

# Predictors of Customers' Hotel Booking Decisions in Thailand

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## Abstract

This research paper investigates the factors that influence hotel booking decisions of customers in Thailand, one of the fastest-growing tourism destinations worldwide, due to its affordability and varied tourist attractions. It focuses on electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), studying the effects of review volume, valence, and website quality on the booking intentions of tourists. Online reviews have been identified to play a critical role in the literature review for building trust, signaling service quality, and influencing the course of hotel marketing strategies. The research identifies the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the travelers, showing how those traits interact with various digital influences on their booking choices. This research employed a quantitative approach through surveying a large respondent base to bridge existing gaps in research within the Thai hotel industry context. The findings will hopefully provide some useful insights for hotel management in helping them improve their digital strategies to develop customer trust and improve their booking rates in the competitive market.

## Chapter 1

### The Problem and the Review of Literature

#### INTRODUCTION

Bangkok, Thailand has become one of the most visited tourism journeys around the globe. It remains a destination that attracts millions of tourists every year due to its cheap cost of living. Compared to any other major global city like New York, Paris, or Tokyo, Bangkok can easily rank among the cheapest places to stay and visit. Bangkok stands at 55.8 in the Cost-of-Living Index (2018), which is much lower compared to other cities mentioned above that scored over 80. This makes Bangkok a viable destination for budget-conscious travelers (Thailand Industry Outlook 2019-21). Additionally, Bangkok has numerous attractions starting from old monuments and cultural installations right through to modern shopping malls, hence an attraction site for international and local tourists.

Adding to its affordability, Bangkok's hotel industry provides good value for money, enhancing the city's appeal for both short-term visitors and long-term travelers. The Industry Outlook for 2024–2026 projects significant growth for Thailand's hospitality sector. By 2025, the country is expected to host approximately 38–40 million international visitors annually, along with 200 million domestic trips (Lumkam & Puttachard, 2024). The anticipated surge would indicate that there will be demand for the hotel industry in Thailand, and a review of the determinant of customers booking hotel service would be needed, considering the digitalized marketplace.

The research on the tourism preferences of Thailand shows that the young Thai traveler is influenced more by attractions that are diversified, safe, accessible, and with plenty of cultural interaction. For instance, Phakdee-Auksorn et al. (2023) study on preferences of ASEAN travelers cited such factors have high

importance for Thai youth in leading their attitudes toward traveling in ASEAN countries. This paper thus brings forth useful points for destination marketers across Southeast Asia, premising that such insight into factors is vital to tailor marketing strategies based on this demographic. More importantly, the finding illustrates the need for destination marketers to invest in the amenities and cultural experiences ascertained in the paper relevant to these preferences.

The increased application of digital channels has changed hotel booking decisions among customers, because its websites have become increasingly important tools for information and customer interaction. Websites provide details that are essential for the consumer, as well as user-generated reviews and features that help them compare options to make informed decisions about booking (Li et al., 2015; Yang et al., 2016). Indeed, in the hospitality industry, online platforms now play a significant role, where customers increasingly depend on customer reviews and ratings when establishing the quality and reliability of a hotel. Digitization has altered the requirement for hotels to find that they have no choice but to optimize their websites and provide a seamless online experience to attract and retain customers.

Electronic word-of-mouth conceptually defined as “any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet” (Hennig-Thurau, et al. 2004). . Consumers exchanging information online is known as electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), and it can be seen in a variety of formats, including social network posts, user-generated content, online product evaluations, and private emails. eWOM has emerged as a key area of study in marketing, communication, and advertising as digital media and new technologies continue to develop.( Roy 2019)

Online reviews have become one of the factors that affects customers' booking intentions. According to Ladhari and Michaud (2015), attributes of reviews-including volume, reviewer expertise, and trustworthiness-"play a decisive role in influencing the consumer decision-making process." Such factors are the different perspectives over various dimensions of online reviews, each influencing the perception of consumers differently. For example, El-Said (2020) showed that an increased volume of reviews-positive, along with low price, and high perceived value-is strongly associated with stronger booking intentions. This research then shows that the effective management of online reviews is positively associated with customers perceiving the hotel as a credible and trustworthy choice.

Some studies research the influence on booking intention due to online reviews, indicating that review volume and reviewer expertise are important factors. Zhao et al. (2015) showed that a larger volume of reviews and reviewer expertise positively affect booking intentions; Amar (2018) proved, however, that other determinants-that include perceived relevance, reviewer credibility, and product knowledge-affect customer decisions. More specifically, Wen et al. (2022) noted that social networks have increased the spreadability of online reviews and provided an avenue through which user-generated content impacts a larger audience. Social networks are, therefore, invaluable sources of information because they influence booking behaviors in hotels even more.

Very specific, that a study was done in Thailand by Patthanang Tangwannawit et. L (2021) regarding Hotel Booking decisions and from a total of 665 respondents using structural equation model and two variable analyses; their research showed the influence of the word-of-mouth communications through electronic channels (E-WOM) had a positive influence and affected the decision for hotel respondents to select and book the hotels based on the perceived factors in terms of hotel quality and credibility Second, the results based on the comparison of income factors, travelling behaviors, and budget showed that the level of knowledge, involvement, and perceptions towards the hotels significantly affected the decisions for

booking hotels and that the main factors for their hotel booking decision more than behaviors from the groups of travelers who would travel with their family or friends.

These results have important practical implications for hotel managers and marketers. Indeed, as Ruzima et al. (2024) note, positive online reviews can significantly improve the reputation of a hotel, hence attracting more customers and increased bookings, while negative reviews can scare the targeted guest off and deteriorate the image of the hotel. Finally, it is therefore an important task to manage online reviews effectively for hotel managers. Now, digital or online sources may be monitored and attended to, to ensure a reputation for the hotel that is positive and healthy in competitive marketplaces. There could be policy guidelines set, such that reviews seen online would be authentic and consumers' trust will be restored in the digital hospitality space.

Despite these findings, some research gaps are still seen. While research is available to date about the relationship between online review and booking intentions, few papers have addressed the specific case of Thailand's hotel industry and cultural and economic factors influencing customer behavior. In addition, not much research exists regarding how certain attributes of reviews, such as volume, website features, and reviewer expertise, uniquely impact the booking decision in Thailand. Hopefully, such gaps would be bridged by this study done for a better understanding of predictors that influence customer booking behaviors in the hotel industry of Thailand.

In other words, it is essential to analyze the determinants of customers' booking decisions in Thailand's digitalized hotel market. This study is pertinent at a time when internet use and social media are dramatically expanding and providing insights into how online reviews and website features influence the booking intention would be critical both for hoteliers as well as policymakers. This study intends to present information that will enable hotel managers to fine-tune their digital strategies to foster customer trust, which should result in increased bookings. Such insights may also be useful for policymakers working on standards aimed at strengthening the credibility of the digital marketplace in presenting reliable and authentic information in online reviews.

### **Objectives of the Research**

This paper aims to find out what predicts customers' hotel booking decisions in Thailand. Specifically, it seeks to describe the demographic profile of the respondents through their location, educational qualification, gender, age, and marital status. The study presents also the socioeconomic profile of hotel customers by their average monthly income and occupation.

Aside from these, the study tested the level of agreement of customers with factors that influence their hotel booking decisions in Thailand, especially relating to the electronic word-of-mouth (E-WOM) volume and valence, as well as to the quality of the website. It also aims to identify the customers' booking decisions and determine the predictive influence of the E-WOM volume, E-WOM valence, and website quality on such booking decisions.

### **Review of Literature**

**Hotel booking intention.** Significant studies have explained what factors influence online hotel reservation intentions, epitomizing the fast-changing nature of travel and hospitality in the digital age. In fact, today's customers can check information on their hotel services or book accommodations from anywhere in the world at any time, aided in part by growing access to hotel websites and online booking. Access will remain one of the factors improving customer satisfaction and allowing customers a feeling

of control in the booking process. Many customers also appreciate the support offered by a virtual assistant or online booking professional, which enhances the overall booking experience and instills trust. Being aware of these trends, many hotels have improved their websites so that customers can book directly through friendly features and visual design elements that improve the booking journey and evoke customer trust (Nguyen et al., 2021). Booking intention is taken to be a component of purchase intention. It is the probability that a prospective customer will actually make a reservation.

According to Touni et al. (2022), booking intention represents an important constituent of consumer behavioral intentions in tourism; these factors influencing this intention are both internal and external, that is, from the customer's motivation and preferences up to the influence of such factors like price, availability, and quality. Perceptions about technology amongst consumers have been considerable in studies; for example, Cheng and Guo (2021) researched how the attitudes of customers toward technology affected bookings. This study found that travelers who have an affirmative impression about technology are more likely to make bookings through online platforms as well as showed how technology acceptance has emerged as a critical determinant in modern booking practices. Agag and ElMasry (2016) also argued that knowledge of booking intention is relevant because it will enable tourism planners and service providers to know how to plan their resources effectively, target the correct demographics and thus increase bookings.

Another key determinant of booking intention is online review, a fundamental quality and reliability indicator for prospective customers. As per Tsao et al. (2015), if reviews are positive, the likelihood of intent to book increases for a customer, but negative reviews decrease it. These are the signs of service quality that allow the customer to reduce information asymmetry in the market by having information on other customers' experience (Yang et al., 2016). Positive reviews, therefore, act as persuasive tools in building trust among the potential customers, while the negative reviews act as a deterrent. The presence of large volumes of positive reviews can also work as social proof, giving people the confidence to book. Apart from reviews, other online sources also affect bookings. According to Zhang, Zhang, Lu, and Ye (2014), attribute information-of the form of detailed hotel descriptions, images, or recommendations from online travel agencies-increases the propensity with which a Chinese traveler decides. The researchers thought that those elements added layers of reliability and specificity, making it easier for a traveler to plan. Similarly, Sriphaew and Katkiao (2017) showed that usability of the website is highly important for making bookings. In fact, their conclusion was that usability arises fundamentally from three aspects: user experience, functionality, and interface usability, and these bring customers through a smooth journey on the hotel's websites since they make it easy for the customer to find what he or she needed.

Hotel booking intentions in the Phuket hotel industry shows positive correlation between the three digital marketing tools - social media, search engines, and online travel agencies. He, Lingyu, (2022). Her findings highlights the importance of a comprehensive digital marketing strategy in today's market. Of the three digital marketing tools studied, social media was found to have the highest correlation coefficient with hotel booking intentions. This finding suggests that hotels in Phuket should prioritize developing a quality and efficient social media marketing strategy to enhance their online presence and increase their visibility among potential customers. Results of research suggest that hotels should focus more on social media marketing as a key component of their overall digital marketing strategy. However, this does not discount the importance of search engines and online travel agencies, which should also be integrated into a comprehensive digital marketing strategy. Overall, these findings emphasize the critical role of digital marketing in the Phuket hotel industry. Leading to prioritize developing an effective and comprehensive

digital marketing strategy

Online reviews significantly influence consumers' hotel booking intentions, playing a pivotal role in decision-making. Trust and value perception mediate the relationship between online reviews and booking intentions, underscoring their profound impact on consumer behavior. The research not only supports existing literature on online reviews, trust, value perception, and hotel booking intentions but also contributes novel insights to these domains. Further, study uncovers essential roles of online reviews, trust, and value perception in hotel booking, enlightening practitioners and researchers on digital-era consumer behavior. (Pongwirithon Kajornatthapol et. al. (2024).

Online booking must be convenient, functional and provide instant confirmation without contact with another person. Websites should be easy to find and navigate and should offer good accessibility from smartphones and tablets. Research revealed that clients are more likely to book directly with hotels for their repeat visits if they have a satisfying stay and a memorable experience. Good customer relationship is a very important strategy to secure future direct bookings. (Abuelkassem, M. (2016).

This research Montakan Chubchuwong (2021), about Online Hotel Booking Behaviors and Preferences posted valuable recommendations such that Hotels should have the following conditions, and their websites should visibly inform the potential customers accordingly, which generally provide service such as direct reservation, comprehensive sales and revenue reports, and system maintenance. Also, competitive price and promotion price and promotion are the most important factors that influence customers when making a booking decision that it should be clearly stated with no hidden costs; have discounts for different occasions; include attractive promotions and packages for each target group of customers; and lastly provide discounts for walk-in customers. However, it is suggested that new, creative benefits are designed to meet the needs of tourists in a period of changing behaviors and trends. Tourists may want to experience something different from their home countries. Some special local benefits might include a complimentary Thai massage, a Thai cooking class, a spa session or a local tour.

The need to know more than the price and images compels the customer to scan online reviews and testimonials. For many travelers, online feedback from previous guests is the key for making an informed booking decision, thus serving as a precious form of EWOM. Such reviews, in the form of ratings or textual comments, are said to manifest the customer sentiment toward various dimensions of hotel services by Sharma et al. (2019). Moreover, feedback usually falls into the category of positive, neutral, or negative feedback and allows a prospective guest to form an estimate of the service experience beforehand when taking the decision to book. Customers can base expectations from this evaluation before actual experience, thus reducing chances for dissatisfaction.

Conversely, electronic word-of-mouth has emerged as a very influential factor shaping consumer behavior and booking intentions in the digital age. Vrontis et al. (2022) confirmed that EWOM is a significant factor affecting customer decision making, as increasingly, people seek reviews from peers and shared experiences online before they make hotel reservation decisions. While, according to De Valck, 2024, EWOM can play an important role in influencing consumer preferences and choice behavior; the positive or negative social media and review platform messages might attract a customer to book or deter them from booking. In this era of social media and review platforms, EWOM has emerged as a strong community-driven source, which, in turn, has substantial power over individual choices of purchase.

Also, with regards to dependence on online sources for travel purchase, the status of information quality has shifted. According to Lata and Kumar (2021), "information quality has an important and positive impact on users' online hotel booking intentions." They further explained that the clarity, relevance, and

accuracy of information on hotel websites immediately determine how probable or improbable booking will be since customers feel more secured and informed. This information, however, had a relatively lesser effect on booking intentions in terms of source credibility, which indicates that the quality of content surpasses the perceived credibility of the information source itself. Their findings also indicate that e-trust or trust in electronic transactions partially mediates the relationship between information quality and booking intentions and emphasizes the need to develop trust on a hotel website.

Demographic factors also affect the customer journey. Such factors include gender. Vo et al. (2019) compared online booking behaviors and found that women are more sensitive to the functionality of websites and are more impacted directly by the functionality on their satisfaction. This information leads one to believe that marketing strategies should focus on gender-specific preferences in order to improve the booking process and, hence, engender loyalty from customers. In optimizing customer experience and improving booking rates, a hotel can address the various expectations that different customer segments hold.

Other studies also show how online recommendations can influence purchase intentions. Recommendations by online travel agencies or influencers on social media are effective endorsements that augment one's confidence in their booking decision. This dynamic features very strongly on e-booking platforms where customer reviews and agency recommendations work in tandem. The findings by Zhang et al. in 2014 and Tsao et al. (2015) bring to light the importance of efficient hotel engagement with such sites since their recommendations may translate into high booking conversion.

In the same view, the role of customer feedback on social media has also become increasingly important. Most customers now share elaborate experiences on places such as TripAdvisor or Yelp, which can have an influence on the booking intention of several individuals and significantly shape the reputation of the broader hotel brand. As observed by Vrontis et al. (2022), social media amplifies the reach of EWOM, thus becoming an opportunity and challenge for hotels in managing their reputations online. Response to feedback, as well as interacting with customers, ensures that the accommodations maintain a good digit image; this helps increase higher booking rates.

As such, the online booking landscape for hotels is greatly transformed based on EWOM, usability, information quality, and customer demographics. Based on the factor influencing hotel booking intentions, hospitality professionals may use this information to optimize their websites, tailor marketing strategies, and increase customer satisfaction within digital interactions that are rapidly becoming the cornerstone of planning for travel. This dynamic digital world calls for a need to respond to consumer requirements through designing easy-to-use websites and developing good reputations online, which have now become necessities in the hospitality industry of today.

**Electronic word of mouth (eWOM).** Electronic Word of Mouth has become a significant area to focus upon as it influences customers' purchase decisions, particularly hospitality services. The digitalization of service has made online marketing tools significantly important and more prevalent compared to the traditional approaches. The quantitative study was conducted, by Ismagilova, E., Dwivedi et. al. (2017) allowing for the collection of evidences in the customer provider relationship on client satisfaction, trust, and commitment as connected to electronic word of mouth. Within a total of 401 findings demonstrated that the more favorable electronic word-of-mouth that existed in the customer relationship, the more probable it was that additional people would use that company's services. Consumer commitment to the brand and their level of trust in the business were both connected with the amount of positive electronic

word-of-mouth. Additionally, there is a strong positive correlation between electronic word-of-mouth and consumer happiness.

During the last decade, it was noticed that an increasing number of customers were booking hotel rooms through OTAs. Tandon et al. (2019) found that a large part of attraction to these websites happens, for example, through offer discounts and ancillary services by OTAs. The following website qualities: trust, ease of use, tangibility, and responsive eWOM systems, significantly lead the customer choices.

Website quality becomes a vital competitive advantage in the hospitality sector, with regard to considering it as a determinant of building customer trust and booking intentions. Wang et al. (2015) showed that the quality of hotel websites significantly influences consumers' willingness to book by promoting eTrust, which, in turn, functions as an intermediary variable for the relationship between website quality and customer intentions. This association implies that hotels that invest in strong online platforms may, by consequence, achieve a stronger connection with prospective guests. Further, Wang and colleagues pointed out that the social presence, aesthetic appeal, and interactivity of a website contribute positively to e-trust and booking intentions, thus emphasizing the multidimensional function of online presentation. With the online booking revolution, word-of-mouth marketing has been transformed into a critical tool in digital spaces. The research of Widodo and Marie (2019) on the Traveloka platform manifested that online reviews directly impact consumer interest in overnight stays-an influence of consumer-generated content. Their regression analysis revealed positive reviews enhance booking intentions, thus indicating consumers highly value peer insights. The study also confirmed that eWOM is not only beneficial to potential guests but essential for OTAs seeking to improve engagement with their services.

Electronic word-of-mouth has become one of the most powerful tools of marketing, pushing consumer attitudes regarding a product to be in favor or against it. To this effect, Geller (2013) and Jalilvand & Samiei (2012) noted that eWOM allows for information acquisition about a product based on other people's experiences, making it an uncomplicated advantage over other means of purchase decision making. This helps to minimize the uncertainty a traveler attaches to his decision. According to Keller & Libai, 2009, eWOM leads the perception that a traveler has towards the quality of accommodations available-thus strengthening the competitive advantage for hotels through which consumers can read positive reviews.

Now, reviews that are slightly positive or otherwise very negative do have a huge influence in the choice of the customer. According to a study conducted by Filieri & McLeay (2013), it was stated there that although positive reviews do not always induce instant booking behaviors, negative reviews may severely and strongly deter customers. For hoteliers who are supposed to manage their online reputation proactively, this point is quite important. Further, Filieri and McLeay's study based on platforms such as TripAdvisor found out that websites of this kind are very important for customers, soliciting millions of reviews of relevance to a traveler's behavior.

E-WOM is also fundamental for mobile bookings as information is easily accessible for consumers in making decisions. According to Kitcharoen (2019), the study looked into the role of eWOM in determining hotel booking intentions through mobile applications such as Booking.com, wherein perceived behavioral control and subjective norms affected the process. Based on 400 samples of Bangkok residents, this study emphasized, therefore, the importance of eWOM for the young and more techno-friendly travelers who use mobile access and real-time reviews for choices.

Agreeably, the social motivations of reputation and community drive the desire of consumers to give and receive feedback on online platforms. Cheung & Lee (2012) contended that consumers share experiences

on eWOM platforms not only for other people's benefits but to attain a subjective feeling of belonging. Community participation fulfills much of the engagement on review sites. Consequently, the users' contribution to eWOM results in a constantly expanding repository of hotel evaluations, which is extremely useful for the potential customers.

In a research article by Lina, Vida Lorenzo, et. al (2023), they proved the influence of era of digitization affecting customers online interaction. They also discovered the influence of electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) and company brand image on hotel booking intention. From a total of 211 people and findings indicated that the e-WOM variable positively and significantly affected hotel booking intentions in Jakarta Indonesia. Brand image positively and significantly impacts hotel booking intentions in Jakarta. Then, e-WOM positively and significantly influences the brand image.

Regarding the Impact of Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) on the Tourists' Purchasing Intentions in Tourism and Hotel Sectors Sayed M, (2022) posted the importance of Word of Mouth (WOM) as an important information source for consumers when making purchase decisions,. While it is true how difficult to evaluate intangible products before consumption. That using online resources to share their experiences with goods and services, and to compare them to their substitutes is commendable. Findings of their research had impact of eWOM in travel apps and websites on tourists' purchasing intentions. There was a significant impact on management by explaining the limitations of eWOM information for travel applications and websites. Therefore, the results of this study would enable marketers to understand the dynamics of eWOM on companies' networks and develop better eWOM marketing strategies.

The eWOM appears as a new kind of WOM that blends several tactics for managing interpersonal influence (i.e., the power of information), while also developing new techniques enabled by the Internet's exceptional features. Moreover, marketers of the tourism and hospitality industries must realize that guests are using the Internet in increasing numbers, and that these consumers in their online world are likely to be exposed and affected by many sites dedicated to selling or discussing travel. Thus, they should take the lead in understanding and utilizing the emerging technologies rather than being driven by the adoption of strategies by their competitor

Given the competitive merits of eWOM, firms in the hospitality sector make it their paramount imperative to ensure a positive online existence. According to Noronha & Rao, 2017, OTAs such as Traveloka have enhanced their reservation systems to afford maximum user experience and satisfaction. Through focusing on easy-to-use interfaces combined with accurate information, Traveloka has availed an online existence that is credible for the tech-savvy customer. This focus on a structured web experience relates to the amplified significance of website quality in determining satisfaction rates.

Internationally, quality website service is important to hotels that want to retain customer loyalty and drive direct bookings. Syarif & Stephani (2019) tested the factors influencing the relationship between website quality and travelers' trust and satisfaction while using Traveloka. The results were as follows: websites with quality interfaces and navigation improved the probability of users proceeding to a purchase booking. On these grounds, hotels have invested more in web optimization to stay ahead and stimulate direct bookings, thereby diminishing dependence on other third-party OTA.

In terms of the research conducted, studies showed that website quality determines not only trust but significantly influences the intention of customers to purchase. Chang (2014) discovered that, especially in cases of chain hotels, website quality can directly generate perceived trust that correlate positively with booking decisions. Findings by Chang also indicated the role played by perceived trust as acting as a



mediator between website quality and purchase intention. This would help hotels better exploit consumer trust through website design and functionality in making the direct booking environment more conducive. On the contrary, Khumalo-Ncube & Motala (2021) further proved the association of website quality and the satisfaction of customers because they showed that website quality will be a great influencer of the purchase intention of customers. Their study also revealed the fact that clarity and usability of online content are the key factors to influencing the satisfaction of customers. Moreover, Khumalo-Ncube and Motala affirmed that because the customers rely almost completely on digital sources, hoteliers will have to make digital engagement strategies predominant to support their online reputation.

Further studies examine how factors like flow perception mediate the relationship between website quality and customer satisfaction. In fact, Ali (2016) does such analyses to determine these connections and found that flow perceptions do have a positive influence on purchase intention, meaning that customers will most likely book if they enjoy a smooth and engaging process of browsing. Thus, such studies add depth to the understanding of how digital user experience can drive sales within the hotel industry.

In the same view, it may be said that the importance of website quality is also highlighted in Kumar's (2020) study where high-quality websites were perceived as having a positive relationship with increased consumer trust and purchase intention. Kumar also found that well-constructed eWOM along with an interactive website portrayed reliability and stimulated customers to complete their bookings directly on hotel websites. This finding encourages hotel managers to add value to their Web site by developing higher engagement inducing and loyalty fosters elements like interactivity and targeted content.

Meanwhile, Amin (2012) tested social presence as a dimension of website experience and verified its role in creating trust and booking intentions. Travelers who are getting a connection or a sense of community on a hotel's website tend to consider the website trustworthy and therefore strengthen their intention to book. The study here by Amin shows how building virtual community on a hotel's website protects consumer trust and influences booking behavior.

Similarly, Van (2019) pointed out that the reach of eWOM is maximized through good quality on the website and active engagement from consumers. He added that a well-structured information website with interactive features creates a feeling of participation among the user, thus pushing users to give positive remarks. This only leads to a more power online reputation for a business and increases direct book intentions among the customers.

Hotels that want customers should also take care of functional quality on their websites since it determines the level of satisfaction and loyalty of customers. Syarif & Stephani H. (2019) cited that sites that serve particular specific users' needs increase the likelihood of conversion and return business. Website features that give priority to ease and accessibility are the major determinant factors on consumer satisfaction, at least based on their study.

Finally, Geller (2013) restates that eWOM is priceless in having a competitive advantage as it enables the consumption of experiences that will help facilitate others' decisions in becoming customers. This phenomenon has brought about the transformation of eWOM from being a marketing tool to becoming an important component of consumer behavior that enables customers to have a say in how the brands are perceived. Subsequently, companies having eWOM with positive 'word of mouth' have the chance to maintain their reputation as well as countenance amidst raging competition.

Therefore, research shows that the interlinks between website quality, trust, eWOM, and online booking intentions determine consumers' hotel booking behaviors. In the end, these studies emphasize the need for well-developed online presence from hoteliers that serve to engage and satisfy the consumer. Indeed, as

emerging digital platforms reshape consumer preferences, active management of eWOM and website quality by hotels will more likely determine success in today's market.

### **Theoretical Framework:**

This study grounds its theoretical basis on three dominant theories: the Trust Theory, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), and Social Influence Theory that demonstrates the scope of factors affecting consumer intentions to book hotel rooms through online reviews. Each theory gives a different insight into drivers of consumer behavior in cyberspace in helping explain the role of trust, perceived control, and social influence in online accommodation booking decision-making processes. In this regard, by relating this research to such theories, the study shall focus on coming up with a totalistic understanding of the psychological and social mechanisms prevailing within the context of eWOM (Electronic Word of Mouth) and booking behavior.

First of all, Trust Theory provides a worthwhile foundation for knowing how consumers rely on online reviews as credible information sources when making a booking. According to Trust Theory, consumers are more likely to perform an online purchase or booking whenever they consider the information provided by the web site or platform to be of very high trustworthiness (McKnight et al, 2002). In the hospitality industry, decreased perceived risks would be ensured through trust in online reviews, wherein the experience and opinion of others have to inform the traveler's decision-making process (Gefen, Karahanna, & Straub, 2003). Through this theory, consumer trust is also drastically obtained through two entities: the credibility of the reviewer themselves and of the platform, which also affects the consumer's decision in booking the hotel. In this research, Trust Theory would come into play very well because it deals with how perceived online review reliability by consumers affects their intent to book. Therefore, building a trust mechanism becomes important to engage the customer on hotel booking websites.

Besides this, the TPB allows for the examination of the influence of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control on consumer intentions and behaviors. The theory was derived by Ajzen in 1991 and suggests that the individual is more likely to take a desired action if he or she harbors certain positive attitudes toward that action, perceives that they are socially approved, and perceives a certain level of control over the behavior process. Therefore, TPB is useful in explaining consumer behavior toward online hotel reservations. Positive attitudes toward online reviews, influence of social norms, and ease of booking contribute to the actual behavior of making the booking. Indeed, if a consumer holds positive attitudes toward a hotel following the reading of some excellent reviews, is socially supported in his or her choice, and finds it easy to make a reservation for the hotel, then he or she will behave more favorably. The study employs the TPB to examine the relationship between attitude toward eWOM, subjective social norms, and ease of booking at an online portal and how these variables play together in influencing booking intentions, also reinforcing the salience of a user-friendly experience in determining consumers' attitudes and behavior.

Social Influence Theory also finds an apt place in understanding the role of eWOM on the consumer buying decision. It was first proposed by Deutsch and Gerard way back in 1955 and examines how opinions, recommendations, and behaviors of others affect individual choices. The Social Influence Theory in relation to the online reviews suggests that customers rely on previous consumer experiences as means of social validation and base their decisions on them for telling the quality and credibility of the product. Online reviews function as one source of normative social influence whereby potential customers seek guidance from the views of others whose circumstances might be akin to theirs. Cheung, Lee and

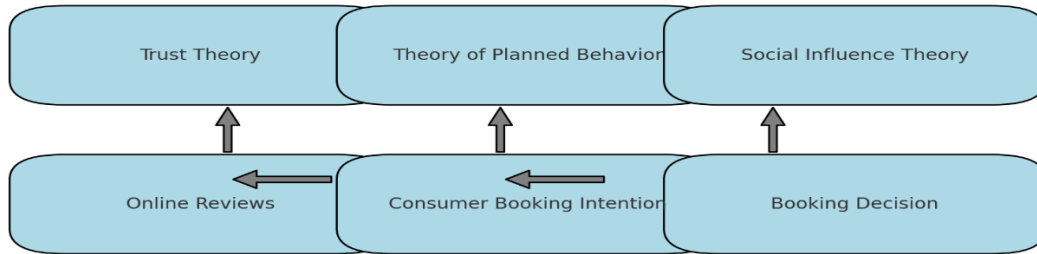
Rabjohn, (2008) express that there is a probability for consumers to use reviews based on whom they feel to have the same preferences or needs. The reviews are said to have a strong impact on decisions to book. Using Social Influence Theory, this paper shall critically assess influences reviews make over the choices consumers take by paying regard to how social proof impacts booking intentions.

Indeed, these theories are highly complementary and, taken together, offer a comprehensive framework to analyze the impact of eWOM on consumer booking intentions in the hotel industry. Trust Theory lets its users understand the role of reliability in online reviews and emphasizes the significance of trust-building strategies to be pursued by the websites. This supports the Theory of Planned Behavior in gaining insight into the motivational factors for consumers to buy into eWOM, bringing out the fact that positive attitudes and feelings of control must be developed among the intended customers. Based on the Social Influence Theory aspect of social validation, this layer of understanding is expanded: The consumers are highly likely to act as respondents rather than initiators when it comes to opinions other than their own when deciding to book. The three theories combined comprise an all-around view of the psychological and social factors that determine eWOM and booking behavior.

The practical implications of this theoretical framework might be useful to the managers of hotels and websites. Knowledge of weightage of Trust Theory over reliability may help in framing the right strategy for reviews on websites related to booking portals. For example, consumers can be made to believe in portals more by various review systems that verify the reviewers and show their credentials on a website. Third, the attitudes, norms, and control issues from the TPB could be integrated into a focus that informs strategies regarding making the process of booking more intuitive and positive social perceptions regarding online booking. This is expected through Social Influence Theory, as including popular reviews or allowing options to filter reviews based on similarity to the reader's preferences is effective because consumers tend to trust feedback from those they identify with.

Significantly, each theory highlights consumer experience as an influencer into booking into a hotel. Trust Theory focuses on the point that to what extent consumers trust a website or platform bears significant implications for their booking decision, especially in this hospitality industry, where high degrees of trust are likely to reduce uncertainty about destinations that are unfamiliar. Similarly, TPB suggests there is a requirement for a facilitating and socially acceptable booking process to suggest that customers are likely to book hotels that reflect both their individual as well as social network preferences. Social Influence Theory achieves this by showing that customers are drawn to hotels that have undergone positive evaluation by a large audience or group in that such review would be perceived as quality endorsements. Thus, the theoretical frame, integrating Trust Theory, TPB, and Social Influence Theory, makes this influence of eWOM on hotel booking intentions a very soundly founded study. The reliability element of Trust Theory, the motivational factors of TPB, and social validation according to Social Influence Theory together offer a comprehensive understanding of the factors that shape the consumer's behavior in online hotel bookings. By examining how these theories function to interact with and inform each other, this study is able to present cross-instructional value for academics and practitioners within the industry alike by improving the effectiveness of online booking platforms and the experience it provides for consumers.

Theoretical Framework for Consumer Booking Intention



**Figure 1 Theoretical Paradigm**

**METHODOLOGY**

**Research Design**

The present study employed a descriptive research design, where customers' predictors of booking in hotels in Thailand are examined. Descriptive research is commonly used to capture and present current situations, patterns, or behaviors among a particular population, hence providing an exhaustive overview of the phenomenon studied by systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation. This design would be highly effective for studies looking to identify and understand variables or relationships within a given context, without changing or manipulating conditions, making it highly ideal for examination of consumer behavior and decision-making processes in the hospitality industry (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). The descriptive approach was deemed appropriate to use as it provides a meaningful understanding of the factors involved in this study, from demographic characteristics, socio-economic profiles, through customer attitudes toward the level of volume, valence, and quality of websites of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). The study correctly identified the predictors of booking decisions amongst hotel customers in Thailand using a descriptive approach. This also allowed the researcher to make inferences about relationships between variables based on analysis of data and further lead to actionable insights into hotel management and marketing strategies.

**Participants of the Study**

This research study conducted had the participants chosen from five of the elite hotels in Bangkok, Thailand namely Mandarin Oriental, Shangri-La, Siam Kempinski, The Peninsula, and Four Seasons. In total, the five elite hotels normally attract approximately 40,000 customers in a given year, an estimated 666 customers per month across the five hotels. Given this large customer population, a sample size was calculated using the Raosoft sample size calculator at a 95% confidence level to ensure accuracy and reliability in representation.

Based on the computations, a stratified sample of 405 respondents were considered the appropriate target for research. Selection of participants for the investigation was done purposefully to select clients who have booked and stayed in the same hotels. It ensured that the sample of customers involved was those directly engaged in booking and thus ensured relevance of insights about factors driving their choice of a hotel for booking. A purposive sampling method is ideal for a study that intends to collect data from specific segments of a population and, therefore, is quite effective in capturing experiences and preferences in a high-end hospitality context (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016).

**Data Gathering Tool**

The structured survey questionnaire was employed to collect data for this research, and it remained the instrument through which the required information were obtained. The questionnaire was designed very carefully in line with an extensive review of available literature as well as established standardized tools to ensure reliability and validity in measuring the variables under study. In this study, three sections were chosen and designed to meet specific objectives related to the research.

The first section dealt with the gathering of demographic responses and provided relevant information about the customer base. The second section examined aspects associated with socio-economic factors, including income, occupation, and educational background to identify their probable impact on booking decision-making. The third section covered customers' booking behaviors and attitudes related to eWOM, website quality, and criteria for booking decisions. All items in this section were taken from previously established scales to ensure consistency with the generally accepted standards of research (Field, 2018). This structured approach in the design of the questionnaire allowed the study to systematically capture key insights concerning predictors of hotel booking decisions in Thailand, and data therefore ensured to be closer to the research objectives.

<b>Reliability Analysis</b>			
<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Cronbach Alpha Value</b>	<b>Number of Items</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
E-WOM volume	0.966	4	Excellent
E-WOM valence	0.911	3	Excellent
Website Quality	0.945	3	Excellent
Booking Decisions	0.973	3	Excellent
<i>George and Mallery (2003) provide the following rules of thumb:</i>			
“ $\alpha > .9$ – Excellent, $\alpha > .8$ – Good, $\alpha > .7$ – Acceptable, $\alpha > .6$ – Questionable, $\alpha > .5$ – Poor, and $\alpha < .5$ – Unacceptable”			

**Gathering Data Procedure**

The research data gathering started with the sending of a formal letter of request to the managers of the chosen hotels requesting permission to be allowed to carry out the survey among their clientele. Once the hotel management approved the researcher to carry out the survey, he went ahead and e-mailed a link for the survey questionnaire directly to the respondents. So as to ensure correctness and reliability of the responses, participants were requested to submit honest and thoughtful assessments of the activities based on their own experience.

Before administering the full survey, a pilot test was conducted so as to validate and generalize the questionnaire. This pilot test involved a small, representative sample of respondents and was performed with the assistance of a skilled statistician, who provided insights on refining the questionnaire for clarity and consistency. The feedback from the pilot test was duly incorporated in order to enhance the effectiveness of the instrument.

The researcher then set aside a week for returns of the questionnaire to be executed and returned. After this period, the returned questionnaires were collected and ready for statistical treatment and analysis for interpretation. To maintain a standard of quality of data, this process was designed to maintain integrity for data to reflect good and relevant results for the objectives of the study.

**Data Analysis**

The study analyzed how electronic word-of-mouth (E-WOM) influenced the booking decisions in travel industries. Before that, the researcher analyzed demographic profiles on location, educational qualification, gender, age, and status of respondents. Further, socio-economic profiles were also examined using average monthly income and occupation.

The demographic profile was described through descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage distribution. In addition, weighted mean and standard deviation were used to measure the volume and valence of E-WOM, website quality, and booking decisions. In contrast, to identify the predictors for booking decisions, a linear regression analysis was performed while relating the E-WOM volume, E-WOM valence, website quality, and booking decisions.

The study used a four-point Likert scale to measure the perceptions of the variables being researched. The scale provided numerical values for the respondents' verbal interpretations. The highest level of agreement was represented by "Strongly Agree" and the lowest level of agreement by "Strongly Disagree".

Option	Scale Range	Verbal Interpretation
4	3.50- 4.00	Strongly Agree (SA)
3	2.50 - 3.49	Agree (A)
2	1.50 - 2.49	Disagree (D)
1	1.00- 1.49	Strongly Disagree (SD)

**Ethical Consideration**

The research thus respected all the employees involved in the study. All were respected and their privacy protected. Before being distributed with the survey questionnaire, each participant made an informed consent with the researcher on the specifics of what the nature of the study entailed and their right to withdraw at their will. This ensured that participants were fully aware of the purpose of the study and their role within it, which empowered them to make responsible decisions about their participation. More importantly, the researcher promised participant anonymity, and no employee participant would be traceable by anyone looking in future reports or publications. The guarantee of confidentiality was an encouragement to the participants to share their thoughts without undue fear of reprisal, building trust and frank responses. Thus, the study ensured that it adhered to such high ethical principles to collect reliable data and respect the rights and welfare of the participants.

**Chapter 4**

**Results and Discussions**

Table 1		
Demographic Profile of the Respondents		
Location	Frequency	Percentage
1. Northern Region	46	11.40
2. Central region	169	41.70

3. Eastern region	85	21.00
4. Northeastern region (Isan)	69	17.00
5. Southern and Western regions	36	8.80
<b>Educational Qualification</b>		
1. Associate degree, certificate, middle school, high school	38	9.40
2. Bachelor's degree	180	44.40
3. Master's degree	148	36.50
4. Doctoral degree or higher	39	9.60
<b>Gender</b>		
1. Male	188	46.40
2. Female	217	53.60
<b>Age</b>		
1. 18-25 years old	33	8.10
2. 26-30 years old	94	23.20
3. 31-35 years old	81	20.00
4. 36-40 years old	75	18.50
5. 41-45 years	57	14.1
6. 46-50 years	42	10.30
7. 51 years or more	23	5.70
<b>Status</b>		
1. Single	148	36.5
2. Married	164	40.5
3. Divorced or widowed	93	23.00

The demographic profile of the respondents, as shown by the results based on Table 1, provides information about hotel customer characteristics and is indeed relevant to marketing strategies and service customization. The central region of Thailand also forms the largest proportion of respondents, forming 41.70% of the sample. This could be attributed to the fact that the region is very diversely rich in tourist attractions, such as historical temples, busy markets, and a dynamic food culture. All these factors make the central region a significant tourist destination site for both domestic and international tourists. The findings are in consonance with those presented by Phakdee-Auksorn et al. (2023), which points to the fact that Thai youth tourists would prefer destinations that uniquely and differentially experience others. This trend appears to therefore extend to hotel customers in the central region, an opportunity for which hotel marketers can create a campaign that focuses on how to deliver very localized and culturally immersive experiences to this segment. For example, hotels in that location can add a new layer to their packages by providing pre-curated activities, such as guided temple tours, experience of culinary workshop, or entry to exclusive local markets as it resonates with those that are culturally curious travelers. A more critical outcome pertains to educational qualifications. The respondents replied that 44.40% of the respondents possessed a bachelor's degree, while 36.50% had a master's degree. Which means that selected respondents are strongly better educated than average, and would like, most probably higher quality service and tastes in line with the intellectual and cultural interests. Educated travelers want more than

simple accommodation; they look for hotels that can provide added value through sophisticated offerings. Hence, hotels operating in this segment would offer additional programs like art exhibitions, seminars by experts, and education of local culture as part of the packages. These would add to the quality of the stay of guests and meet the intellectual needs of group target customers.

Briefly speaking, demographic research reveals that marketing strategies and services have to be specifically designed to fulfill the unique attributes of the target customers. Such local unique experiences for the customers in the central region would nurture engagement and loyalty. For the educated segment, there could be a set of intellectually enriching activities that help a hotel stand out in the market. Such strategies would allow hotels to cater to different needs of customers and enhance their position among competitors in the hospitality market.

Meanwhile, from the gender distribution results, there could be a slight indication that there were more females than males at 53.60%. It may, therefore, be an indication that women are perhaps slightly more of a strong presence in this tourism and hospitality market concerning the study. This finding is of great importance as far as marketing strategy and personalization in services are concerned, since it indicates a kind of necessary requirement to give in to women's wishes and expectations of traveling. The study in this regard has mainly found the selection of women as the decision maker of a journey, especially if she travels alone or with her friends or family. As stated by Phakdee-Auksorn et al. (2023), most of the time as a preference, care about security, cultural experience and easy traveling were the considerations.

Safety of women travelers in preference is one factor that hotels have to meet through the services provided and in marketing programs. This may be through strict proof of safety measures such as areas being well-lit with proper 24-hour surveillance, hence guaranteeing them considerable security. Hence female travelers are highly interested in experiences that allow much engagement with a culture. For example, hotels could exploit this by coming up with specific activities that are in themselves curations in the form of art workshops, cooking classes, guided tours, and the like targeted to women's interests. Such activities would fit the bigger trend of experiential tourism where tourists seek more experience.

And while experience is the big contributor, results would indicate that female-focused amenities can really make a difference in terms of guest satisfaction. The more wellness-oriented facilities, yoga classes, spa services, and even female-only rooms can be specialized and personalized. Such facilities appeal not only to women travelers but position the hotel as attentive to special needs of its guests. They can further take these services with campaigns under digital marketing, and they can display testimonials from women travelers, inclusive imagery, services, and activities available exclusively for women.

Therefore, this high percentage of female travelers in the sample opens the opportunity to provide more gender-sensitive hotel offerings. Female guest concerns and preferences could better be addressed to ensure loyalty as a customer base, happy reviews, and market positioning. Really, the findings ushered in more the idea of coming up with a strategy or plan considering care and thoughtfulness in being changed to fit current traveling expectations, especially by people in this powerful group.

Looking at the table, a summary of age in the survey reveals concentration with most of the young travelers. As such, 26-30-year-olds represent 23.20% which has become the largest segment. This age segment insight unfolds well the great influence of millennials and Gen Z in all these involvements within the tourism and hospitality arena. Younger visitors reflect other preferences than the elderly by easily adopting convenience, technology, and exotic memorable experiences. This trend turns to a show where there is an evident sign that hotels need to change their service and marketing campaigns with expectations set by this dynamic and technology-conscious segment.



The foremost significant characteristic feature of young travelers is their dependence on technology while traveling. From searching destinations to comparisons of places, to putting words together in social media accounts of the destination, technology basically resides in every step of the traveler's journey. Thus, these hotels should focus on incorporating technology-like having an easy-to-navigate website, online booking systems that can be carried out extremely seamlessly and also using mobile apps to make the stay experience even more enjoyable. Features like virtual concierge services, contactless check-ins, and smart room technologies will really catch their eye, since these individuals put so much importance on convenience and efficiency.

As can be inferred from this result, youth travelers also, by nature, need experiential and interactive experience. Youth travelers require the authentic experience, an immersive experience, but one that does not get anything to do with the question of accommodation. Here, hotels can leverage such demands with activities such as adventure tours, cultural immersion programs or themed events corresponding to local traditions and lifestyles. Indeed, this type of experiential hands-on experience, from taking in a local cooking class, ecotourism activities, digital-friendly spaces for socializing and networking make the hotel attractive to this generation.

Another dependency on which the younger traveler relies is social media. Most of the experiences that they go through will involve documenting and sharing online; thus, visually appealing spaces will become an important factor in their choices. Of course, hotels can also benefit from this by planning Instagrammable spaces within the hotel, including appealing lounges, scenic rooftop bars or uniquely shaped rooms. Creating shareable experiences means that hotels, by doing so, not only improve the guest experience but also receive free organic marketing through user-generated content.

This millennial age group highlights technology and experiences, as asserted by the study of Phakdee-Auksorn et al. (2023), which highlights that youth travelers require "differentiated and engaging" attractions. Such hotels can enjoy an upper hand over competitors in catching and retaining this very precious target market. Again, specially tuned marketing campaigns, such as influencer co-operations, digital ads on social media, and ad campaigns targeted toward experiential experiences, will help reach out to youth travelers.

Thus, undoubtedly the salience of the 26-30 age group among the responses makes it fairly critical to align the hospitality services of a hotel in accordance with the requirements of the young guests. Immersive experiences, beautiful spaces, and technology-driven solutions would be some of the engines for an important connect that hotels might establish with this group. Therefore, these strategies would increase the guest satisfaction levels and would make the hotel a forward-thinking as well as a current brand in fast-paced market.

Notably, the marital status data found the number of respondents in a marital union quite significant at 40.5%. The close second were single individuals at 36.5%, while 23% were divorced or widowed. Such information is valuable because it gives information on various types of customers within the hotel where each has different needs or wants, and strategic targeting can be oriented to improve guests' satisfaction and welcome more diverse groups.

Above all, it is probably that for most of the married respondents, who is the largest single respondent category, family-friendly amenities and services can constitute a top demand. Offers for couples and families can be focused and some packages can include interconnecting accommodations and children's play areas, as well as babysitting services. Further opportunities can arise by focusing on couple-oriented packages, especially for honeymooners, whose needs include romantic packages, such as a series of

treatments in spas, candlelit dinners, or honeymoon specials. From this result, it can be construed that destinations offering rest together with some opportunities for bonding may be included, so hotels which provide comprehensive wellness facilities, adventure activities or serene settings can capture this market effectively.

The other important target group is single visitors, 36.5%, who are normally looking for independence and exploration during the travel period and want to get some socialization as well. To appeal to this demographic, hotels may offer package deals that emphasize the attributes of singles, such as single occupancy discounts, community dining, or group tour access. It is in the nature of experiences, leaving room for connection with others and for freedom of pace in the exploration of destinations, that the hostels with social spaces or boutique hotels with more personalized services are often singled out.

On the other hand, for divorced or widowed respondents, that is, 23%, hotels may promote as safe haven environments that welcome such people to come seeking rest, rehabilitation, or self-improvement. This kind of group would probably be interested in wellness-related offers such as yoga retreats, spa offers, or mindfulness activities. Travel packages created for personal discovery or social connection also may appeal quite well to this age group. These can then be emphasized in marketing to further the comfort for such guests. This, as can be assumed, will make them feel that they are indeed staying in a safe and friendly place. As such, it can be said that this knowledge related to marital status also influences marketing strategies. Campaigns can be devised for such exclusive groups by targeting motivations related to traveling. For example, the advertisements may relate to family-oriented amenities, while independent experiences and adventure may attract single people. Similarly, wellness programs and inclusive packages may attract divorced or widowed people for restorative travel experiences.

Thus, the statistics point out the necessity of segmentation of hotel services aimed at answering the different needs. Therefore, tailoring services and packages especially for married couples, singles or divorced or widowed guests, which would significantly personalize the guest experience in a meaningful way. As such, targeted marketing might increase customers' satisfaction but will also strengthen hotel positions in highly competitive markets due to increased appeal towards a wider and more diverse audience.

Conversely, an analysis of the demography of hotel respondents provides insights of significant value for hotel marketers and tourism practitioners, allowing them to adapt their offerings and strategies towards marketing in different directions that would effectively capture the variety of segments identified in the study. Findings are in consonance with research presented by Phakdee-Auksorn et al. (2023), as diverse attractions, safety, easy travel, and cultural experiences are some of the main features that appeal to young tourists, especially those for the central region. With such knowledge, hoteliers can further adjust their services and promote them to fit the needs of this target market so that it leads to better customers who are constantly loyal to the hotel brand.

Meanwhile, looking at the results in Table 2, it can be seen the distribution of respondents in terms of their socio-economic profile. To note, as evident in Table 2, socio-economic profile of the respondents provides extremely critical information about their financial status and occupational backgrounds and hence understanding of spending behavior and travel preferences. As reflected in the results, most of the respondents have reported incomes falling within the \$20,001-\$30,000 range that essentially means that they form a middle-income earning group. Indeed, as massive as 28.60 percent of them are engaged in traditional employment with companies, factories, or hotels. Occupational diversification connects to the

broad appeal hospitality commands, cuts across diverse socio-economic groups, and underlines the potential of this segment as a driver for sustainable demand toward hospitality services.

<b>Table 2</b>		
<b>Socio-Economic Profile of the Respondents</b>		
<b>Average monthly income</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1. Less than or equal to 10,000 baht	3	0.70
2. 10,001 - 20,000 baht	73	18.00
3. 20,001 - 30,000 baht	109	26.90
4. 30,001 - 40,000 baht	76	18.70
5. 40,001- 50,000 baht	84	20.70
6. More than 50,000 baht	60	14.80
<b>Occupation</b>		
1. Business owner personal business	33	8.10
2. Government employees, civil servants, state enterprises	61	15.10
3. Students	21	5.20
4. Unemployed	21	5.20
5. Freelance career	73	18.00
6. Trade	46	11.40
7. General employment	34	8.40
8. Regular Employees of companies, factories, hotels	116	28.60

Mean income captures the middle-income class of the surveyed populations; thus, it implies the larger worldwide pattern in tourism where most tourists simply give experiential value precedence to expensive purchases. This paradigm where consumers are more willing to experience life rather than gather possessions is because, as studies prove, most middle-income customers expect their money to be spent on memorable experiences rather than just commodities. According to Ekstein, (2018), this trend is economically impactful because the tourism industry has become a core driver of local economies and further went on to influence economies such as Thailand through their foreign visitors.

From this result, it can be cited that Thailand will also be one of the most visited places in the world and hence further fueling this trend. This estimate assumes that Thailand's nearly 40 million projected foreign visitors for 2019 were estimated by the National News Bureau of Thailand (2019). According to Stapornchai (2018), 73% of these arrivals came from the East Asian continent, reflecting high demand in region for cultural attractions, affordability, and hospitality. These factors appeal to middle-income travelers, who look for value experiences with cultural enrichment and immersion that will not cost them an arm and a leg.

For hotel marketers, these results mean an opportunity to create products which fulfill the needs of middle-income guests. Then cultural experience packages, adventure activities or even eco-tourism-oriented packages would attract the kind of customers seeking something unique and full of experience. To the

same income group, price positioning strategies that are focusing on quality at affordable prices will come out even more appealing since they still have a balance of cost and perceived value. Then, hotels would innovate loyalty schemes and other value-added services to further add value to their guests' retention levels.

Hence, it can be construed that the social-economic profiles of the respondents speak about the critical place middle-income earners have in the tourism sector. Their orientation toward experience travel and prudent spending pattern is a trend more characteristic of common behavior, in line with Thailand's strategy of getting positioned as a value-rich destination. Of course, a premise it builds from can also further create the appeal for the offering of hotels through cultural, experiential, and budget-friendly initiatives that are addressing the target demographics-add another layer to position drive within a highly competitive marketplace. It will also directly impact those preferences in building up toward the overall economic impact of tourism for Thailand.

On this account, convergence between themes of the socio-economic profile of the respondents and the reviewed literature was strongly noticeable. The distribution of income and occupational backgrounds of respondents corresponded closely with broader tourism trends and economic contributions in Thailand, as explained in the literature. This outcome, the answer to experiential travel and preference over material wealth in making memories, resonates with the larger trend in society in tastes and therefore supports the contention that modern travelers want more authentic experiences and wholesome lives.

Thus, socio-economic analysis of the respondents of hotel establishment has enriched information about the profile of travelers while ascertaining the appropriateness of knowing traveler preferences and importance of tailoring services towards accommodating such needs. Merging these findings with the reviewed literature gave strong backing to the fact that adaptation to new consumer behavior through improvements of visitor experience ensures customer satisfaction and loyalty in this competitive tourism sector.

This paper thus brings forth useful points for destination marketers across Southeast Asia, premising that such insight into factors is vital to tailor marketing strategies based on this demographic. More importantly, the finding illustrates the need for destination marketers to invest in the amenities and cultural experiences ascertained in the paper relevant to these preferences.

<b>Table 3</b>			
<b>Assessment in E-WOM volume</b>			
<b>E-WOM volume</b>	<b>WM</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>VI</b>
EVO1. Popular hotel There are many reviews online.	4.21	0.74	Agree
EVO2. Hotel with a good reputation, has many ratings and reviews.	4.64	0.58	Very Much Agree
EVO3. I remember the name of the hotel. that many customers can easily talk about on online media	4.40	0.62	Agree
EVO4. I often see hotels. that has many reviews on online media	4.64	0.57	Very Much Agree
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>4.47</b>	<b>0.63</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Meanwhile, the measurements of e-WOM volume, as shown in Table 3, provide an inside look at the quantified impact online reviews and reputation have in the process of hotel selection. The top three statements based on the rating assigned were "Good hotel reputation has numerous ratings and reviews," "I often see hotels that have many reviews on online media," and "I remember the name of the hotel that many customers can easily talk about on online media." These obtained high agreement scores, with the highest being 4.64, indicating a very strong accord among the respondents.

Such a result supports the idea of De Valck (2024), who concentrated more on the importance e-WOM had for decisions relating to booking in hotels. Moreover, high agreement scores mean that respondents consider hotels with a good reputation, high ratings, and favorable reviews of Web resources. This hypothesis was in accordance with the assumption in the literature stating that the criteria used to influence one's decision concerning booking a hotel involve customer perceptions of reputation and online presence. Findings on the purchaser decision buying decision process as found are thought provoking. The statement "I remember the name of the hotel which many customers can talk about easily online media" scored a 4.40, followed by "Popular hotel that has many reviews online," scoring a 4.21. These relatively high, yet slightly lower agreement levels in turn suggest that although online presence and reviews are factors influencing the purchase, they do not have to be critical for every respondent.

There is a slice of sophistication and multiplicity in priorities: for some, the popularity of a hotel or its reputation may count more on online forums, while others may look at it from another angle-from personal services to location or price. Quite generally, this means that customer choice would not be governed only by surface-level popularity or brand recognition but by how important other, arguably less apparent, factors are to them.

This lower agreement score may also reflect the fact that the dynamics have shifted from the client to give more emphasis to the qualitative online review elements-authenticity and relevance-than to the quantitative, such as quantity of reviews or general popularity. It is one with the growing use of meaningful, experience-based decision-making so that travelers want to make better choices in step with insightful and authentic feedback rather than just following what is trendy and mainstream.

As can be inferred from these results, it can be said that the lesser reliance on the online community will give the ability to remember and interact with a hotel brand. This may suggest a shift in consumer behavior. They may not care as much about whether the brand name is well known or how many reviews the product has, but they care more about other factors in their choice criteria, like if reviews come from people who are truly authentic, if they have personalized experiences, or simply get value for money. This would be able to be said in relation to Cheung and Lee's (2012) perspective that indicated reputation, sense of belonging, and enjoyment of helping other consumers were all factors strongly influential in e-WOM engagement. Implications would thus hold that however excellent the tool remains, that is, e-WOM, its impact may somewhat need to be nuanced to depend on the ultimate context and preferences of the customer.

The implication of these findings is that customers care more about qualitative review aspects rather than the quantitative ones. Therefore, instead of the number of reviews or the popularity of the hotel, they might be interested in in-depth, authentic feedback. With this, once again, this similarity exemplifies the type of growing consumer preference towards more authentic, experience-oriented insights, which may provide a better decision-making basis. Most importantly, perhaps, is that lower stratification on the importance of hotel name memorability may indicate that a traveler can be more concerned with practical factors like location, amenities, or pricing rather than brand recall or widespread recognition.

From a strategic perspective, these findings add much to the key implications for hoteliers. To that end, hotels should care more about creating better experiences for their customers-to be reflected in their positive, well-specified reviews. These could well be factors of differentiation - excellent service, special amenities, or attentive personal touch, which in the minds of potential customers matters much more. In addition, active and differential communication with the community via marketing can create loyalty and can even assist them to purchase based on words of mouth rather than through mere online presence metrics.

Hence, the findings of this research study would show that the marketers in the hotel industry might consider niche markets or design experiences unique to their offerings compared to their competitors. With this perspective, this would attract consumers to keep staying in a more personal and local experience besides the popularity alone of the hotels. Social media sites could also be employed by these hotels to post compelling stories and testimonials from their already satisfied guests, which indicates the human side of their services rather than brand memorability alone.

Very low scores in terms of agreement on these statements reveal an even larger trend: quality, authenticity, and personalization over popular name familiarity or memorability for hotels. What hoteliers achieve through an understanding and working with these intangible preferences can be manipulated to move from the level of customer satisfaction toward making an impression in the marketplace.

Overall, the most highly ranked statements were that reputation, web presence, and favorable online comments were decisive factors for a hotel customer in booking decisions. The results highlight the significance of e-WOM in the hotel industry, which is of great importance; supported by De Valck (2024) and the more extensive literature on the impact of e-WOM on the behavior of consumers.

However, the lower agreement scores for the bottom two statements suggest that, although online reviews are important, other factors may also help make a memorable experience and personal recommendations relevant to customers' choice-making criteria. This suggests some complexity in consumer preference and the multifaceted nature of the factors influencing hotel bookings, as developed in the literature.

As observed by Vrontis et al. (2022), social media amplifies the reach of EWOM, thus becoming an opportunity and challenge for hotels in managing their reputations online. Response to feedback, as well as interacting with customers, ensures that the accommodations maintain a good digit image; this helps increase higher booking rates.

As such, the number of e-WOM volume in Table 3 is very informative for the purposes of understanding how hotel booking decisions are greatly influenced by online reviews and reputation. The findings will be in accordance with literature cited, which highlights an obligation on hospitality managers to deal with online reputation, elicit positive reviews, and understand influencing factors and elements as consumer intentions in the digital hotel industry.

On the other hand, the valence of e-WOM findings on Table 4 reveal the importance of content about hotels as an influencing accommodation selection factor when making a booking. The composite score average of 4.50, the finding revealed that these respondents valued the relative influence of e-WOM to their choices by either positive or negative reviews. This increases reliance in the digital environment for the harvesting of information and better decision-making on traveling through informed traveling decisions in a marketplace that is becoming more digitalized.

<b>Table 4</b>			
<b>Assessment in E-WOM valence</b>			
<b>E-WOM valence</b>	<b>WM</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>VI</b>
EVA1. High or low hotel review ratings It's important to me.	4.48	0.48	Agree
EVA2. I searched for hotel reviews. both in a positive and negative way	4.54	0.65	Very Much Agree
EVA3. Hotel overall rating It helps me compare between different options. quickly online	4.48	0.60	Agree
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>4.50</b>	<b>0.58</b>	<b>Very Much Agree</b>

As evidence of this, the highest mean score was 4.54 for the statement "I searched for hotel reviews, both in a positive and negative way." It goes without saying that it becomes possible for the consumer to be proactive in seeking balanced perspectives about what a hotel has in store for them. This practice supports Zhang et al. (2022) which stresses the role of KORs in shaping consumer decision-making processes. Indeed, Zhang showed that besides the content of reviews, credibility of the reviewers was also a factor on which consumers would consider the review of trustworthy and informing comments. This attitude presents an inclination toward the smart consumer market, making decisions with in-depth analysis instead of a glance at superficial perceptions.

On the other hand, negative review could be very informative about what is missing from a hotel, much to the irritation of hotels. Undeniably, being important on an overall level evokes a perception of a generic trend towards the desire of customers for transparency. The apparent general consensus that both positive and negative reviewing had to be done is important. By doing this, one will be able to determine if these weaknesses accommodate their priority or preference. Conversely, a positive review confirms the strengths of a hotel, hence comforting consumers about the type of service and services that they should expect. Together, these reviews give an all-around perception of the hotel experience in terms of increasing consumer confidence in their booking decisions.

This statement is further supported by the research conducted by Geller (2013), which argued that electronic word-of-mouth is an extremely effective marketing tool for influence building of positive or negative consumer perceptions. Jalilvand & Samiei (2012) also suggest that getting a competitive edge in tourism is a significant aspect enhanced through e-WOM. Keller & Libai (2009) are also of the view that e-WOM helps in shaping traveler attitudes for destinations and accommodations.

The remaining statements, although with slightly lower scores for agreement, still reflected the importance of consulting the web in informing customers' perceptions. "Hotel overall rating It helps me compare between different options quickly online" with a weighted mean of 4.48 reveals how the respondents place value on general rating as a basis of comparing numerous hotels. The result concurs with El-Said (2020) who asserted that negative online reviews do have an effect on the travel intentions of a hotel booking. In fact, their research, which relied on a convenience sample of 432 customers who have previous experiences in making an online reservation, highlighted added significance to an online response on behalf of hotels about online customer reviews, this time negative reviews, as another way of promoting oneself.

The lowest rating went to the statement "High or low hotel review ratings It's important to me" 4.48. This still indicates that respondents view online reviews as important but might indicate that they are less

enthusiastic about this particular numeric rating than about the content. This fact further portrays that an in-depth review including description beyond stars would tell the customers about the services received and the deficiencies present in the offering by a hotel.

Hence, as shown by Table 4, the current analysis reveals that the valence of E-WOM has a tremendous influence over hotel booking decisions. Results based on the study are in tune with the views of Zhang et al. (2022), Geller (2013), Jalilvand & Samiei (2012), Keller & Libai (2009), and El-Said (2020) that emphasize reputation management, positive word-of-mouth dissemination, and the role of informational word-of-mouth in attracting and retaining customers in the modern digital marketplace.

<b>Website Quality</b>	<b>WM</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>VI</b>	
WQ1. Famous hotel has an interesting website.	4.49	0.65	Agree	
WQ2. International hotel website made me interested in finding out more.	4.53	0.60	Very Much Agree	
WQ3. Hotel website that is reliable and easy to use. It's important to me.	4.62	0.54	Very Much Agree	
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>4.55</b>	<b>0.60</b>	<b>Very Much Agree</b>	

Gratitude for the quality of a website-an extremely important role for a designed and functional website that could influence hotel bookings. A composite mean score of 4.55 indicates very strong agreement among the responses. Thus, the findings reveal that the importance of website quality on consumer perception and behavior toward booking sums up to evidence as being valid for website quality, forming the doorway to the presentation of a good first impression and trust in customers.

The statement "Trusty and user-friendly hotel website. That is important to me" supports it by means of percentage score at a maximum weighted mean of 4.62. It therefore means that when customers consider reliability and friendliness of the website, pretty much dependency can go ahead to be a deciding factor. A hospitable website inspiring confidence can ensure that any visitor accessing it may surf freely and be given information on various options available and even make reservations without frustration. This study's findings were resonant with the work of Noronha and Rao (2017), where website quality correlates directly to customer satisfaction. Their research found that all those user needs, for example, clear navigation, rapid page-load time, and lack of error function, differ in terms of satisfaction and motivate the intention to do more online bookings.

The highest score for the agreement was scored in the statement, "International hotel website made me interested in finding out more at," 4.53 which is relatively high. That means attractive or informative websites that attract the attention of a user in prospects where deeper engagement will take place. Website quality does not only attract customers but also brings satisfaction within the system; therefore, leading to higher purchase intentions according to Khumalo-Ncube and Motala (2021). This would have customers navigate deeper and ultimately make a booking reservation when the overseas hotel site is rich in information and photographs, interesting, and interactive.



The findings of this study also have some important implications for hotel management and digital marketing strategy. Firstly, the findings of the research underscore the imperative of putting in investments in site development and maintenance concerning dependability, simplicity, and aesthetic appeal. The sites must be user-centered, very easy to navigate, detailed about the information they carry and not compromise between functionalities on devices. Real-time support in the form of chat options where booking processes and secure payment systems are possible also determine how good a website is, thus maintaining users' trust.

The strong consensus over the quality of a website further underlines the competitive advantage which can be given by optimization of the presence of hotels through the Internet. As the role of the digital marketplace continues to grow, providing pertinent trip planning services, Hotels have realized that an up-and-coming website must stand out in design, content and functionality. For example, among those reasons why a tourist will look for a particular website, such things as the distinctive selling points, quality images, and opinions about the website from its customers are the factors.

At any rate, however, international web involvement in encouraging customer interest brings an important value to this objective of international reach. Such features as multilingual characteristics and local content, combined with localized marketing, may appeal to more travelers internationally when considering features of hotel websites on the internet and then looking to delve further and book.

A nutshell summary would be that the results again clearly state that site quality remains the most important variable in any form of relation to customer satisfaction and subsequent purchase intentions in the tourism and hospitality sectors. Reliability and ease of use with an interesting visual appeal can make for a better online presence to attract more customers, thus implying increased bookings. Such a highly competitive and technologically driven marketplace requires the hotel to attain digital excellence, where first impressions seal the customer's decision.

The lowest weighted mean was for the statement "Famous hotel has an interesting website" with a score of 4.49, but despite attaining this relatively low level of agreement, the result does still exhibit a high level of agreement, and it might then suggest that a beautifully designed website is not an important criterion influencing customers to make their final choice. This view is also in agreement with that of Hasanov and Khalid (2015), such that online shops should be searched if the consumers adore the websites' look. However, as it follows from the study conducted by them, aesthetic quality of websites is actually not enough and requires measures surpassing it, as use should also be made of all-inclusive evaluations based on information quality, service interaction, as well as human-computer interaction.

Hence, on the basis of this fact, it is clear that Syarif, Stephani H. et al. (2019) also proved that the quality of the website is relevant to whether it influences customer satisfaction and online purchasing intention. The study considered the relationship between perceived flow and customer satisfaction with regard to online purchase intention while booking hotels at Traveloka.

Thus, the result of Table 5 on website quality according to the leading adequate proof that a good and operational effectiveness website is highly decisive for hotel booking. Moreover, these findings align with the works of Noronha and Rao (2017), Khumalo-Ncube & Motala (2021), Hasanov and Khalid (2015), and Syarif, Stephani H. et al. (2019). This confirms that website quality is vital to building different consumer preferences and selection behavior in the hospitality industry. In the present digital age, hotels are expected to make user-friendly, information-rich, and aesthetic website portfolios to influence attracting and retaining customers.

<b>Table 6</b>			
<b>Customers Booking Decisions</b>			
<b>Booking Decisions</b>	<b>WM</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>VI</b>
BD1. Social media comments about the hotel affects my decision to book a room.	4.56	0.59	Very Much Agree
BD2. Positive reviews on the hotel website. affects my decision to book a room.	4.58	0.57	Very Much Agree
BD3. Negative reviews on the hotel website affects the decision not to reserve a room.	4.56	0.59	Very Much Agree
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>4.57</b>	<b>0.59</b>	<b>Very Much Agree</b>

Analysis of customer booking decisions is provided as can be taken from table 6, where it is noted that there is a high reliance on online reviews and feedback, pointing to a high-level consideration of the importance attached to e-WOM in hotel booking decisions. The use of online reviews to decide their hotel bookings was found to be very high, with a composite mean score of 4.57. The statements with the highest agreement scores were "Positive comments about the hotel on the hotel website influence my decision to book a room" (WM 4.58); "Comments about the hotel on social media influence my decision to book a room" (WM 4.56); and "Negative comments about the hotel on the hotel website influence the decision not to reserve a room" (WM 4.56). All of these findings agreed with Sharma et al. (2019), Kouzmal H., Saleh M., and Abd El-Latief M. (2020), and Tsao et al. (2015) that the online reviews have a significant role in customers' booking decisions.

According to Touni et al. (2022), booking intention represents an important constituent of consumer behavioral intentions in tourism; these factors influencing this intention are both internal and external, that is, from the customer's motivation and preferences up to the influence of such factors like price, availability, and quality. Perceptions about technology amongst consumers have been considerable in studies; for example, Cheng and Guo (2021) researched how the attitudes of customers toward technology affected bookings. This study found that travelers who have an affirmative impression about technology are more likely to make bookings through online platforms as well as showed how technology acceptance has emerged as a critical determinant in modern booking practices. Agag and ElMasry (2016) also argued that knowledge of booking intention is relevant because it will enable tourism planners and service providers to know how to plan their resources effectively, target the correct demographics and thus increase bookings.

A big and positive score of this agreement with statements shows how respondents rely a lot on online reviews when taking decisions; moreover, how there is a transition toward an informed, data-driven approach when referring to travel planning. This information is verified by the results obtained by Kouzmal H., Saleh M., and Abd El-Latief M. (2020) noted that "travelers are increasingly using internet-based media to compare prices, read reviews and gather information about hotels before booking." This is complemented by the findings of Widodo and Marie, (2019) which hypothesized that online reviews are likely to influence the interest of the consumer towards staying at a given hotel.

The results also indicated that both positive and negative reviews have an influence on the customers' decisions. The positive reviews increase the book intention of a customer while the negative reviews discourage them from booking. According to Tsao et al. (2015), if a customer perceives positive reviews, his booking intentions increase while if he perceives negative reviews, then his booking intentions decline. This would thereby mean that hotels must take active control over their online presence and also encourage reviews that are positive while acting promptly on adverse comments to promote a positive image and attract potential customers.

On the contrary, the results of customer booking decisions in Table 6 show the significant role that online reviews play in setting up consumer behavior and hotel booking decisions. The related high agreement scores on statements concerning the impact of postings and opinions on social media sites and online reviews on booking decisions, among other things, indicate the growth of e-WOM influence in the hospitality industry. This research fits well within the trend identified by Widodo and Marie in 2019 that digitally transforms the travel industry, which perceives online reviews as one of the fundamental drivers of travel choices. The findings add further weight to online reputation management and the need to benefit from positive feedback in the quest for more visitors and excellence in the whole booking process. Hopefully, it will help to gain trust, credibility, and loyalty among guests for hotels, which directly increases bookings and revenues in the competitive online marketplace through their understanding and actions taken towards the feedback of customer.

The results also indicate that more attention needs to be paid toward the perceived impacts of online review practices on customer behavior. For example, having an agreement level as high as that found in connection with the impact of negative reviews, hotels should take their time and make the effort to overcome negative feedback so as not to jeopardize their reputation and loss of subsequent bookings. This is relevant because Tsao et al. (2015) discovered that negative reviews can significantly reduce customers' intention to make a booking.

As concluded in Table 6, analysis of the decisions made by customers at the time of booking clearly presents evidence as regards strong proof that online reviews and e-WOM significantly affect the consumer behavior of the hotel industry. In fact, the alignment of those results with cited literature underscores the importance of online reputation management, analysis of customer feedback, and proactive communication strategies by hotels looking for an increase in their online presence and attracting more guests. With the power of positive reviews and constructive responses to negative comments, hotels can certainly attain a strong brand image, improve customer satisfaction, and experience a successful outcome in bookings. This study's conclusions will help guide hoteliers in planning their optimal online optimization strategy and e-WOM potential for business success in the digital world.

Thus, this further explained theoretical frame, integrating Trust Theory, makes this influence of eWOM on hotel booking intentions a very soundly founded study. By examining how these theories function to interact with and inform each other, this study is able to present cross-instructional value for academics and practitioners within the industry alike by improving the effectiveness of online booking platforms and the experience it provides for consumers.

Table 7						
Predictors of Booking Decision						
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Interpretation
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
Constant	1.44	0.21		6.96	0.000	
E-WOM volume	0.17	0.05	0.17	3.15	0.002	Not Significant
E-WOM valence	0.30	0.05	0.33	6.07	<0.001	Highly Significant
Website Quality	0.23	0.06	0.22	4.09	<0.001	Highly Significant

*Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.05; R – Rejected; FR – Failed to Reject; S – Significant; NS – Not Significant*

As it can be seen in Table 7, the only two of the predictors that have a significant impact on Thai hotels' booking decisions are E-WOM valence and website quality, with p-values less than 0.05, meaning they are highly associated with booking decisions.

The importance of E-WOM valence, thus highlights online reviews, whether positive or negative in the creation of customer perceptions as well as booking intentions. This is also consistent with Chang's (2014) study that undertook to analyze the interaction of website quality with perceived trust and purchase intention among hospitality-related customers. Chang (2014) based on its findings concluded that indeed website quality boosts perceived trust and further increases purchase intention. This therefore means that hotels with high quality websites that offer necessary information, and positive reviews will be most likely to develop trust and thus translate into bookings.

The considerable influence of website quality also indicates developing an e-platform that should be user-friendly as well as informative. This is in line with the study by Tandon et al. (2019), who pointed out several quality criteria for an e-WOM system, including trust, ease of use, tangibility, ease of booking, navigation, customization, system availability, responsiveness, and interactivity. Hotels with websites scoring on these parameters will attract more customers and make more bookings.

Interestingly, there is little correlation between E-WOM volume, or the number of reviews, and booking decisions. The assumption is thus made that review quality is very important and, in so doing, captures E-WOM valence. This finding is further corroborated by the self-reported experiences of the respondents, who stated that they often regret booking based only on online photos, and who indicated a higher reliance on detailed information and reviews available on hotel websites.

Further, Khumalo-Ncube & Motala (2021) further proved the association of website quality and the satisfaction of customers because they showed that website quality will be a great influencer of the purchase intention of customers. Their study also revealed the fact that clarity and usability of online content are the key factors to influencing the satisfaction of customers. Moreover, Khumalo-Ncube and Motala affirmed that because the customers rely almost completely on digital sources, hoteliers will have to make digital engagement strategies predominant to support their online reputation.

Results also underline the designing need of a positive social experience at hotel websites. Amin (2012) showed that in order for the development of trust in e-services and online booking intentions of hotels, social presence is essential. Those hotels whose websites are warm and inviting, encouraging interaction and community building, tend to build more trust and encourage bookings.

Thus, results presented in Table 7, mean the importance of online reputation management, quality websites and quality social experience for the hospitality industry to attract and retain customers in an electronic age. The findings indicate that these aspects reflect the fact that E-WOM valence and website quality really have a strong impact on shaping customers' perceptions and actual booking decisions.

### **Conclusion**

1. Respondents- the target customers of this study include mainly young female, educated tourists from Bangkok who prefer experiential travel and for whom creating experiences is much more important than collecting materialism.
2. About E-volume: Thai hotel customers actually believe that ratings and reviews would significantly influence hotel reputation as well as booking choice.
3. E-WOM valence for hotel customers in Thailand values both positive and negative online reviews-the same again emphasizes the fact that there is effective online reputation management coupled with an active response to the views of the customers.
4. Thai hotel customers' assessment on website quality proved that they prioritize dependable, easy-to-use, and information-providing hotel websites, further underlining the significance of the good quality of websites in building trust and affecting intentions to book a hotel.
5. E-WOM valence and website quality are excellent predictors of the booking decision of Thai customers of hotels, providing an ample reason for online reputation management and website optimization in attracting and retaining customers.

### **Recommendation**

1. Hotel managers can also benefit from reviewing their online booking services from time to time to maintain competition in the hospitality industry.
2. The Marketing and Technology departments will find this useful because analyzing customer feedback on intensity, valence of opinion, and content will allow them to more clearly see the factors that lead customers to visit and make bookings.
3. In making online reservations for hotels, customers are more likely to compare costs and to read reviews of other visitors, which can influence their booking decisions.
4. Future studies can investigate the effects of additional variables on hotel booking decisions.

### **Recommendation**

1. Hotel managers may benefit from regularly reviewing their online booking services to maintain competitiveness in the hospitality industry.
2. Marketing and Technology departments may find it beneficial to analyze customer feedback, considering its intensity, valence of opinion, and content, to better understand factors influencing customer decisions to visit and book.
3. Hotel customers may be more likely to compare costs and read reviews from previous visitors when making online hotel reservations, potentially influencing their booking decisions.

4. Future studies may explore the impact of additional variables on hotel booking decisions.

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