Investigating the factors affecting online hotel reservations: An analysis of Vietnamese adolescents

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	A study on the importance of returning hotel reservations plays a significant role for both hotels and researchers in the hospitality industry, especially in the context of the strong development of technology and the increasing popularity of online hotel bookings. In Vietnam, the younger generation has a diverse and high-frequency travel behavior. Therefore, this study aims to identify factors that influence the intention of young people to return and make hotel bookings. The study used 558 respondents under the age of 35. The PLS-SEM analysis technique was applied in this study using Smart-PLS software. The results of the analysis indicate that social influence, perceived value, habit, website trust, and perceived ease of use all have a positive impact on the intention to reserve hotels online. Based on these research findings, the authors also suggest some policy implications to improve the attraction of young customers to return and make hotel bookings.

1. Introduction

Booking hotel rooms online is an advanced technology that helps users save time, money, and convenience when booking hotel rooms. With the development of technology and the Internet, this has become increasingly popular and important in our modern lives (Chen 2012). Online hotel booking has become a common trend in modern times (Kim & Kim, 2017). This has brought about a significant change in the way consumers search and book hotel rooms. By using online hotel booking websites, those who want to book rooms can easily find hotels that suit their needs and make bookings quickly and easily (Chen & Dubinsky, 2003). With the development of technology and the Internet, online hotel booking has become easier than ever (Chen & Dubinsky, 2003; Zickuhr & Madden, 2012). Users only need to access hotel booking websites and enter information about the arrival date, departure date, and number of people. Then, they can search for suitable hotels and make online bookings in just a few minutes (Beldona, 2005; Chatterjee & Wang, 2012; Kim et al., 2015; Yoo & Gretzel, 2009).

In general, booking hotels online not only saves time but also helps users save costs. Thanks to the price comparison feature on hotel booking websites, users can search for deals, promotions, and discounts from various hotels, helping them save costs for their trip (Duffy, 2015; Litvin et al., 2008). Additionally, online hotel booking makes it more convenient for users to make changes or cancel their bookings. With the online booking management feature, users can easily and quickly change their arrival and departure dates or cancel their bookings (Chen & Dubinsky, 2003; Duffy, 2015; Zickuhr & Madden, 2012).

Young people play an important role in shaping the trends and preferences of the hotel tourism market. To develop and create economic benefits for the hotel tourism industry, businesses need a suitable strategy to attract and retain young customers (Huang et al., 2017). Young people currently account for a large proportion of the population and have a tendency to love traveling. Accessing and attracting this customer group can bring a large potential customer base for businesses in the hotel tourism industry (Lien et al., 2015; Talwar et al., 2020). Young people often have different trends, habits, and needs compared to previous generations. To attract young customers, businesses in the hotel tourism industry need new creativity in products, services, and experiences (Huang et al., 2017; Lien et al., 2015). Young people are often tech-savvy and use social media stylishly (Talwar et al., 2020). Therefore, businesses in the hotel tourism industry need to use digital marketing tools to access these young customers. Therefore, studying the behavior of young people in hotel tourism is becoming increasingly important.

Recent studies in online hotel booking have shown that consumer intentions are shaped by factors like perceived value, website trust, and hotel trust, which significantly influence booking behavior (Augustine & Adnan, 2020; Kim & Kim, 2017). Since 2017, further research has highlighted that aspects such as website design quality, ease of navigation, and security assurance are crucial for building consumer trust and enhancing perceived ease of use. For instance, Xiang et al. (2021) emphasized that a seamless, mobile-friendly interface improves user experience and facilitates booking intentions, reflecting the importance of usability and trust in online platforms.

The present study combines the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) to comprehensively examine these evolving influences. TAM, initially developed by Davis (1989), emphasizes perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use as central determinants in a user's decision to adopt new technology. Recent studies reinforce the relevance of these constructs in the online hotel booking context, where efficient navigation and security features play a significant role in influencing user attitudes and intentions (Morosan & DeFranco, 2019). As mobile usage grows, factors related to ease of use, especially mobile optimization and intuitive design, have become even more critical for consumer adoption (Okumus et al., 2018). TRA, on the other hand, focuses on how subjective norms-social pressures or influences-affect behavioral intentions (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). This is particularly relevant in the current digital landscape, where peer reviews and social influence heavily impact booking decisions. For example, Stylos et al. (2021) found that positive online reviews and endorsements significantly increase users' confidence in their booking decisions, underscoring the role of subjective norms in online travel behavior. TRA's focus on the power of social validation and peer influence aligns with the observed impact of online word-of-mouth and influencer recommendations on consumer choices.

The integration of TAM and TRA in this study provides a comprehensive framework that captures both technological usability (TAM) and social influences (TRA). This dual approach allows for a more nuanced understanding of how ease of use, website trust, and habit interact to shape consumer intentions to book online. Recent research also indicates that consumers develop habitual behaviors with repeated use of technology, which can strengthen their commitment to specific platforms over time (Venkatesh et al., 2020). By accounting for both direct effects (e.g., usability and perceived usefulness) and indirect social and habitual influences, this study provides a holistic view of the factors driving online booking intentions.

This research offers a fresh perspective on the hospitality and tourism industry by focusing on an underexplored yet pivotal demographic: young Vietnamese consumers. It seeks

to uncover the key factors driving their online hotel booking intentions, with particular attention to the role of habit as a direct determinant of booking behavior. By integrating TAM and TRA frameworks, this study explores the dynamic interplay between technological usability, trust, and social influences in shaping booking decisions. With Vietnam's youth representing a tech-savvy and rapidly growing market segment, the findings provide critical insights into their decision-making processes, offering practical recommendations for enhancing user engagement and loyalty. This research not only addresses a significant knowledge gap in the literature but also equips online booking platforms with actionable strategies to adapt to the evolving needs of modern consumers in an increasingly competitive digital landscape.

2. Literature review

2.1. Intention to reserve hotels online

The desire of consumers to make online hotel reservations is the primary dependent variable in the model. This variable is based on the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), which suggests that the primary predictor of actual behavior is behavioral intention (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). According to Ajzen (2011), in the context of online buying, behavioral intentions have been shown to be a reliable indicator of actual behavior. Additionally, it has been shown that behavioral intentions are the strongest indicator of actual behavior when it comes to online travel buying (Amaro & Duarte, 2015; Ponte et al., 2015). Because it is difficult to measure actual consumer behavior, we instead concentrate on behavioral intentions as the most reliable indicator of actual customer behavior.

2.2. Hypotheses development

2.2.1. The Influence of Society (IS) and intention to reserve hotels

The impact of society can be described as the influence of important individuals on a person's perspective of a situation. These individuals can be friends, family, or significant others (Hee, 2000). Social pressure relates to feeling compelled toward a particular action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Regular and strong communication between an individual and their social network can make them more receptive to others' ideas and beliefs (Hee, 2000; Leenders, 2002). TRA posits that subjective norms - social influences and perceived expectations of others-have a significant impact on behavioral intentions. For online hotel reservations, subjective norms shape intentions by reinforcing the perceived importance of social endorsement. Recent studies suggest that social influences, such as peer reviews or family recommendations, are key drivers in increasing consumer trust in online booking systems (Amaro & Duarte, 2015; Stylos et al., 2021). Therefore, the research hypothesis is as follows:

H1: The Influence of society has a positive impact on the intention to reserve hotels online

2.2.2. Habit and intention to reserve hotels

The concept of habit is defined as "a learned sequence of actions that become automatic responses to specific situations, which can be effective in achieving goals or end-states" (Verplanken et al., 1997, p. 540). Prior studies have shown that habits are behavioral tendencies arising from past experiences (Khalifa & Liu, 2007). In online shopping, habit is an automatic response triggered by repeated interaction with an environment (Hsu et al., 2015). In TAM, habit reinforces behavioral intention by minimizing cognitive effort, as repeated actions become automatic over time (Venkatesh et al., 2020). In online bookings, habit formation through repeated positive experiences strengthens consumer intent to rebook. Studies indicate that habit may also moderate the effects of perceived ease of use and trust,

amplifying their influence on intention (Hsu et al., 2015; Venkatesh et al., 2020). Based on this, the following research hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Habit has a positive impact on the intention to reserve hotels online

2.2.3. Perceived value

The notion of perceived value is commonly defined as the balance between the cost and the quality of a product or service, accounting for the concept of receiving value for money (Kim & Kim, 2017). This is a critical factor that heavily impacts customer decision-making, influencing satisfaction, and purchasing behavior. For instance, Zeithaml (1988) suggested that perceived value mediates between quality and purchase intentions. In TAM, perceived value is closely tied to perceived usefulness, as consumers are more inclined to adopt services they view as beneficial. In online booking, higher perceived value correlates with increased user satisfaction and booking intention (Okumus et al., 2018). Research has shown that perceived value positively impacts booking behavior, especially among consumers seeking cost-effective and quality accommodations (Amaro & Duarte, 2015). Based on this, the following research hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Perceived value has a positive impact on the intention to reserve hotels online

2.2.4. Perceived ease of use

The factor of 'ease of use' is an important determinant of the convenience of online shopping (Yoon & Kim, 2007). Convenience is a major benefit of online shopping, and navigation difficulties often lead to shopping cart abandonment. Davis (1989) defined Perceived Ease of Use (PEU) as the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system will be effortless. In TAM, PEU significantly influences the likelihood of technology adoption by simplifying interactions and improving user experience (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000). Research indicates that an easy-to-use booking interface encourages users to complete transactions (Okumus et al., 2018). Studies suggest that PEU also enhances perceived value, as consumers perceive streamlined platforms as more reliable and valuable (Bilgihan et al., 2016). Therefore, the hypotheses are as follows:

H4: Perceived ease of use has a positive impact on the intention to reserve hotels online

H5: Perceived ease of use has a positive impact on perceived value

2.2.5. Website trust

Website trust is defined as the readiness of one party to expose itself to the actions of another, based on the expectation that the other party will perform as promised (Cyr, 2013; Kim & Kim, 2017). In online transactions, when consumers trust a website, they invest less effort in seeking additional information and are more likely to transact (Kim & Kim, 2017). TRA supports that trust shapes positive attitudes toward behavior, impacting intentions. For online hotel bookings, website trust is particularly vital, as security and reliability reduce perceived risks and encourage transactions. Recent studies highlight the role of trust in enhancing consumer confidence in online purchases, especially within tourism and hospitality platforms (Sahli & Legohérel, 2016; Stylos et al., 2021). Therefore, the research hypothesis is presented as follows:

H6: Website trust has a positive impact on the intention to reserve hotels online

2.2.6. Consumers' online reviews

Two main types of evaluations are used for online products and services: reviews by professional editors and reviews by consumers (Kim & Kim, 2017). Although both are

considered reliable, consumers tend to trust peer reviews more, as they provide insights potentially omitted by professionals (Gretzel & Yoo, 2008). Online reviews reflect subjective norms under TRA, as they serve as social proof that can shape consumer perceptions of a product's credibility (Confente & Vigolo, 2018). Positive consumer reviews enhance hotel trust, as they provide social validation, increasing the likelihood of booking decisions (Ye et al., 2009). Thus, the research hypothesis was as follows:

*H7: Consumers' online reviews have a positive impact on hotel trust*

2.2.7. Hotel trust

A lack of trust in a hotel can be a major barrier to booking, as consumers typically seek reliable, transparent information before making a reservation (Kim & Kim, 2017; Ladhari & Michaud, 2015). Consumers tend to collect information to reduce uncertainty and perceived risks associated with online bookings (Pavlou & Gefen, 2004). TRA and TAM both emphasize that trust influences attitudes and behavioral intentions. Recent studies show that when consumers have strong trust in a hotel's online presence, they perceive less risk and have higher booking intentions (Ladhari & Michaud, 2015; Stylos et al., 2021). Therefore, the research hypothesis is presented as follows:

H8: Hotel trust has a positive impact on the intention to reserve hotels online

Figure 1

The Research Model
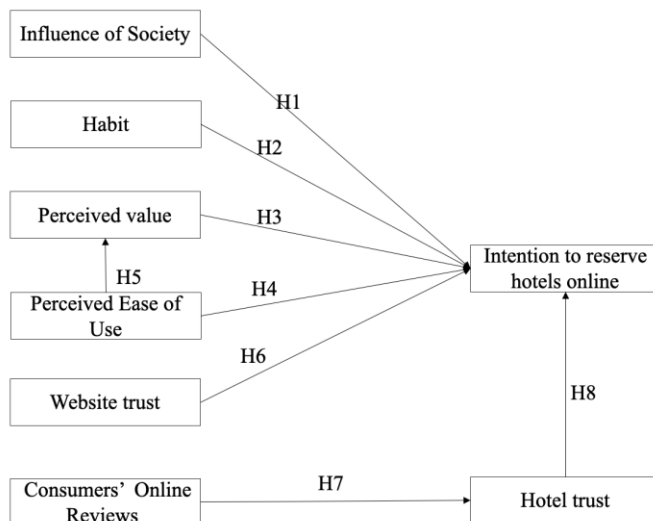
Note. Author

3. Methodology

3.1. Questionnaire design

In order to tackle the problem of the inflexibility of the variables in relation to hotel booking and hospitality, the author also added some other factors besides those discovered from the previous research. To test the reasonableness of the survey questions, a prototype version was sent out to a sample of 40 close acquaintances with the offer to provide feedback to the researcher. As inferred from the results acquired and comments received as to the confusion and readability among the orders, wording, and constructs in the questionnaire, a defined version was developed and carefully peer-proofread before being mass distributed on social media networks and offline places. The questionnaire is in Appendix S1 (online version).

3.2. Data collection

In terms of the demographic profile, gender, and age are the two characteristics of the respondents to be classified. The demographic identifications present a slight dominance of female participants (48% in total) over the opposite gender. That insignificant discrepancy was also shown in terms of age group. The older ones, at 24 - 35 years old, were the larger group in terms of size (55.7%) compared to the younger group, which was mainly university students and freshers aged between 18 and 24 (44.3%). Such discrepancies in terms of age are justifiable, as the sample was collected in the vicinity of the writer's social networks and acquaintances. Surveys were handed out to colleagues and friends who had mostly graduated and were employed full-time. This **convenience sampling method,** wherein surveys were distributed through the researcher's personal networks and acquaintances, both online and offline, facilitated rapid data collection and targeted a demographic relevant to the research objectives.

It can also be understood by the fact that workers tend to have a sufficient budget to pay for travel products such as airplane tickets and hotel rooms. Thus, a greater percentage was seen among that group of people. In addition, the collected data also shows that university education accounts for the largest proportion, with 439 people accounting for 78.7%. Next is the postgraduate education group, with 90 people (16.1%). The group with the smallest percentage is the college group with 10 people (1.8%). Regarding income, the income group from 10 to 15 million accounted for the largest proportion, with 163 people (29.2%). Next is the group of over 20 million (155 people, accounting for 27.8%). The group is at least under 10 million (107 people account for 19.2%). The detail is in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographics of Respondents

	Gender	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**
Gender	Male	290	52.0	52.0
	Female	268	48.0	48.0
Age	Under 24	247	44.3	44.3
	> 25	311	55.7	55.7
Education	Vocational School	19	3.4	3.4
	College	10	1.8	1.8
	University graduate	439	78.7	78.7
	Postgraduate University	90	16.1	16.1
Income	Under 10 million	107	19.2	19.2
	10 - 15 million	163	29.2	29.2
	16 - 20 million	133	23.8	23.8
	> 20 million	155	27.8	27.8
	Total	**558**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Note. Authors' calculation

3.3. Analysis methods

The methods used to evaluate the reliability and validity of measures are known as measurement models. In this study, three measurement models proposed by Hair et al. (2014) were utilized, including indicator loadings and internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Reliability was tested using two indices: Cronbach's Alpha

coefficient and Composite Reliability (CR), both of which needed to be greater than 0.7. Convergent validity was assessed by evaluating factor loading coefficients and average variance extracted, both of which needed to be greater than 0.5. In addition to assessing convergence and reliability, the analysis required constructs to be distinct from each other. The Fornell-Larcker criterion method was used, which required the square root of AVE to be greater than the corresponding correlation coefficient between two constructs. The study also used PLS-SEM as a multivariate analysis method to establish the cause-and-effect relationship between variables when using a questionnaire and a Likert scale. PLS-SEM was preferred due to its ability to estimate much more complex models with smaller sample sizes and the relaxation of distributional assumptions required by CB-SEM. Hence, the study used PLS-SEM as it had more advantages than CB-SEM.

4. Research results

4.1. Reliability test

The constructs demonstrated good reliability, as evidenced by Cronbach's Alpha coefficient and Composite Reliability (CR) values greater than 0.7. Additionally, the constructs exhibited convergent validity with outer loadings all greater than 0.5 and AVE values all greater than 0.5. The details are in Table 2.

Table 2

Reliability and Convergence Validity

Items	Outer Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
COR1	0.834			
COR2	0.902	0.845	0.907	0.764
COR3	0.885			
HT1	0.823			
HT2	0.854			
HT3	0.848	0.902	0.927	0.718
HT4	0.849			
HT5	0.861			
IB1	0.831			
IB2	0.854	0.849	0.898	0.688
IB3	0.809			
IB4	0.822			
IS1	0.872			
IS2	0.854	0.818	0.892	0.734
IS3	0.843			
PEU1	0.844			
PEU2	0.87	0.889	0.923	0.749
PEU3	0.864			
PEU4	0.884			
PH1	0.924	0.882	0.927	0.809
PH2	0.871			

Items	Outer Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
PH3	0.904			
PV1	0.875			
PV2	0.906	0.89	0.924	0.754
PV3	0.893			
PV4	0.794			
WT1	0.842			
WT2	0.855	0.805	0.884	0.718
WT3	0.845			

Note. Authors' calculation

4.2. Discriminant valid test

The discriminant validity was assessed in this study using the Fornell-Larcker criterion. The results of the discriminant analysis among the factors indicated that the model achieved discriminant validity (the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was greater than the corresponding correlation coefficient). The square root of AVE ranged from 0.847 to 0.9, while the corresponding correlation coefficients ranged from 0.37 to 0.602.

Table 3

Discriminant Validity

	COR	HT	IB	IS	PEU	PH	PV	WT
COR	**0.874**							
HT	0.476	**0.847**						
IB	0.507	0.418	**0.829**					
IS	0.469	0.375	0.5	**0.857**				
PEU	0.491	0.486	0.639	0.455	**0.866**			
PH	0.487	0.411	0.564	0.51	0.575	**0.9**		
PV	0.485	0.494	0.58	0.554	0.602	0.565	**0.868**	
WT	0.388	0.459	0.441	0.387	0.394	0.37	0.483	**0.847**

Note. Authors' calculation

4.3. Hypotheses test

The results of the SEM model analysis indicated that only HT (Hotel trust) did not have a significant effect on intention to reserve (p-value greater than 0.05). Therefore, hypothesis H8 was rejected. The results also showed that IS had a positive effect on IB ($\beta = 0.128$ and p-value less than 0.05), thus, hypothesis H1 was accepted. The factor Habit had a positive effect on IB ($\beta = 0.173$ and p-value less than 0.05), thus, hypothesis H2 was accepted. The factor Perceived value had a positive effect on IB ($\beta = 0.14$ and p-value less than 0.05), thus hypothesis H3 was accepted. The factor Perceived ease of use had a positive effect on IB ($\beta = 0.347$ and p-value less than 0.05), thus, hypothesis H4 was accepted. The factor Perceived ease of use had a positive effect on Perceived value ($\beta = 0.603$ and p-value less than 0.05), thus hypothesis H5 was accepted. The factor Website trust had a positive effect on IB ($\beta = 0.121$ and p-value less than 0.05), thus, hypothesis H6 was accepted. The

factor Consumers' Online Reviews had a positive effect on Hotel trust ($\beta = 0.479$ and p-value less than 0.05), thus, hypothesis H7 was accepted. Therefore, hypotheses H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6, and H7 were all accepted. Details are provided in Table 4.

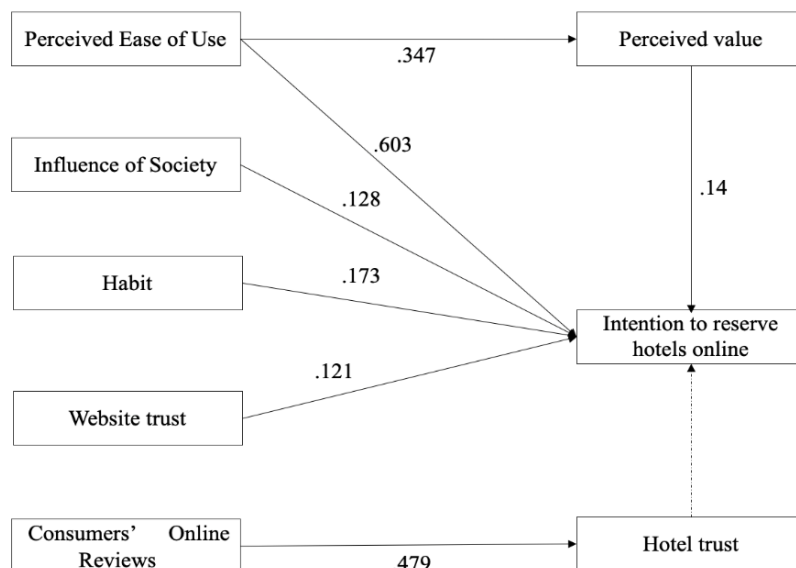**Table 4**

Results of PLS-SEM Analysis

	IB	PV	HT
COR			0.479[a]
			(0.037)
HT	0.006		
	(0.038)		
IS	0.128[a]		
	(0.044)		
PEU	0.347[a]	0.603[a]	
	(0.045)	(0.039)	
PH	0.173[a]		
	(0.043)		
PV	0.14[a]		
	(0.046)		
WT	0.121[a]		
	(0.036)		
R²	0.520	0.364	0.230

Note. Authors' calculation

From the results of PLS-SEM analysis, the results are described in detail by the coefficients according to the PLS-SEM model in Figure 2.

Figure 2

PLS-SEM Result

Note. Authors' calculation

The analysis results show that the Influence of Society has a positive impact on the Intention to reserve hotels online. This result indicates that external social factors also affect travelers' intention to reserve online. The influence of family and friends makes it easier for individuals to arrive at the intention to reserve hotels online. Customers who receive encouragement from their loved ones feel the need to make hotel reservations online early. These findings are consistent with previous studies that have also shown the impact of social influence from family members on increasing the intention to reserve hotels online (Sahli & Legohérel, 2016).

The habit of using online tools in daily life and work leads to an increase in the intention to reserve hotels online. It can be observed that daily Internet use not only creates a habit of online shopping and ordering but also increases the intention to reserve hotels online. Convenience is the key factor in developing the habit to increase the intention to reserve hotels online. These findings are consistent with previous studies that have also demonstrated the positive impact of the habit of using online tools on the intention to reserve hotels online (Hsu et al., 2015).

Website trust has the same effect on the Intention to reserve hotels online. This result shows that the hotel building website to bring customer trust has an important role in increasing the Intention to reserve hotels online. In addition, secure payment forms or processes for customer information also help customers feel more secure when returning to book hotels online. This result is also similar to previous studies, indicating that trust in the website, the form of payment, has a positive meaning with the Intention to reserve hotels online (Kim & Kim, 2017).

Ease of use has a positive effect on perceived value and Intention to reserve hotels online. This result shows that the ease of operation on the application and website in booking and payment brings convenience, as well as customers receive the value of the online form. The way to make transactions is simple and easy to operate for customers, bringing comfort to them. Although they are young people and have good access to technology, the ease-of-use factor is still highly appreciated by this group of customers. At the same time, when customers find it easy to use, it not only increases the value of online hotel booking but also increases the Intention to reserve hotels online. The results of this study are similar to those of previous studies (Bilgihan et al., 2016).

Customers' online reviews have a positive effect on hotel trust, indicating that reviews on the Internet will help customers evaluate the reputation of the hotel. However, Hotel trust is not the cause of the increasing Intention to reserve hotels online. This shows that hotels are doing quite well in online marketing when using self-review forms as well as dealing with crises, if any (negative customer comments will be handled to avoid negative reviews) and bad prices (Kim & Kim, 2017; Ye et al., 2009).

5. Conclusion

This study presented an overview of customers' online hotel booking activities and evaluated the factors influencing their intention to return to the hotel. The study identified several factors in the research model, including Hotel trust, Perceived ease of use, Perceived value, Habit, Customers' Online Reviews, and Influence of Society. The study found that all factors had a positive effect on intention to reserve, except for Habit. Additionally, the study found that Perceived ease of use has a positive impact on Perceived value, and Customers' Online Reviews have a positive impact on Hotel trust.

6. Recommendations

From the perspective of consumers, there is no doubt that in the foreseeable future, they will be provided with cutting-edge technological services. As a result, the competition among

online travel agencies will be fiercer than ever in the hope of acquiring as many potential customers as possible. To make full use of such advancements in technology, customers should be more conscious of the value they are offered and take into account many other antecedents to secure the most beneficial deals. Decoy effect and other psychological tricks are more likely to be made use of, so it is indispensable to consider not only the released price but also online reviews and feedback so as to precisely evaluate the destinations they are planning to stay.

For a travel company, *firstly,* the website plays a vital role in introducing its services as well as promoting online sales transactions. As far as the website is concerned, hoteliers need to be effective in terms of:

Content: Hoteliers should build a blog of articles sharing experiences and destinations of high quality and usefulness. The information on prices, tour itineraries, and room services needs to be updated in a timely manner and transparently in case of changes. Images should be picturesque, sharp, and suitable for the topic being discussed, and carefully selected.

Message: Messages must be clear, coherent, and concise so that customers can memorize the message as quickly as possible. Make use of the right words and create a compelling message. The message must clearly imply what the business has done, what benefits are offered, and what the customers are interested in.

Function: Make sure all functions and navigation on the website are logical and stable, especially the booking engines. Customer operations should be performed quickly and conveniently. For those who do not regularly utilize online booking, a lack of Internet knowledge can also be learned and manipulated.

Secondly, hoteliers had better make the booking process simple and user-friendly. As expected, data have shown that the share of mobile travelers is increasing. Millennials are the most active group on mobile phones (23%), while the distribution of mobile travelers across age groups is rather uniform, as more people get used to the idea of booking on their gadgets. Therefore, having an "eye-catching" travel app has become the edge in the competition. In fact, data from Criteo's travel research shows that the conversion rate for app users on travel apps is up to 5 times higher than on mobile web, and it is becoming a super effective portal through which they reach and re-engage customers.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

All authors declare that they have no conflict of interest related to this research.

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