

Relationship of Brand Image, Trust and Value on Purchase Intention of Hotels Using Online Technology in China

Wong Chee Hoo¹, Wu Guodian², Christian Wiradendi Wolor³, Zhu Ling⁴, Manoch Prompanyo⁵

Abstract

According to a 2015 survey on Chinese outbound tourist consumption, more than a third of Chinese tourists saw travel as equally important as learning and education, career development, child growth, and family wealth. This led to a significant improvement in both the well-being of individuals and their quality of life indicators. When customers have a wider range of options to choose from when making reservations, they are more likely to encounter difficulties in incorporating all of these choices. When customers interact with these forces in the same manner as they do with other forces, conventional variables such as brand image, price, trust, and value will significantly influence their decisions. This means that consumers will interact with these forces in the same manner. We are conducting this study to identify the factors that influence customers' purchase intentions when they make hotel or online reservations in China. The study gathered the information from 392 individuals who responded to the questionnaire. We performed an analysis of the obtained data using SPSS. The conclusion that can be drawn from this is that there is a substantial association between the dependent variable, which is the consumer's desire to make a purchase while booking a hotel online, and three independent factors, namely brand image and trust. On the other hand, we found that the price significantly influences the customer's desire to make a purchase when they book a hotel online. According to the findings of this research, it is possible to draw the conclusion that consumers in China have the same viewpoint and concerns as consumers in other countries when it comes to booking a hotel via an online platform.

Keywords: *Customer Purchase Intention, Consumer Behaviour, Online Hotel Booking, Brand Image, Trust, Value, China.*

Introduction

The 2015 study on Chinese outbound tourist consumption revealed that over one-third of Chinese tourists regarded travel as equally essential to learning and education, job development, child growth, and family prosperity. It played a significant role in enhancing individuals' well-being and assessing their quality of life, according to Ipsos.com (2016). According to a poll, the majority of travellers get information on their trips over the internet.

According to the 2018 Chinese Global Travel Survey Report (<http://downloads.juwai.com>), China has become the world's fastest-growing and biggest outbound travel market due to rising consumption levels among Chinese residents. This transformation occurred as a result of the Chinese population's rapid growth. The millennial generation, which includes those between the ages of 20 and 30, is increasingly choosing to make travel plans on their own rather than purchasing pre-packaged vacation packages (Coresight study, 2018). It indicates that they are responsible for making their own accommodations and travel arrangements.

The development of various technologies has made the Internet a significant distribution channel in the hotel business. When it comes to hotels, various distribution channels each play a unique role. For example, the hotel's website highlights and reflects its image and competitive edge. On the other hand, online travel agents offer customers benefits such as the ability to compare the prices of multiple hotels at the same time (Duran, 2015). Clients like to book hotels on the internet because it saves them time and is convenient. Additionally, clients can learn about pricing, service, and brand image. Several hotels have recognized this trend and implemented an online booking service (Lien et al., 2015). Liu et al. (2024) study bridges gaps in

¹Associate Professor Faculty of Business and Communications, Malaysia INTI International University, Email id: CheeHoo.wong@newinti.edu.my, Orcid id: 0000-0003-0691-4463.

² Faculty of Business and Communications, Malaysia INTI International University, Email id: i1713912@student.newinti.edu.my.

³ Faculty of Economics, Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Indonesia., Email: christianwiradendi@unj.ac.id.

⁴ Faculty of Liberal Arts, Shinawatra University, Thailand., Email: zhu.ling@siu.ac.th.

⁵ Lecturer, Faculty of Management, Shinawatra University, Thailand, E-mail: Manoch.p@siu.ac.th, ORCID:0009-0006-9819-3163

smart hotel literature by proposing new frameworks for understanding customer decisions amid technological advancements and environmental responsibilities

When attempting to make hotel reservations, the most significant challenge is obtaining appropriate information in order to make comparisons. Before the advent of online portals, consumers had to visit and communicate with numerous service providers to gain an understanding of the services they could expect from that specific organisation (JennyWeichen & Mohsen, 2016)

The proliferation of several different channels for booking these hotels and providing information causes dissonance in the customer's thinking about which channel to trust at any given moment (Huang, Li, Mou, & Liu, 2017).

Therefore, most of the challenges faced by customers arise from their attempts to identify the variables they need to consider at any given moment. The shifting expectations of consumers will lead to changes in these composition components, leaving businesses uncertain about the next innovation in the sector. Consequently, this might result in some companies failing to participate in the development cycle when it takes place (JennyWeichen & Mohsen, 2016).

The main purpose of this study is to determine the factors that influence customer purchase intentions when booking hotels online in China. The research objectives can be divided into the following specific areas:

RO1: To determine whether brand image has relationship with customer purchase intention.

RO2: To determine whether trust has relationship with customer purchase intention.

RO3: To determine whether value has relationship with customer purchase intention.

Review of Literature

Purchase Intention

According to Kang and Kim (2012), the term "consumer purchase intention" refers to the buyer's ultimate purpose in making a purchase of the goods in question. The customer must first go through a specified sequence of actions before their desire to make a purchase becomes a reality. When it comes to these transactions, the consumer buying process is a good predictor of consumer intention (Yeow, Chin, Yeow, & Tan, 2013). The literature refers to this procedure as the consumer purchase process. Research up to this point describes the consumer's purchase intention as the intention they have while interacting with goods and services. Han and Hu (2009) state that the consumer with the purpose is most likely to buy the goods, making them the firm's most productive client. There are a wide range of factors that could influence consumers' decision-making processes and intentions about their purchases. The brand's established branding and awareness could potentially impact the customer during the information seeking stage (Rahim & Rosly, 2014). This occurs because the customer is actively seeking information. Presenting the product qualities in a way that appeals to the consumer is likely to accelerate the customer's progression to the next stage. This is because the consumer is looking for more information about the product's characteristics. In the same vein, the procedure that occurs after the purchase is also correct. Recent study by Abdullah et al.(2023) studied purchase intention of green online travel products in Malaysia.

Brand Image

Sallam (2016) defines brand image as the customer's internal perception of the brand. As the name implies, the focus is on the consumer's perception, which is shaped through their interactions with the brand or their involvement in the company's awareness campaigns (Anwar, Gulzar, Sohail, & Akram, 2011). This is because perception is what the consumer pays himself for. Furthermore, the consumer's immediate environment may play a role in the formation of the brand image through their informal and formal

communication networks. According to Rondon (2012), this, in conjunction with the internal cognitive characteristics of the customer, is what ultimately results in the formation of the final brand image that exists in their mind. For a variety of reasons, the organization places a great deal of importance on branding and building a brand image. According to Anselmsson, Bondesson, and Johansson (2014), businesses that ultimately engage in the process of brand development are more likely to establish closed-loop systems that allow customers to circulate inside them. Hosseini and Moezzi (2015) assert that a crucial aspect of branding for businesses is the value of the created brand.

Trust

According to Mal, Davies, and Diers-Lawson (2016), the term "consumer trust" refers to the amount of trust that a customer develops with a brand as a result of persistent interactions and the development of connections with the brand inside the consumer. According to Wilson et al. (2017), the establishment of trust is contingent upon the customer's understanding of the brand promise and their perception of receiving the expected value. Moreover, other factors like performance qualities necessitate businesses to focus on building trust in every transaction. According to Hynes, McLeod, Norsworthy, Sharp, and Sword (2017), trust is a highly cognitive power that is inherently present inside the consumer. When individuals interact with others that they know, they exhibit many of the same characteristics that are present in trust relations. Sundharavadivel and Dharani (2017) assert that the establishment of trust between the customer and the brand enhances the significance of the entire transaction between the two parties. This is analogous to the way in which people trust one another.

In order for trust to exist, there must be a connection between the two parties. Groenland, Kuylen and Bloem (1996) assert that for a firm to build long-term trust, it must consistently show that it is not only fulfilling the brand's promise, but also enhancing it.

Value

According to Svec, Giannoulis, and Zdravkovic (2011), values refer to the capacity to position a product in a market that falls somewhere between a luxury product and a mass market product. Svec, Giannoulis, and Zdravkovic (2011) argue that a product possesses intrinsic value if it possesses the requisite quality qualities and if its pricing aligns with market standards. Specifically, this is because the price process's valuation accurately reflects the quality of the goods. Consequently, people perceive value as a complex force because calculating it presents significant challenges. According to Lee, Kim, and Welk (2014), it presents a challenge for companies to simultaneously provide multiple values, as different individuals may have varying perceptions of the defined value. On the other hand, companies can achieve this objective by implementing a differentiated approach. A differentiated strategy is one in which the primary emphasis is on the production of a diverse range of goods that can simultaneously satisfy and provide value to a number of different target markets. According to Rubio, Villaseñor, and Oubiña (2015), one of the most significant challenges in marketing is the achievement of providing sufficient value for each and every transaction. It is an essential component of the marketing mix to provide value to the customer for each and every launch or campaign that is currently going on.

Gaps in the Literature

(JennyWeichen & Mohsen, 2016) point out that there is a significant lack of research that examines all of these characteristics in the context of hotels in China. This represents a significant gap in the current body of literature. Other research investigates a variety of variables and attempts to comprehend the influence that these variables have on the dependent variable as well as the consumer's intention to make a purchase, but very few of these studies focus on the combination of factors (Wang, Luo, & Tang, 2015). There have been a number of studies that have regarded some variables as dimensions rather than independent variables. According to Yang, Huang, and Shen (2017), this study provides insights into the ways in which people in China are evaluating hotel options, as well as the major elements that encourage them to participate in the decision-making process. These are the main concerns that regulatory and industrial parties must address to improve China's tourist sector and help it grow into a major economic contributor.

Research Framework

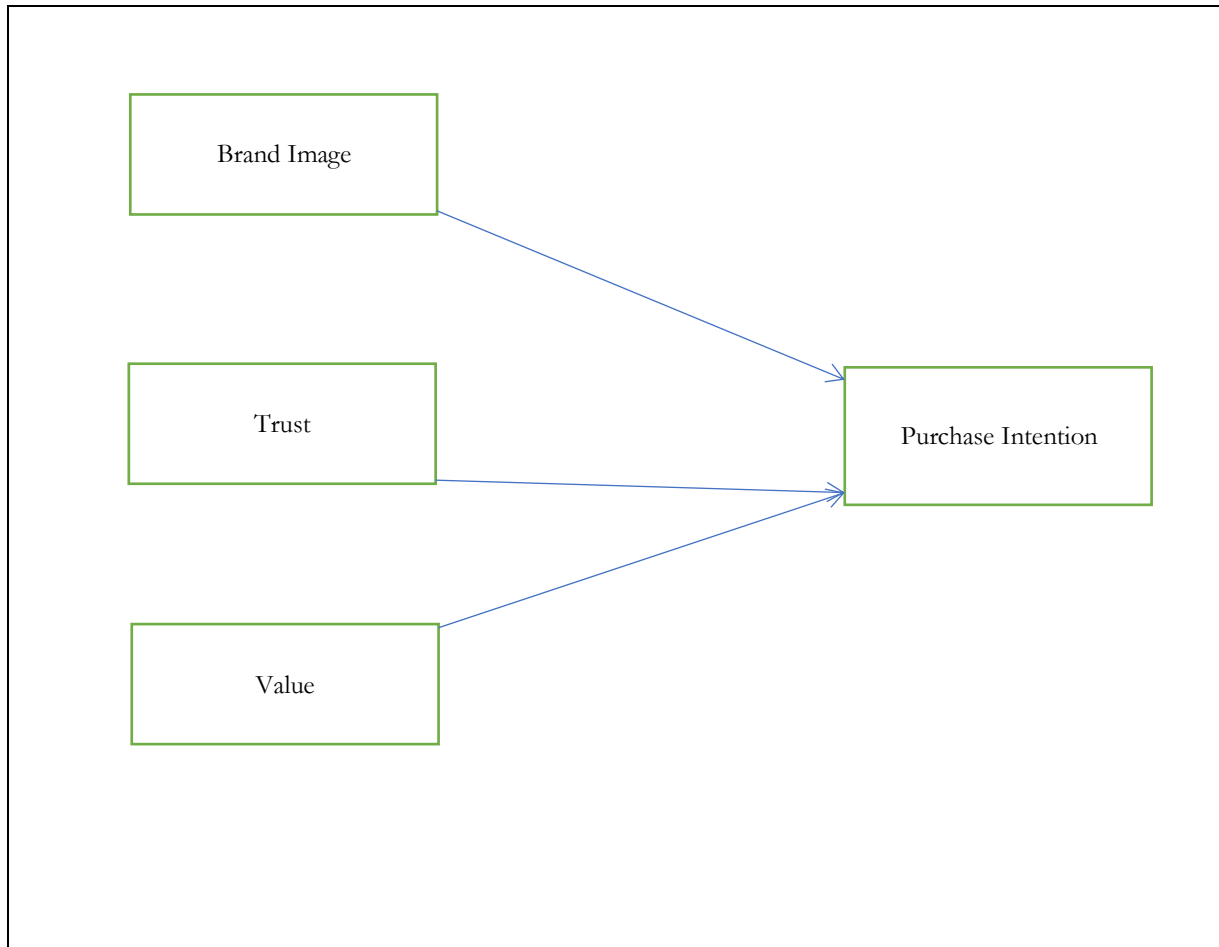


Figure above shows the research framework of this study.

Source: Authors

Hypotheses

Based on the research objectives and literature reviews material, the research hypotheses are as following:

H1: Brand image has a significant relationship on the customer purchase intentions when booking hotels online in China.

H2: Trust has a significant relationship on the customer purchase intentions when booking hotels online in China.

H3: Value has a significant relationship on the customer purchase intentions when booking hotels online in China.

Research Design

For the purposes of this research, the population would consist of all people in China who make hotel reservations online. We used a nonprobability convenience sample strategy as the representative sample for

this particular investigation. In addition, the researchers may use a sample size calculator to establish the number of people to survey; for example, if the population is more than 100,000, the sample size would be 384 (Krejcie and Morgan, 1970). The strategy will involve using forms and conducting the data gathering process online. The most important reasons for using online data collection are the time savings and convenience it provides. The questionnaire and its questions will draw from previous research on the relationship between the factors under investigation and the variable under study. In other words, we will only use and ask verified questions, thereby simplifying the process for the manufacturer of the currently used measuring device.

Data Analysis and Results

This section will include a discussion of the respondents' demographics. We collected demographic information from the respondents, including their gender, age, marital status, level of education, monthly income, and previous experience with online hotel reservations. In the context of this study, it is essential to have a comprehension of the respondent profile.

Table 1: Demographic Profile

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	120	30.6
	Female	272	69.4
Age	18-20 years	32	8.2
	21-30 years	159	40.6
	31-40 years	151	38.5
	41-50 years	40	10.2
	51 and above	10	2.6
Marital Status	Married	185	47.2
	Single	188	48.0
	Divorced	19	4.8
Education Level	Secondary/ High School	22	5.6
	Diploma	99	25.3
	Degree	167	42.6
	Master's and above	104	26.5
Monthly Income	RMB 2,000 – RMB 5,000	18	4.6
	RMB 5,001 – RMB 8,000	173	44.1
	RMB 8,001 – RMB 11,000	158	40.3
	RMB 11,001 and above	43	11
Online Booking	Yes	311	79.3
	No	18	20.7

First and foremost, we will discuss gender in the context of demographics. Table 2 clearly shows that there are significantly more females than males, with 272 compared to 120. It is possible to draw the conclusion that the female population in China is larger than the male population based on the fact that the number of females is higher than the number of men.

With regard to the age demographic, the majority of the respondents are between the ages of 21 and 30, which accounts for 41% of the total. Those who fall within the age range of 31 to 40 years old make up 38.5% of the total responses, making them the second-biggest group. Suddendorf, Addis and Corballis (2009) found that humans lose their ability to travel once they turn 21. Their financial and emotional preparation suggests that they may travel for business or pleasure.

When it comes to the demography of someone's marital status, being single and being married are almost identical. When compared to those who are married, the majority of the respondents are single, accounting for 188 individuals, while married status accounts for 185 individuals.

Regarding the demographics of respondents' educational levels, 167 out of 392 respondents, or the majority, have a high education level, which is equivalent to a degree level. Moreover, the master and above-holder group, comprising 104 out of 392 respondents, ranks as the second-highest group. As a result of China's highly competitive culture, the majority of the country's citizens have taken further measures to improve their educational level. To put it another way, the individuals who participated in this study exercise have a high level of analytical skill. This will enhance the reliability of the study's results.

Regarding the demography of monthly income, the majority of respondents fell between the range of RM 5,001 and RM 8,000, which accounts for 44% of the total. The second highest price falls within the range of RMB 8,001 to RM 11,000, accounting for forty percent of the total. Employers in China were unable to provide better compensation to their workforce because of the country's relatively high population density.

Regarding the following topic, the majority of respondents have already booked a hotel online or are planning to book one online. This category includes 311 out of 392 respondents, which accounts for 79% of the total. Because of the rapid development of technology and the Internet of Things (IoT), it is increasingly common for people in China to make reservations or purchases online or via the Internet of Things (IoT). Kshetri's (2016) research revealed that 83 percent of Chinese citizens favor online shopping due to its ability to significantly reduce time, money, and inconvenience.

Reliability Analysis

For the purpose of this investigation, we conducted a reliability study that is identical to the test conducted in the questionnaire's pilot survey. The purpose of conducting a reliability analysis is to confirm that the variable is accurately measuring its intended parameters. This is because if the variables are not measuring what they are meant to measure, then it is possible to make rapid adjustments to rectify the situation before continuing with the study. In light of the fact that it is comparable to the pilot test, the minimum criterion for the Cronbach Alpha value is 0.7 or higher.

Table 2: Reliability Test

Variables		Cronbach's Alpha	N of Item
Independent Variables	Brand Image	.834	4
	Price	.779	4
	Trust	.815	4
	Value	.729	4
Dependent Variables	Purchase Intention	.756	4
All Variables		.897	26

Table 2 presents the reliability analysis results of four independent variables, namely brand image, price, trust, and value, based on the presented information. In this study, purchasing intentions are the dependent variable. There are four items attached to each of the variables, which is a reference to the total number of questions included in the questionnaire. The first variable, brand image, displayed a Cronbach Alpha number of 0.834, surpassing the typical Cronbach Alpha value of 0.7. We found the Cronbach Alpha value for the second variable, price, to be 0.779, 0.079 higher than the minimal criterion of 0.7. We have determined a Cronbach Alpha value of 0.815 for the third variable, trust. This value is 0.115 points higher than the previous value of 0.7. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the fourth variable has a value of 0.729, which is 0.029 higher than the previous value of 0.7. We determined that the Cronbach Alpha satisfied the minimal threshold for the purchase intention test, which is more than 0.7. We assign a value of 0.756 to the intention to acquire.

The researcher can proceed with the investigation using the currently selected variables. This is because the values of all four Cronbach Alpha variables exceeded the minimal threshold of 0.7. This demonstrated that the variables had a high degree of dependability.

Table 3: Correlation test

Independent Variables	R – value	P – Value	Significant
Brand Image	.557	.001	Significant
Trust	.509	.001	Significant
Value	.462	.001	Significant

Table 3 displays the results of the coefficient test. The goal of running a Pearson correlation test, as stated by Adler and Parmryd (2010), is to determine whether or not there is a significant link between two variables. In other words, we use the Pearson correlation test to ascertain the degree of closeness between two variables. The p-value, which is the measurement technique, had to be lower than the r-value.

With a correlation coefficient of 0.557 and a p-value of 0.001, the p-value for the first variable, which is brand image, is lower than the alpha value. This suggests a significant correlation between brand image and purchase intentions. With a correlation coefficient of 0.509 and a p-value of 0.001, the p-value for the second variable, which is trust, is lower than the alpha value. Consequently, we discovered a substantial association between trust and the desire to make a purchase. With a correlation coefficient of 0.462 and a p-value of 0.001, the p-value for the third variable, which is value, is lower than the alpha value. The findings indicated that there was a substantial association between value and the intention to make a purchase. To sum up, there was a strong association between each of the four factors and the desire to make a purchase. Therefore, the following is a summary of the findings in relation to the hypothesis:

Table 4: Summary of the Findings.

Hypotheses	Item Description	Results
H1	Brand image has a significant relationship on the customer purchase intentions when booking hotels online in China.	Significant
H2	Trust has a significant relationship on the customer purchase intentions when booking hotels online in China.	Significant
H3	Value has a significant relationship on the customer purchase intentions when booking hotels online in China.	Significant

Table 4 summarised results of the data analysis. When it comes to making a reservation for a hotel online in China, the objective of this study is to determine which elements might have an impact on the customer's desire to make a purchase. We chose trust, pricing, and brand image as the elements for this investigation. To phrase it another way, the purpose is to determine whether or not there is a link between the independent factors and the dependent variable. The results can be summarized as follows: a customer's desire to make a purchase when booking a hotel online is significantly influenced by the brand impression, pricing, and trust level. As a result, the majority of hotels must keep this in mind if they want to increase their sales income or overall company success.

Conclusion

This study examined the factors that influence customers' purchase intentions during online hotel reservations. We chose the hotel or hospitality business as the sector of interest for this study. We conducted a number of tests during this investigation. These tests included multiple linear regression, Pearson correlation, coefficient, and statistical significance tests. All test results were consistent, indicating

that brand image, pricing, and trust significantly influence customers' purchase intentions when they book hotels online in China.

All independent factors, including brand image, trust, and value, significantly influence the dependent variable, the consumer's intention to make a purchase while booking a hotel online. On the other hand, we found that the brand image has highest significant influences the customer's desire to make a purchase when they book a hotel online. According to the research findings, it is possible to draw the conclusion that consumers in China have the same viewpoint and concerns as consumers in other countries when it comes to booking a hotel via an online platform.

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