



# An analysis of online purchase intention of Thai hostel accommodations

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## Abstract

Thailand's tourism sector has exploded in recent years, with expected international arrivals in 2019 projected at nearly 40 million, making it the 10<sup>th</sup> most popular destination on the planet. Furthermore, due to massive infrastructure expenditures, officials are further projecting 65 million visitors within the next ten years. Therefore, this study's purpose is to propose how these travelers' online purchase intention (PI) is affected by a hostel's website (HW), the accommodation booking website's personality (WP), the travellers' perceived value (PV), and the traveller's satisfaction (CS). From the sample group's 523 guests from 14 hostels, the LISREL 9.1 software program was used to analyze the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), which was followed by a structural equation model (SEM) of the study's nine hypotheses. Results showed that all the model's causal factors had a positive influence on PI, with the variance of the factors influencing PI ( $R^2$ ) being 80%. Ranked in importance, factors affecting PI were WP, CS, PV, and HW, with total effect (TE) values of 0.64, 0.55, 0.54, and 0.29, respectively. The study is a literature study that is novel in that it further explores the esoteric idea of a 'website's personality,' and the subsequent use within a social media world. Furthermore, the sample group in Thailand can help other developing nations better understand how technologies can be blended to gain a better competitive advantage within the tourism sector.

**Keywords:** Customer satisfaction, hostel website, perceived value, SEM, website personality.

## Introduction

In 2019 Thailand is projecting nearly 40 million foreign tourists, making Thailand the 10<sup>th</sup> most popular tourist destination in the world (Marukat, 2018; Sriring and Thaichareon, 2019). Foreign travelers to Thailand also are the highest spenders in Asia, which has made Thailand the 4<sup>th</sup> most profitable global tourism destination (Ekstein, 2018). Travel and tourism contributed 21.6 % of Thailand's total gross domestic product [GDP] in 2018 (Knoema, 2018), which additionally accounted for 5.8 million jobs or nearly 16% of the country's total workforce (Stapornchai, 2018). Thailand, therefore, has become a very attractive global tourism brand, and as a consequence, has transformed into itself into a major tourist destination (Marukat, 2018) (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** International Arrivals of Foreign Tourists 2015 – 2019.  
 (Sourced from the Kasikornbank Research Center, 2019).

Some researchers have credited Buhalis with the creation of the term ‘eTourism’ (Rus and Negruúá, 2014), which is another way to discuss a traveller’s online purchase intentions (Buhalis, 2003). Additionally, Gaggioli (2015) has stated that online travel agencies [OTAs] have morphed into highly complex marketing channels for hotel entrepreneurs, giving online travellers easy access to different travel options in terms of time, location, and price. Examples of powerful OTAs included Booking.com, Expedia, and Priceline, which now offer market access once unattainable by smaller hoteliers and hostel entrepreneurs. Also, according to Xu (2017), these disruptive innovations now allow OTAs and owners to make money from underused assets, with Airbnb being an excellent example within the hospitality sector.

Bharadwaj et al. (2017) have also reported that the social media model is influencing Thai e-commerce with 40% of the purchases digitally influenced and over 60% of Thai consumer online research taking place with online apps (Suebsaiaun and Pimolsathean, 2018). With the proliferation of online accommodation booking websites, the need for measurement criteria to evaluate the criteria of a website, and a traveller’s purchase intention (PI) needs to be further explored.

Therefore, the authors undertook an investigation of the importance and interrelationships of a hostel’s website (HW), the accommodation booking website’s personality (WP), the travellers’ perceived value (PV), and the customer’s (hostel guest) satisfaction (CS), on their online purchase intention (PI). Additionally, the paper hopes to contribute to the literature concerning what constitutes a ‘website’s personality’, as well as help small, independent hotels and hostels understand and develop a website presence that can compete with the OTA marketing machines such as Expedia and Priceline, which are now charging commissions which significantly reduces a smaller hostel’s competitive advantage. Furthermore, the study’s sample group constitutes foreign guests who stayed at one of 14 hostels in seven difference provinces/metro areas in Thailand.

Finally, the results of the study are segmented into seven sections. These include an introduction and a literature review related to HW, WP, PV, CS, and PI. These are followed by section 3's the materials and methods of the study, while section four is focused on the results. Section five is the discussion. Section six is the conclusion and future research recommendations, followed by section seven's study limitations.



## Literature Review

### Hostel Website (HW)

Many young and mobile travelers use hostels for their accommodations. Therefore, a hostel website (HW) should relate positively to customer satisfaction, whose attributes should contain visual clarity, guest care, service demonstration, and guest guidance (Dabrowski et al., 2014). Other research has suggested that a company's web site is critical for business success, with the site's design quality being one of the essential elements (Boushra, 2008).

More recently, Macau hotel website attributes and functionality were evaluated (Qi, 2016), with a hotel's inability to respond to traveler feedback and manager's lack of awareness of user-review sites being noted as significant concerns. This is consistent with Law and Cheung (2006), who also determined that a website's importance level rises with the class of the hotel. However, according to Rus and Negruúa (2014), reservation information is considered by travelers to be the most crucial aspect of a hotel's website.

Therefore, from the study's literature review, the authors identified four manifest variables to evaluate a hostel's website for the study. These included *the website's ease of use* (x1), *the website is very useful* (x2), *the website contains decision-making information* (x3), and finally, *the website has a fast response* (x4). Therefore, the following three hypotheses were conceptualized:

*H1: The Hostel Website (HW) affects directly Perceived Value (PV).*

*H2: The Hostel Website (HW) affects directly Customer Satisfaction (CS).*

*H3: The Hostel Website (HW) affects directly Purchase Intention (PI).*

### Website Personality (WP)

A website's personality (WP) has become an essential item for online travel services, with Aaker (1997) proposing that brands possess distinct personalities. In the online world, Phelan et al. (2013) suggested that website providers need to develop websites which engage potential travelers based on their personalities, as websites have personalities as well (Wroblewski, 2008). Therefore, by adding personality to a website, the gap between the technical and impersonal nature of the web can be bridged. Furthermore, adding website personality adds accessibility makes it user-friendly and adds personal experiences that users often miss online.

In India, Jain and Yadav (2019) deduced that WP and website user engagement impacted a traveler's PI. Specifically, Shobeiri et al. (2015) identified enthusiasm, unpleasantness, genuineness, site involvement, and sophistication as elements of a web site's personality.

Therefore, from the literature, the authors identified three manifest variables to evaluate a hostel's website for the study. These included *the website is modern and up-to-date* (x5), *the website's ease of use* (x6), and *the website's lovely appearance* (x7). Therefore, in order to examine the hostel's website effects on the study's latent variables, the following three hypotheses were conceptualized:

*H4: Website Personality (WP) affects directly Perceived Value (PV).*

*H5: Website Personality (WP) affects directly on Customer Satisfaction (CS).*

*H6: Website Personality (WP) affects directly Purchase Intention (PI).*



## Perceived Value (PV)

Zeithaml's (1988, p.142) stated that PV relates to how well a consumer assesses the utility of a product based on what an individual thinks they will get and what is actually given, which is a central concept within the hospitality's sector marketing and customer behavior research (Chang, 2008; Eid, 2015; Itani et al., 2019). Lexhagen (2008) also stated that for a firm to both acquire and keep its customers, they must provide customer value. In Malaysia, Abdullah et al. (2016) indicated that customer PV consisted of cost savings, security, and privacy. This is consistent with Chiu et al. (2014), who also discussed monetary benefits in the context of cost savings in online bookings by travelers being able to compare prices and book hotel rooms. Lexhagen (2008), however, saw benefits and sacrifice as PV elements for online content. Additional elements also investigated by researchers have been related to online privacy and security (Itani et al., 2019; Lallmahamood, 2007). As such, it may be used to develop our knowledge of customer experiences gained from travel and tourism web sites.

Therefore, from the literature, the authors identified three manifest variables to evaluate a traveler's perceived value. These included *good website service quality* (y4), *the website had good security* (y5), and the website offered *good value for the money* (y6). Therefore, in order to examine the perceived value (PV) on the study's latent variables, the following two hypotheses were conceptualized:

*H7: Perceived Value (PV) affects directly Customer Satisfaction (CS).*

*H8: Perceived Value (PV) affects directly Purchase Intention (PI).*

## Customer Satisfaction (CS)

Iwaarden et al. (2004) proposed that a website's ease of use is a crucial element in considering a website's quality, which is an essential antecedent of CS and a key element for retaining customer loyalty in the online marketplace (Dabrowski et al., 2014).

Therefore, from the literature, the authors identified three manifest variables to evaluate a traveler's perceived value. These included the *website was nicely designed* (y7), *the website meets my needs* (y8), and *overall, I am satisfied with the website* (y9). Also, in order to examine the perceived value (PV) on the study's latent variables, the following hypothesis was conceptualized:

*H9: Customer Satisfaction (CS) affects directly Purchase Intention (PI).*

## Purchase Intention (PI)

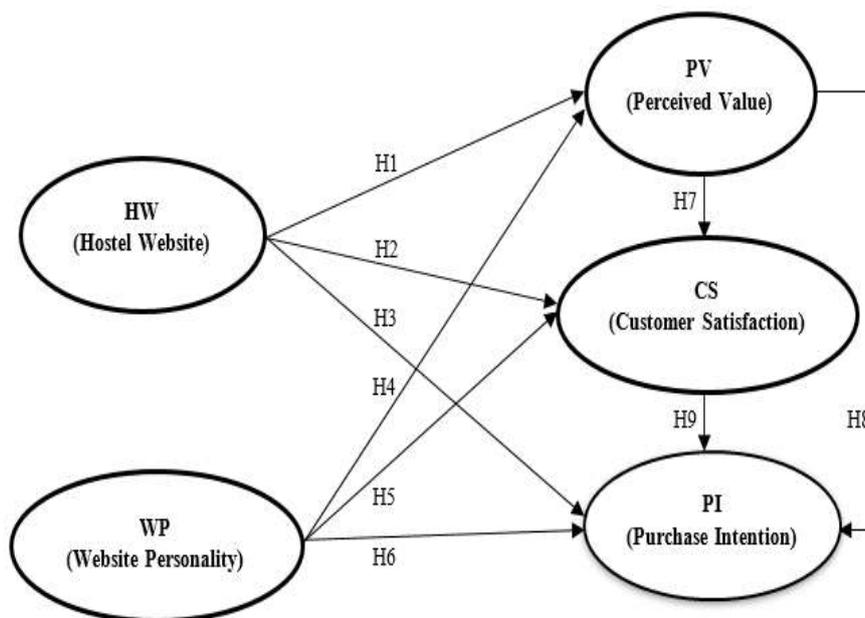
In Ojasalo's (2010) e-services model, Internet interaction, highly personalized communications, adjusting services to customer needs, and non-restricted service delivery were distinct characteristics of online purchase intention. Also, Zhang et al. (2014) stated that a traveler's review significantly influences PI and attribute information on hotel e-bookings PI by Chinese travelers. Additionally, online travel agency recommendations also positively influence hotel e-bookings. Furthermore, according to Sriphaew and Katkaeo (2017), website usability is a crucial success component, which consists of three specific quality factors, including user experience, functionality, and user interface usability.

Therefore, from the literature, the authors identified three manifest variables to evaluate a traveller's perceived value. These included *I will continue to use the website* (y1), *I expect I*

will not change to another website (y<sub>2</sub>), and I plan to book my next trip using the website (y<sub>3</sub>).

### Conceptualized Research Model

Figure 2 details the study's conceptualized nine hypotheses.



**Figure 2.** Conceptual Model.  
 Source: Authors' design

### Objectives

1. To research the determining variables affecting the online PI of Thai hostel accommodations.
2. To investigate the strength of the variables from the use of a CFA. Subsequently, an SEM is to be conducted on the variable affecting the online PI of Thai hostel accommodations.

### Materials and Methods

#### Population and Sample

The study's population was drawn from the travelers who booked and used a Thai hostel via an online travel website. Hostels were selected from the [www.tourism.go.th](http://www.tourism.go.th) web site. The final sample of 523 foreign hostel guests was obtained after they had checked into a Thai hostel (2 per province) in one of seven Thai provinces or metropolitan areas. The survey teams were assigned to two hostels within each of the following seven areas: Chiang Mai in the Northern Thailand, Ayutthaya in Central Thailand, Khon Kaen in the Northeast (Isan), Chonburi on Thailand's Eastern Seaboard coast, Petchaburi in the West, the province/island of Phuket in the South, and finally, Thailand's capital, Bangkok. The researchers dispatched student teams to each of these regions after which the students solicited every fifth individual who checked into one of the 14 targeted hostels over three months.



## Research Instrument

The research tool was a seven-level Likert scale questionnaire, which was used for part 2-6 of the study. The number '7' was used to 'strongly agree', '4' indicated moderate agreement, and '1' indicated 'minimal agreement.' Part 1 consisted of items related to the hostel's guest, including gender, years old, marital status, and how often and which online booking website they used. Part 2 contained eight items concerning each hostel's guest opinions about their hostel's website (HW), while part 3 asked the hostel guests' opinions about their 'website's personality' (WP) with five items. Part 4 had six items about PV, part 5 had eight items about CS, and finally, part 6 of the survey contained seven items about PI. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  questionnaire reliability testing was 0.95–0.97, which is considered excellent (George and Mallery, 2010).

## CFA

According to Dragan and Topolšek (2014), a CFA is used to determine if the data fit the hypothesized measurement model. Furthermore, it is always necessary to investigate discriminant and convergent validity, as well as the reliability, when a CFA analysis is conducted. Composite reliability (CR) has also been stated to have a value of  $\geq 0.7$  for all constructs of a measurement model. Also, in determining the fit of a model, CFA goodness-of-fit index [GFI] tools should be used (Table 2).

## Results

### Foreign Tourists' Travel and Personal Characteristics

From the final sample of 523 foreign tourists, results showed that 58.13% were men, and 41.87% were women (Table 1). The age of the hostel guests was a bit surprising as almost 60% were 31 years or older. It is not clear why, but the authors speculate that older people have reached a point where they can travel but do so inexpensively (Sooksai, 2019). Hostel guests are also known for their ability to meet and share stories, adventures, and get travel advice from other guests. This deserves further investigation. Furthermore, staying at a hostel might be a good place to start a relationship as 46.46% are single, with another 15.11% divorced. Also, booking hostel accommodations is not something new to most surveyed guests, as 67.62% had booked five or more times online before. It also seems that these international travelers make more use of large OTA sites, such as Agoda (25.05%) and Booking.com (24.28%). TripAdvisor was third with 17.59%.

Use of these OTAs by the study's participants is supported by the fact that in 2016, TripAdvisor (2018) alone had over 300 million users who viewed information on over 7.3 million accommodations, airlines, restaurants, and attractions. Additionally, the site had 661 million reviews from over 455 million unique visitors.

**Table 1.** Traveller's personal and travel characteristics ( $n=523$ ).

Survey Item	Travellers	%
<b>Gender</b>		
Women	219	41.87
Men	304	58.13
<b>Total</b>	<b>523</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Age</b>		
Below 25.	87	16.63
26-30.	126	24.09



31-35.	137	26.20
36-40.	105	20.08
More than 40.	68	13.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>523</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	243	46.46
Married	201	38.43
Divorced	79	15.11
<b>Total</b>	<b>523</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>How many times have you booked a hostel online?</b>		
First time	75	14.34
2-4	98	18.74
5-7	111	21.22
8-10	122	23.33
More than 10	117	22.37
<b>Total</b>	<b>523</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Which OTA or website did you use to book your room?</b>		
Agoda	131	25.05
Expedia	48	9.18
Hotel	59	11.28
Booking	127	24.28
Hotel combined	43	8.22
Trip advisor	92	17.59
Other	23	4.40
<b>Total</b>	<b>523</b>	<b>100.00</b>

(Source: Compiled by the study's authors)

## CFA Results

Table 2 shows the results of the goodness-of-fit [GoF] analysis. Table 3 and Table 4 present the results of the LISREL 9.1 software analysis and expand on the CFA analysis for the external and internal latent variables.

**Table 2.** The GoF results.

Indices	Criteria	Theory	Values	Results
$\chi^2$	$p \geq 0.05$	Rasch (1980)	0.99	passed
$\chi^2/df$	$\leq 2.00$	Rasch (1980)	0.58	passed
RMSEA	$\leq 0.05$	Chen et al. (2008)	0.00	passed
GFI	$\geq 0.90$	Jöreskog et al. (2016)	0.99	passed
AGFI	$\geq 0.90$	Hooper et al. (2008)	0.98	passed
RMR	$\leq 0.05$	Diamantopoulos and Siguaw (2000)	0.00	passed
SRMR	$\leq 0.05$	Diamantopoulos and Siguaw (2000)	0.00	passed
NFI	$\geq 0.90$	Schumacker and Lomax (2010)	0.99	passed
CFI	$\geq 0.90$	Schumacker and Lomax (2010)	1.00	passed
$\alpha$	$\geq 0.70$	Tavakol and Dennick (2011)	0.95-0.97	excellent

(Source: Compiled by the study's authors)



**Table 3.** CFA results for the external latent variables HW and WP.

Latent variables	$\alpha$	AVE	CR	Manifest variables	loading	R <sup>2</sup>
Hostel website (HW)	0.95	0.81	0.94	The website's ease of use (x1).	0.90	0.82
				The website is very useful (x2).	0.91	0.82
				The website contains decision making information (x3).	0.88	0.77
				The website has a fast response (x4).	0.90	0.82
Website personality (WP)	0.96	0.80	0.92	The website is modern and up-to-date (x5).	0.93	0.86
				The website's ease of use (x6).	0.80	0.65
				Website's lovely appearance (x7).	0.94	0.89

(Source: Compiled by the study's authors)

**Table 4.** CFA Results for the internal latent variables PV, CS, and PI.

Latent variables	$\alpha$	AVE	CR	Manifest variables	loading	R <sup>2</sup>
Perceived value (PV)	0.97	0.86	0.95	Good website service quality (y4).	0.93	0.86
				The website had good security (y5).	0.92	0.84
				Good value for the money (y6).	0.93	0.87
Customer satisfaction (CS)	0.97	0.90	0.96	The website was nicely designed (y7).	0.95	0.90
				The website meets my needs (y8).	0.94	0.88
				Overall, I am satisfied with the website (y9).	0.95	0.89
Purchase intention (PI)	0.96	0.82	0.93	I will continue to use the website (y1).	0.93	0.86
				I expect I will not change to another website (y2).	0.90	0.82
				I plan to book my next trip using the website (y3).	0.88	0.78

(Source: Compiled by the study's authors)

Under the bold diagonal in Table 5, the latent variables' correlation coefficients are shown. Also, the composite (construct) reliability ( $\rho_C$ ), and both the average variance extracted (AVE) and the square root of the AVE are reported.

**Table 5.** Latent variable analysis results.

Latent variables	HW	WP	PV	CS	PI
Hostel website (HW)	<b>1.00</b>				
Website personality (WP)	0.80**	<b>1.00</b>			
Perceived value (PV)	0.74**	0.82**	<b>1.00</b>		
Customer satisfaction (CS)	0.77**	0.86**	0.86**	<b>1.00</b>	
Purchase intention (PI)	0.78**	0.80**	0.85**	0.88**	<b>1.00</b>
$\rho_V$ (AVE)	0.89	0.80	0.86	0.89	0.82
$\rho_C$ (Construct Reliability)	0.97	0.92	0.95	0.96	0.93
The square root of the AVE	0.94	0.89	0.93	0.94	0.91

\*\*Sig.  $\leq .01$  (Source: Compiled by the study's authors)

Furthermore, Table 6 details the analysis results of the direct effect (DE), indirect effect (IE), and total effect (TE) of the latent variables (HW, WP, PV, and CS) on a foreign tourist's online purchase intention (PI) in booking Thai hostels.

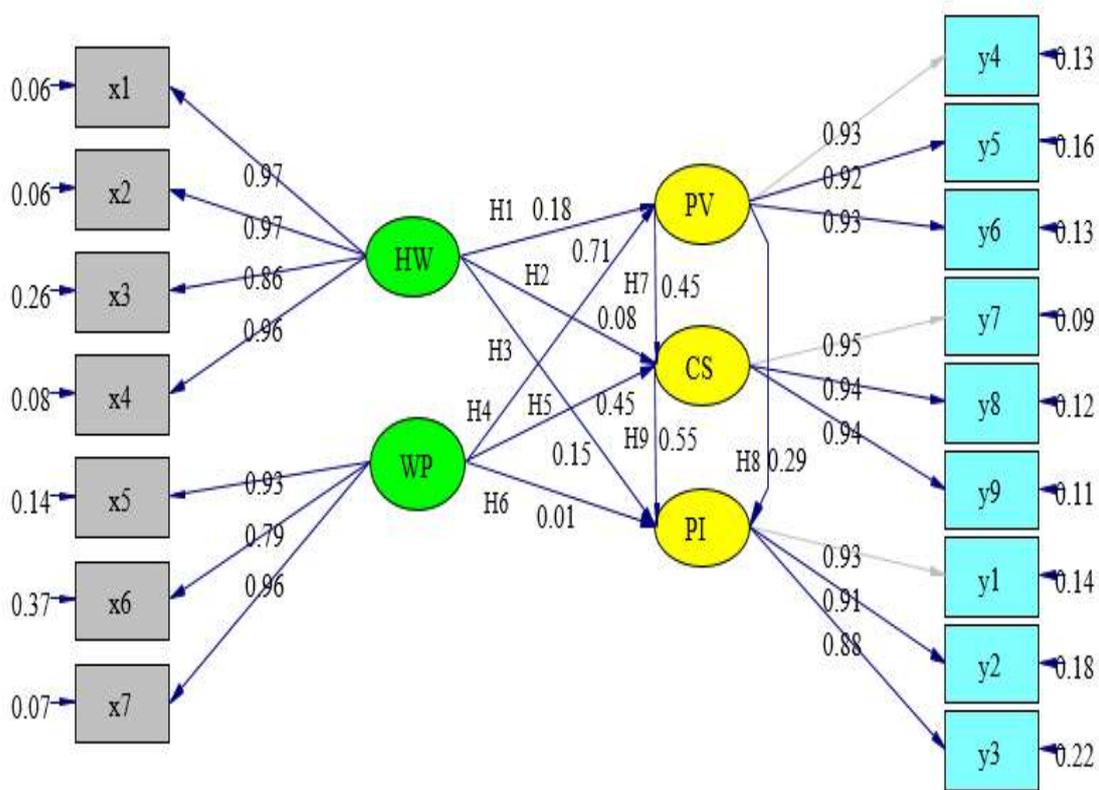
**Table 6.** Results for the SEM's PI variables.

Dependent variables	R <sup>2</sup>	Effect	Independent variables			
			HW	WP	PV	CS
Perceived value (PV)	.75	DE	0.18**	0.71**		
		IE	-	-		
		TE	0.18**	0.71**		
Customer satisfaction (CS)	.83	DE	0.08*	0.45**	0.45**	
		IE	0.08*	0.32**	-	
		TE	0.16**	0.77**	0.45**	
Purchase intention (PI)	.80	DE	0.15**	0.01	0.29**	0.55**
		IE	0.14**	0.63**	0.25**	-
		TE	0.29**	0.64**	0.54**	0.55**

\*Sig. ≤ .05, \*\*Sig. ≤ .01 (Source: Compiled by the study's authors)

### Convergent Model Analysis

LISREL 9.1 was used for data analysis which indicated that the model fit well with the data as  $\chi^2 = 30.70$ ,  $df = 53$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.99395$ , and  $RMSEA = 0.000$  (Figure 3). Table 7 shows the details of the hypotheses testing. Also, Table 8 presents an overview of the questionnaire's latent variable descriptive analysis.



**Figure 3.** SEM of Variables that Influence Online Purchase Intention of Thai Hostels.  
 (Source: Compiled by the study's authors)



**Table 7.** Hypotheses testing analysis.

Hypotheses	Coefficient	t-test	Consistency
H1: HW affects directly PV	0.18	3.80**	consistent
H2: HW affects directly CS	0.08	2.23*	consistent
H3: HW affects directly PI	0.15	4.54**	consistent
H4: WP affects directly PV	0.71	12.91**	consistent
H5: WP affects directly CS	0.45	8.53**	consistent
H6: WP affects directly PI	0.01	0.09	inconsistent
H7: PV affects directly CS	0.45	9.91**	consistent
H8: PV affects directly PI	0.29	5.35**	consistent
H9: CS affects directly PI	0.55	8.09**	consistent

\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$  (Source: Compiled by the study's authors)

**Table 8.** Descriptive analysis.

Latent Variable	Survey Items	Mean	S.D.	Skewness	Kurtosis	Interpretation
HW	8	5.04	1.14	-.68	.42	Agree slightly
WP	5	5.08	1.11	-.41	-.14	Agree slightly
PV	6	5.16	1.12	-.57	.20	Agree slightly
CS	8	5.19	1.10	-.65	.53	Agree slightly
PI	7	5.25	1.07	-.68	.41	Agree slightly
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>					

(Source: Compiled by the study's authors)

## Discussion

Results showed that the model's causal variables had a positive effect on PI, with the variance of the factors affecting PI ( $R^2$ ) being 80%. Ranked in importance, factors affecting PI were WP, CS, PV, and HW, with TE values of 0.64, 0.55, 0.54, and 0.29, respectively.

Therefore the hypotheses testing results indicated that:

H1 showed that there was a weak but positive interrelationship of HW and PV, as the *correlation coefficient*  $r = 0.18$ ,  $t$ -value = 3.80, and \*\*  $p \leq 0.01$ . Support for this hypothesis result comes from the questionnaire's part 1, in which the guests indicated that 95.6% used OTA type websites to book their accommodations. This is consistent with survey data from Expedia.com, in which it was determined that OTA customers skew young, with the millennial generation from 25-39 (36%) favouring the convenience of large OTAs (Howe, 2017) as compared to individual hotel booking websites.

H2 also had a very weak but positive interrelationship between HW and CS, as the results from the  $r = 0.08$ ,  $t$ -value = 2.23, and \*  $p \leq 0.05$ . This weak correlation most probably is associated with today's travellers want to review and share travel information, not only about the specific accommodation but the surrounding areas and its related features. This is supported by Ha and Im (2012), in which it was revealed that web sites should positively influence users.

H3 also showed a weak but positive interrelationship of HW and PI, as the results from the  $r = 0.15$ ,  $t$ -value = 4.54, and \*  $p \leq 0.05$ . Reasons for this are the same as H1 and H2.

Therefore, we can see that an individual hostel website is no competition for the mammoth OTA and user-inspired review sites. This is consistent with Feinstein (2018), who reported that 96% of travellers turn to OTAs like TripAdvisor for user reviews before booking online. Also,



83% usually reference reviews before making their decision, while pictures uploaded by guests' influence 76%. Also, 63% read reviews, look at photos, and book online from the same website. Finally, only 50% of OTA users choose to visit a hotel's website. Therefore, hostels must integrate their reviews and user-generated content, such as pictures directly on their websites. With OTA fees soaring, hotels need to find solutions to decreasing a traveller's use of OTA sites and therefore book their accommodations through the hostel/hotel site to maintain a more competitive edge (Rondeau, 2016).

H4 however, showed that the interrelationship of WP and PV was strong, as  $r = 0.71$ , t-value = 12.91, and  $** p \leq 0.01$ . Kim et al. (2017) support this finding as PV was stated to be affected by both the quality and the price, which was then positively influenced online PI. Furthermore, it was determined that a traveller's PI depended on the trust of third-party online booking sites and hotel trust, which was affected by online reviews. This is also consistent with research on a Thai hotel's online reservation system, in which Atchariyachanvanich and Hitoshi (2011) determined that online booking trust is dependent on attitude towards using online hotel reservation systems. Gregg and Walczak (2010) also indicated that online auction trust is dependent on website quality.

H5 showed that the interrelationship of WP and CS was moderate, as  $r = 0.45$ , t-value = 8.53, and  $** p \leq 0.01$ . Validation for this comes from other studies concerning the importance of a website's personality (Aaker, 1997).

With H6 however, the interrelationship of WP and PI was unsupported, as  $r = 0.01$  and the t-value = 0.091. One potential reason for H6 being unsupported comes from Lee et al. (2009), in which it was suggested negative reviews offset positive ones.

Furthermore H7's interrelationship of PV and CS was moderate, as  $r = 0.45$ , t-value = 9.91, and  $** p \leq 0.01$ . This is consistent with Rahim et al. (2016) who determined that university students judge PV by a product's features, the brand name, and the social influence.

However H8's interrelationship of PV and PI was weak but positive as  $r = 0.29$ , t-value = 5.35, and  $** p \leq 0.01$ . Kim et al. (2017), also determined that PV was affected by a hotel's price and quality, which was related to a hotel's PI.

Finally H9's interrelationship of CS and PI was moderate, as  $r = 0.55$ , t-value = 8.09, and  $** p \leq 0.01$ . Shiao and Luo (2012) also determined that online group buying behaviour depends on CS, trust, and creativity of the vendor. Angelova and Zekiri (2011) also stated that CS is dependent on an individual having their needs met, with expectations playing a crucial role in the formation of satisfaction. Kotler and Keller (2015) have also suggested that CS is concerned with how an individual's feeling of disappointment or pleasure results from the comparison of a product's perceived performance to their perceived expectations.

## **Conclusion and future research recommendations**

The study proposed a study of interrelationships and influences of MC, BV, BQ, on ST. It was determined that MC had the most significant influence on a Thai fast-food restaurant's ST. It was also determined that all the model's variables had a positive effect on ST, with the variance of the factors affecting ST ( $R^2$ ) being 60%. Ranked in importance, factors influencing ST were MC, BV, and BQ.

The study sought out to identify what aspects were essential to international travelers who booked their hostel accommodation online before visiting Thailand. This knowledge is crucial



as smaller, single hostels do not have the budgets to compete with the OTAs such as Expedia and Priceline (Rondeau, 2016). Furthermore, although numerous studies have discussed the factor of 'trust' being paramount to online PI, this study's survey results showed that price was still a major contributing factor leading to online booking. Therefore, future research is suggested to investigate what level of importance trust and price play in the online hospitality sector. Additionally, it has been well proven that the majority of travelers who use OTA sites for online purchasing do so because of their interactive nature and the ability to review other traveler opinions almost in real-time. It is suggested, therefore, that if hostels wish to reduce their booking costs (OTA fees), that hostel website designers develop a process to 'feed' reviews and related area information onto their sites. More in-depth analysis is also suggested in the role of 'age' and 'comfort' in these travel decisions. Also, in 2019, social media surpassed word of mouth when it comes to product awareness. An investigation needs to be given as to how this is happening, and the importance of their use.

### Limitations

Finally, this study's potential limitations could be that only two hostels in each of seven Thai provinces/areas were surveyed, which may restrict some ability to generalize from a particular survey result.

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