Management Model

EDC Selection Criteria
- Value for money
- The brand name
- The quality of hotel information shown on EDCs
- Target market
- Online promotions
- Ease of use
- Support that hotelier receives from the EDC company
- Advertising
- Trust
- The communication effectiveness between EDC company and hotels
- Online visibility
- Flexibility

Complexity
- Train hotel managers and staff
- Recruit a dedicated person to deal with EDCs
- Choose the right EDCs
- Undertake EDC assessment on regular intervals
- Develop the EDC performance evaluation toolkit (see the third stage in the model and chapter seven) to fit the hotel needs
- Invest in the hotel website and in developing a successful SEO to attract more e-customers directly
- Develop a personalized EDC management model to achieve the hotel goals
- Emphasize the affiliation body standards in the electronic distribution (if the hotel is a member of affiliation)
- Use ‘Hotel products distribution model’ to familiarize your staff about the different distribution channels
- Exploit each EDC according to the hotel needs
- Set clear distribution strategies
- Negotiate to have the most appropriate deals (e.g. the contract terms) with EDCs and affiliation bodies
- Develop contingency plans

Quality of Hotel Information Shown on EDCs
- Update and check the information on your systems and on your website
- Check the hotel quality of information shown on different EDCs using the EDC assessment checklist
- Check competitors websites and their online practices
- Be innovative

The Channels and Trends Which Are Expected to Grow in the Future
- Mobile phones
- VTCS
- Be selective in choosing intermediaries
- Travel, and tour operators’ nature of business will be changed
- Remaining of GDS and Switch companies
- Richer online media contents
- Improving loyalty programs
- More added value via EDCs companies
- Expanding of alliances and independents will remain
- Increase competition between EDCs
- The development of electronic distribution will depend on the region of the word
- More control

Building Customer Relationships Electronically
- Send personalized and timed e-mails with previous permission
- Establish loyalty programs
- Consider interacting with customer’s feedback
- Establish an online honest promotional campaigns, emphasizing on emotional things
- Build descent customer information profile
- Build an effective CRM and use appropriate software (if applicable)
- Consider the type of traveler that the hotel targets
- Offer competitive prices
- Encourage customers to book at the hotel website
- Contemplate to present value added services in your marketing campaign
- Monitor and interact with customer feedback (e.g. VTCS, online surveys)

Communication with EDC Companies and Affiliation Head office
- Identify the responsible person about the hotel in the EDCs companies and affiliation head office
- Have clear contract
- Understand the hotel responsibilities, EDCs responsibilities and affiliation members about the reason behind choosing the EDC
- Inform the involved staff and the affiliation members about the reason behind choosing the EDC
- Identify and use the means of support that EDC company or affiliation will provide to you to support the hotel distributional efforts
- Adopt technological solutions to enhance the communication with EDCs
- Be quick in your response to EDCs’ requests
- Prioritize EDCs
- Repeat contact if the EDC did not reply the hotel request
- Establish relationships with other big players to be the hotel substitutes if needed
- If the hotel failed to establish this relationship and the hotel is losing, join an affiliation to be flexible

Price Transparency
- Apply yield management
- Use best price guarantee additionally as marketing tool
- Be selective in choosing EDC (apply selective distribution strategy)
- Obtain property management system (if applicable)
- Make sure to include terms which protect the hotel best price guarantee strategy or the hotel pricing strategy in the contract with EDCs
- Build efficient CRM
- Have single image inventory
- Consider the different nature of channels
- Be consistent in price conditions across the channels
- Find best compromising deals with EDCs
- Have clear pricing strategy
- Offer competitive rates

Please see chapter 7 and the toolkit
Objective 5: Develop the final EDC management model into an EDC performance evaluation toolkit aimed at addressing the current issues facing hoteliers in relation to their exploitation of EDCs.

According to the findings of chapter six, a toolkit was a necessity to fulfill the requirements for the flowchart to be useful for different types of hotels. The EDC performance evaluation toolkit was developed using different resources (see Figure 7.1): literature review, Welsh hotel case study findings (phase one of the research); the expert and the industry panels' findings (phase two of the research). The toolkit was built on the final EDC performance evaluation flowchart (see Figure 8.8) which composed of four main sections for examination: SEO; the hotel website; the quality of information shown on different EDCs; value for money. The toolkit used the early mentioned resources to help hoteliers to exploit EDCs and evaluate EDCs' performance through various checklists and many examples with figures. The toolkit and the final management model should be used by hoteliers to develop their own management model and evaluation toolkit which addresses their own needs since it varies from one hotel to another.
Figure 8.8: Final EDC Performance Evaluation Flowchart Which Summarised the Toolkit

Keys

- start
- Procedure
- Decision
- Terminator

- Did you score enough at Section A?
- Did you score enough at section B?
- Did you score enough at section C?
- Did you achieve your targeted yield from the channel (Section D)?
- Did you decide to continue with the lowest scored EDC(s) after checking it against other EDCs and other factors (e.g., its brand, the contract, other alternatives that you have)?

Regular intervals

Speak with the web designer to remedy the faults and redo them to get higher score

Check this channel performance against other channels
8.3 Contribution to Theory

Lim and Huang (2005) pointed to the paucity of literature dealing with non-affiliated (independent) hotels and EDC applications in these hotels. Furthermore, there were few resources about marketing consortia hotels and their relationship with EDC. The majority of previous research in this area has focused on chain hotels (e.g. Connolly, 1999; O’Connor, 2003). This research has contributed to a deeper understanding of the characteristics of non-affiliated and marketing consortia hoteliers’ in relation to their ED management style (see chapter five).

Various models about EDCs and distribution channels (DCs) and hotels were reviewed and updated through this study (see chapter four). The critical approach of reviewing such models produced certain discrepancies and it was obvious that these models did not mention certain relationships between EDCs, and between EDCs and hotels. These discrepancies and the missing links were discussed and the findings helped to develop an initial model for distributing hotel products. This model was revised and edited by conferences’ audiences, the expert panel and Welsh hoteliers to produce a new model for distributing hotel products. In the final distribution model, some emerging channels of distribution were presented (e.g. mobile phone companies and VTCs). Colour codes were used in it to facilitate tracking the relationship between EDCs and hotels. Particularly, the same colour was used for the company and its website; and the links connecting it to different EDCs or the hotel itself. The value of this was clear when HMC2 and CH4 asked for a copy of it to use in training their
staff and to inform them of the nature of EDCs and the hotel distribution environment.

The ‘scale of disintermediation’ was an adaptation of different authors’ point of views regarding distribution strategies (e.g. Turban et al, 2006; Hudson, 2008). These strategies were modified to be harmonised to represent the different distribution strategies and represented on a scale to make it easy to identify which e-distribution strategy hoteliers adopted or could adopt (Figure 8.2).

Communication between hotels and EDC companies has not been highlighted as an issue in EDC management in previous studies. However, its significance clearly emerged in the Welsh hotel case study and was confirmed by the members of the industry and expert panels. In particular, enhancing communication between hoteliers and EDC companies was the second most repeated recommendation to EDC companies (see Table 6.16). The EDC companies have great responsibility in relation to this issue but hoteliers similarly have to do their best to maintain and enhance this relationship. The participants’ recommendations to hoteliers regarding this issue were mentioned in the final EDC management model (see Figure 8.7). The recommendations to EDC companies about enhancing this relationship revealed the importance of assuring the ease of use of EDC company systems and software and was followed by other recommendations: EDC companies should be efficient in handling hoteliers requests and in increasing the hotel’s volume of business; EDCs should provide customer feedback to hoteliers; EDC companies should
update the hotel information appearing on the EDC; EDCs should provide relevant information about the hotel.

Lim and Huang (2005) pointed to the limited literature on EDC applications in non-affiliated hotels. This research has investigated EDC management in non-affiliated and affiliated hotels and found differences between them. Furthermore, differences were experienced between major affiliated hotel groups, i.e. marketing consortia and chain hotels. Differences existed, in the EDC management style, according to the discrepancies between them in: the number of rooms; the brand; the negotiating power; the staff experiences; the financial abilities; the amount of freedom in their decision making; the nature of business and the signed contracts terms. These elements influenced their performance. For instance, the financial abilities influenced the staff experiences and abilities. The acceptable payment that affiliated hotels pay for their employees decreased the rate of employee turnover and enabled them to recruit well trained and experienced employees.

Maxwell’s (1998) model (see chapter two) was modified to reflect the nature of this research. The modified model for research design (see Figure 8.9) can be taken as starting point to develop a model which represents current practice in qualitative research design. In the modified model ‘accessibility’ was added to the contextual elements affecting research design. Some links in Maxwell’s (1998) model were missing between the different contextual factors, e.g. the link between ‘methods’ and ‘validity’. Other contextual factors were merged since
they seemed to overlap, notably ‘researcher skills’ and ‘personal style’. The ‘personal style’ was presented in other elements in the researcher skills and in the personal experience. This model (Figure 8.9) was presented in chapter two.

Other studies in similar research areas have been undertaken using Delphi technique, case study approach and other quantitative research methods (e.g. Conolly, 1999; O’Connor, 2001; Varini, 2006). This study tried to develop a new research approach to achieve the aim and the objectives, and to give stakeholders more space to contribute and to update the current knowledge. This strategy was successful as it exposed different areas which were
previously neglected in the literature (e.g. communication issue between the EDC companies and hoteliers) and it enriched the final EDC management model (especially, the EDC performance evaluation toolkit). Of particular note is that the different stakeholders have different backgrounds and belonged to different cultures and countries which enriched the findings.

Discourse analysis was also used in this research and a cross checking procedure between the interview results and the website analysis (Figure 2.8), was developed to enrich the analysis and to contribute to the reliability and validity of the research. The cross checking was adopted in the first phase of research (Welsh hotel case study). A web analysis procedure was designed to check the EDCs’ websites (including the quality of hotel information shown and the website position at SEs); hotel website position at different SEs; and hotel website quality before and after the interview. This checking revealed some contradictions between what hotel managers thought and what was actually happening in the e-market place (e.g. CH4) which reflects the hotelier’s lack of assessment of EDCs.

8.4 Contribution to Practice

O’Connor (2001) identified the lack of EDC evaluation tools for hotels. This research has developed an EDC evaluation performance toolkit (see chapter seven and the second volume of this thesis). The EDC performance evaluation toolkit was designed to be flexible to accommodate different hoteliers’ needs and management styles. Particularly, it enables any hotelier to add any
attributes or element for assessment and to modify the score without any complicated calculations. The EDC evaluation toolkit can be modified to be used in educating and training hoteliers since it was built on different recommendations to enable hoteliers to exploit different EDCs. Especially, the findings in this study highlighted staff training and ability as the major resources in effectively managing EDC in different types of hotels.

The final EDC management model was designed to fill the knowledge gap about EDC management. In this one model all the different issues related to EDC management which were not covered in other distribution management models (e.g. Kotler et al., 1999; Hudson, 2008) are included and it provides updated information about the current practices in hotel industry. Additionally, the model can accommodate future trends which thus enables hoteliers to plan their future management strategies accordingly. The EDC management model, including the EDC evaluation toolkit and the model of distribution hotel products, can be used in training staff and managers about how to deal with EDCs and different current trends in hotel distribution. The model could be included in a standard training handbook which contains information about EDC management for hoteliers.

8.5 Limitations of the Research and Opportunities for Future Research

The first and most obvious limitation of this research is that due to temporal constraints (the research has already taken four years and has challenged the timescales allowed by the sponsors of the research), the toolkit was not trialled
with hoteliers to check the appropriateness of its wording and their ability to apply the toolkit and enhance their EDC performance. Thus an initial opportunity for further research would be to trial the toolkit with hoteliers in Wales and wider across the UK. Following that the generalisability of the toolkit from the UK context to other contexts, e.g. Egypt (which is an established tourism destination) and Oman (which is an emerging tourism destination), is also something that can be tested. The international nature of the industry and expert panel and indeed the Internet should mean that the toolkit is applicable beyond the UK in terms of its technical content but issues of presentation in different cultural contexts and languages may need particular attention.

The relationship between hotels and the new EDCs (e.g. VTCs; mobile phone companies; online auctions) were not explored in any depth since they were considered as new or future channels and hoteliers (particularly, non-affiliated hoteliers) were not familiar with them. However, these new EDCs are likely to have a powerful role in ED in the future and thus would provide a suitable focus for research. VTCs have already begun to have a role in distributing hotels and should be considered as an opportunity for non-affiliated hotels to build their own reputation and to compete against branded hotels (Amadeus, 2007). This opportunity needs to be examined against current hoteliers’ practices and its applicability for SMEs explored. Mobile phone companies (e.g. 3G) have launched a range of web services which enables their users to click on icons for certain companies (e.g. ebay) and connect to its website, to log into their accounts and to buy and sell products. These services and their opportunities
for hoteliers will need to be researched and discussed with mobile companies, e-intermediaries and hotels. Online auction companies have been identified as a growing distribution channels for hotels in Germany (Fuchs et al., 2008) and this new channel requires additional research to assess its profitability for hotels and to investigate its future opportunities.

8.6 Final Thoughts
This research has tried to advance knowledge of a range of issues relating to the management of electronic distribution in hotels and in doing so has interacted with different discipline areas (e.g. IT, tourism and consumer behaviour). Multi-disciplinary research is a challenge - particularly so in this research which was about making complex technical issues understandable to non-technical audiences, i.e. hoteliers.

Any research has to be clearly delimited from the beginning else it will have no end and is likely to fail. The major limits of this research were time and finance. A researcher should have in place contingency plans to deal with any unhappy surprises (e.g. no response from the research sample) and must be prepared to be flexible in order to achieve the objectives and to cope with any unforeseen circumstances. This was one of the major lessons that came out of this research.
8.7 Conclusion

The research was undertaken to investigate current issues facing hoteliers in relation to their exploitation of EDCs in order to develop an EDC performance evaluation toolkit. Four main issues were identified in literature, i.e. complexity; quality of hotel information shown on EDCs; price transparency; building customer relationships. Whilst price transparency and building customer relationships were not perceived as critical issues for hoteliers, the findings emphasized that hoteliers face two key interrelated challenges, i.e. complexity and quality of hotel information shown on EDCs. Additionally, the study revealed a significant issue facing hoteliers which is the communication with EDC companies. The results from two phases of fieldwork resulted in an EDC Management Model from which an EDC performance evaluation toolkit was developed.

The research journey had some obstacles which were resolved by modifying: the sample; contact methods; research methods and sets of questions. The objectives were achieved at the end producing a theoretical contributions and practical contributions. The main theoretical contributions of the research were: the new hotel distribution model; the modified model for contextual factors influencing the research design; adding to the existing literature about non-affiliated hotels exploiting EDCs in; revealing communication with EDC companies as another issue facing affiliated and non-affiliated hoteliers; the scale of disintermediation. The practical contributions were: the final EDC management model and the EDC performance evaluation toolkit.
The toolkit was simplified to make it more useful for affiliated and non-affiliated hoteliers. The toolkit comprises a set of instructions, accompanied with explanatory figures, and tips which were provided to help hoteliers to understand about ED and how to evaluate EDC performance - including their own websites. The toolkit was designed to evaluate four key areas individually to enable hoteliers, particularly those who do not have enough time to undertake a complete evaluation of their ED practices, to focus on particular aspects of ED. The toolkit was designed to be flexible to permit hoteliers to adjust it context according to their special needs and priorities.