

***Brand awareness in the online hotel booking system Booking.com
and making a booking decision***

***La notoriété de la marque dans le système de réservation d'hôtels en ligne
Booking.com et la prise de décision de réservation***

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Abstract:

This research aims to propose and test the brand awareness model in the online hotel booking system, and was applied to a sample of 250 individuals who use Booking.com sites in Algeria. The results indicate that creating a virtual interactive environment, exchanging information in the online hotel booking system and providing high-quality services enhances brand awareness, which in turn increases users' booking decision-making.

Keywords: Online hotel booking system, Brand awareness, Booking decision making, Booking.com.

Jel Classification Codes: M15; M37; M31; M15

Résumé:

Cette recherche vise à proposer et tester le modèle de notoriété de marque dans le système de réservation d'hôtels en ligne, et a été appliquée à un échantillon de 250 personnes qui utilisent Booking.com sites en Algérie. Les résultats indiquent que la création d'un environnement interactif virtuel, l'échange d'informations dans le système de réservation d'hôtel en ligne et la fourniture de services de haute qualité améliorent la notoriété de la marque, ce qui augmente la prise de décision des utilisateurs en matière de réservation.

Mots clés: Système de réservation d'hôtel en ligne, Notoriété de la marque, Prise de décision de réservation, Booking.com.

Jel Classification Codes: M15; M37; M31; M15

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1. INTRODUCTION

The waves of globalization have led to radical changes in the external environment of contemporary workers, resulting in marketers are increasingly using digital marketing as a modern and effective communication tool (Toros & Kalpaklioglu, 2011). Because of its superior capabilities to activate communication between the various parties of the activity, and because it added a new marketing dimension represented in providing opportunities for customers to share their expertise and experiences about various products and brands online, which led to an increase in the spread of brand awareness (Fischer, Volckner, & Sattler, 2010)

The use of the Internet has become a regular daily activity for individuals in our contemporary world, which has prompted companies to rely on it as a modern means that leads to increasing customers' knowledge of the brands of those companies.

And to become online hotels booking systems is currently one of the most important contemporary marketing media that contribute to quick access to customers, which prompted many international and local hotels to rely on it as an attractive and promising market, in addition to the marketing opportunities it offers that enable companies to strengthen their relationship with current or potential customers and improve the brand image. These systems also provide the opportunity for hotels to create their own content and brand, and also allow the establishment of friendly and interactive relations with the customer and thus enhance awareness and loyalty to those advertised brands, and provide positive recommendations about them to other customers, which in turn contributes to creating a positive purchase intention for the customer (making a reservation decision) (Hernández & Küster, 2012). Through the above, researchers seek to take the study to try to answer the following problem: **How does the online hotel booking system contribute to brand awareness?**

2. Conceptual background

2.1. Online hotel booking system and booking.com: overview

Travel provider → tour operator → shop → customer has been the traditional linear distribution model used for tourism items. Travel agencies handled the distribution of tourism items under this system. (Buhalis & Licata, 2002) Potential passengers still primarily utilize travel agencies as their distribution channel, but they now use the Internet to reserve hotel rooms. Nowadays, consumers mostly purchase their travel products through internet distribution channels. (Brewer, Christodoulidou, & Connolly, 2010)

A software platform known as a hotel booking system enables hotel operators to oversee and take online reservations for their rooms. It is crucial to realize that the term "system" is a little deceptive because it already refers to a number of linked systems that are needed to record, process, and oversee hotel reservations. (Hollander, 2023)

In order to optimize distribution across numerous channels, hotel booking systems may also feature connections with third-party providers, such as online travel agencies (OTAs) like Expedia and Booking.com. To help with guest experience and reception operations, use a property management system (PMS). While some hotel booking systems are separate programs that can be placed on the company's own servers, others are cloud-based solutions provided by companies like Cloudbeds. (Hollander, 2023)

Booking.com a leading example in the online booking system as shown in the following figure 10 booking sites ranked first in the world for 2023, and we see booking.com In the lead.(su, 2024)

Figure 1: Top 10 World's Booking Sites for 2023



Source:su. (2024). the Top 10 booking channels to boost your hotel's revenue. Récupéré sur linkedin: <https://www.linkedin.com/posts/su-api-su->

[reveals-top-10-booking-channels-to-boost-activity-7152513720869371905-L6sx/](#)

Booking.com, originally established as a small startup in Amsterdam in 1996, has grown significantly to become one of the leading international platforms in digital travel services. The main purpose of Booking.com, which operates as part of Booking Holdings Inc. (NASDAQ: BKNG), is to simplify and enhance travel accessibility for people worldwide (Booking.com, 2024).

Through strategic investments in innovative technology aimed at overcoming common travel challenges, Booking.com successfully connects millions of travelers globally to distinctive and memorable accommodation options. The platform currently provides over 28 million verified listings, among which are more than 6.6 million unique properties, such as homes, apartments, and alternative lodging facilities, and it supports users in 43 languages.(Booking.com, 2024)

2.2.The impact of Online Booking System on Brand Awareness: Determinants and hypotheses

While some academics describe brand awareness as the degree to which a brand name is recognized, independent of product class and instead based on perceptual frequency, Aaker (1996) defines it as the strength of a brand's presence in the customer's consciousness. (Hellofs & Jacobson, 1999)

According to Keller (1993), brand awareness is made up of brand recognition and brand recall, the former of which is the first stage of brand communication; that is, a business creates a brand name that people associate with and are reminded of the company's attributes in order to disseminate this information. (Fengzeng, Yunhe, & Jian, 2015)

The capacity of a potential customer to identify or recall that a brand belongs to a specific product category is known as brand awareness. (Oktavia, Budi, & Febianti, 2018) The brand awareness pyramid from low to highest level is as follows Aaker (1997): Unaware brands, Brand Recognition, Brand Recall. (Suprapti, 2015)

2.2.1. Information quality and its impact on brand awareness

The online booking system's superior information helps people understand brands better, feel supported by other users, and make wiser judgments. Users who want assistance on a specific topic or information about a product or service benefit from high-quality content. The quality of the information is crucial in providing users with a number of advantages. (Zheng, Zhao, & Stylianou, 2012)

With a distinct competitive edge, online booking systems and the booking.com website in particular offer consumers dependable, current, reputable, and abundant information. As a result, they offer high-quality information that could be viewed as more appealing.

Over time, people's level of brand awareness is influenced by the quality of the information they receive. (Biedenbach & Marell, 2009) When these people use the online booking system, they are able to identify and recall the brand. (Barreda, Bilgihan, Nusair, & Okumus, 2015) Through the above, we can put forward the following hypothesis that link information quality and brand awareness:

H1: Information quality positively affects brand awareness.

2.2.2. Service quality and its impact on brand awareness

A fulfilling of customer expectations without direct involvement in the services rendered is referred to as e-service quality. (Pearson & Friffin, 2012). The overall assessment of customers regarding the superior quality of electronic services offered to clients in the online market can be used to interpret the quality of electronic services. (Oktavia, Budi, & Febianti, 2018).

Show how the company's overall atmosphere is shaped by the quality of the services provided in online situations. The probability of a first impression rises with service quality since the user reacts to recognize the brand's visual components. Strong brand awareness increases the likelihood that a user will make a purchase. (Albert, Goes, & Gupta, 2004) So we can put forward the following hypothesis that link service quality and brand awareness:

H2: Service quality positively affects brand awareness.

2.2.3. Virtual interactivity and its impact on brand awareness

The body of research on interaction theory points to the potential benefits of the web's multimedia features and interactivity in fostering a variety of consumer interactions in virtual environments. (Di Pietro, Di Virgilio, & Pantano, 2012). The degree to which internet users may participate in real-time content modification on websites is a pertinent, accurate theoretical and operational term. (Barreda, Bilgihan, Nusair, & Okumus, 2015).

For instance, guests can communicate with hotel staff members through the online booking system without having to speak with them directly. This way, the staff members will always have access to client information, passengers won't have to identify themselves, and they won't have to ask unrelated questions. Efficient communication through the online reservation platform helps enhance brand equity. (Alhaddad, 2015). Customers are more likely to simply recall and recognize the brand when they deal with others—such as personnel in the hospitality industry—in an expedient manner. (Boonsiritomachai & Sud-On, 2020). Therefore, we put forward the following hypothesis:

H3: Virtual interactivity positively affects brand awareness.

2.3.The impact of Brand Awareness on Booking Decision Making: Determinants and hypotheses

The assessment of options is a crucial phase in the decision-making process. (Kollat, Engel, & Blackwell, 1970). Customers typically reduce their awareness set into a more manageable consideration set that contains a smaller subset of goal-satisfying alternatives since it is difficult to process several alternatives at once. Customers then make a final decision based on this consideration set by weighing different product qualities against one another in order to rule out unfavorable options. (Turley & Leblanc, 1993).

Online decision-making is also significantly influenced by consideration of individual variances in personal experiences, knowledge, and awareness. (Kim & Kim, 2004). Possessing a familiarity with the product boosts confidence and draws attention to particular brands. The degree to which people participate in the information-seeking process and

the particular contents of the information that people search for online are influenced by their knowledge of travel items. (Park & Kim, 2010). Through the above, we can put forward the following hypothesis that link to brand awareness and booking decision:

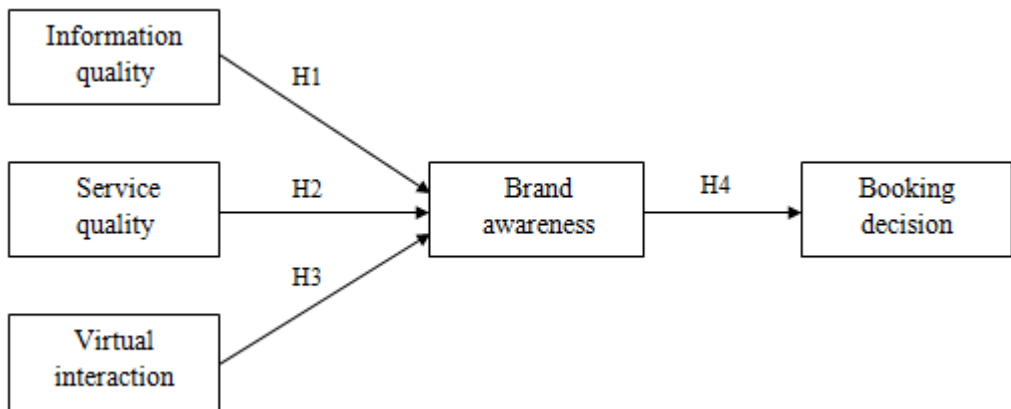
H4:Brand awareness positively affects booking decision making

3. Research METHODOLOGY

3.1. Measurement and pilot testing

The current study develops a theoretical model aimed at clearly describing brand awareness and booking decision making from an online hotel booking system (see Figure 2) and tests four hypotheses (see Table 1).

Figure 2: Proposed research model



Source: Prepared by researchers

Table 1: Summary of hypotheses

Hypotheses
H1: IQ $\longrightarrow$ (+) BA Information quality is positively related to brand awareness
H2: SQ $\longrightarrow$ (+) BA Service quality is positively related to brand awareness
H3: VI $\longrightarrow$ (+) BA Virtual interaction is positively related to brand awareness
H4: BA $\longrightarrow$ (+) BD brand awareness is positively related to decision making

Note: IQ= information quality; SQ= system quality; VI= virtual interactivity; BA= brand awareness; BD= Booking Decision.

Source: Prepared by researchers

Each underlying structure used in this research was measured using the Likert pentameter. All metrics were evaluated based on previous research with modifications to the items to suit the context of the Booking.com website. As shown in Table 2

Table 2: QUESTIONNAIRE FORMULATION

Measures of Electronic Reservation System			
Information quality (IQ)	IQ1	This site offers clearer and more detailed descriptions regarding available products and services.	(Syed & Suroso, 2018)
	IQ2	This site allows me to access precise and trustworthy information about travel-related products, including room availability, hotel locations, and other relevant details.	
Service quality (SQ)	SQ1	This site provides excellent post-booking services, such as sending a confirmation email and detailed instructions on how to reach the hotel from the airport.	
	SQ2	The website is quick to respond to my inquiries and requests.	
Virtual interaction (VI)	VI1	The site facilitates interactive communication and data exchange between service providers and users.	(Barreda et al., 2015)
	VI2	This website offers credible and authentic reviews from other hotel users.	(Syed & Suroso, 2018)

Measures of Brand Awareness			
brand awareness(BA)	BA1	I am familiar with the hotel brands listed on Booking.com.	(Barreda et al., 2015)
	BA2	I can identify this hotel brand when comparing it with other competing brands featured on Booking.com.	
	BA3	I recognize the appearance and style of this particular hotel brand.	
	BA4	Certain features of the hotel brand listed on Booking.com easily come to mind.	
	BA5	I can easily recall the logo or visual identity of this specific hotel brand on Booking.com.	
Measures of Booking Decision			
Booking Decision (BD)	BD1	My decision to book a hotel is influenced by previous guests' reviews.	(Amherst & Wu, 2013)
	BD2	I have a strong intention to book this hotel.	(Kim et al., 2017)
	BD3	I prefer booking hotels through this particular reservation platform.	

Note: IQ= information quality; SQ= system quality; VI= virtual interactivity; BA= brand awareness; BD= Booking Decision.

Source: Prepared by researchers based on the references mentioned in the table

3.2 Population, Sample, and Data Collection

Unlike previous studies addressing brand awareness theory, this research specifically targets the context of online hotel reservation platforms. The study's population consists of Algerian consumers who have previously used or recently accessed Booking.com for hotel reservations. To gather the necessary data, the researchers developed an online survey and distributed it randomly through email and social media platforms. The survey link included a brief introduction outlining the research objectives, inviting recipients to participate voluntarily.

Participants were requested to recall their most recent booking experiences, carefully read each item, and provide their responses accordingly. The questionnaire included 14 statements designed to measure the study variables (as detailed in Table 2). Additionally, the first section of the questionnaire gathered demographic details and information regarding the frequency of participants' previous use of the Booking.com website. Responses were recorded using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree). A total of 250 valid responses were collected and subsequently analyzed.

4 Analysis and results

4.1 Analysis

The data analysis was initially performed by performing a reliability analysis by calculating the value of the Cronbach alpha coefficient using the SPSS 25 program. Then use structural equation modeling (SEM) in AMOS 25. SEM allows researchers to examine a set of interrelated relationships simultaneously, a confirmatory factor was calculated to assess the capacity of the measurement model, the quality of model suitability was estimated at both measurement levels and the structural model and the model was improved. The following suitability quality indicators were used to evaluate the models: Chi-Square/df ratio, CFI, GFI, TLI, NFI, AGFA, PGFI, PNFI, IFI, and RMSEA (Schumacke & Lomax, 2004).

4.2 Results

4.2.1 Validity and Reliability

Through the Cronbach alpha account, researchers test the reliability of online hotel booking system factors, brand awareness, and booking decision-making. The result is given in Table 3. The reference in Table 3 suggests an acceptable value of Cronbach alpha 0.7K for confirmatory search and 0.6 for exploratory search. Cronbach alpha values for all factors are acceptable.

Table 3: CRONBACH'S ALPHA

Factor	No of items	Acceptable Value	Reference	Construct reliability	Assessment of factors
Information quality	2	0.70	(Hair, Anderson,	0.967	Acceptable
Service quality	2	0.70	Tatham,	0.837	Acceptable
Virtual interaction	2	0.70	Black, &	0.788	Acceptable
Brand Awareness	5	0.70	Babin,	0.937	Acceptable
Booking Decision	3	0.70	2010)	0.843	Acceptable

Source: Prepared by researchers based on SPSS 25 outputs

4.2.2. Demographic Profile

Of the respondents, 47.6% are female, while males represent 52.4%, and this demographics reflect the growing gender characteristics of the majority of Booking.com users in Algeria. About 35.2% of respondents are aged 19-30, 28% are between 31-40 years old, 24.8% are between 41-50 years old, and 12% are aged 50 years and older. The vast majority of respondents 70.8% have graduate education, 19.2% have a master's degree, 07.6% have a bachelor's degree, and 02.4% have a secondary education. As for the use of Booking.com 61.6% of the sample had a good experience with this site as they used it more than three times, 19.6% twice and 18.8% had only one experience with the site. All these percentages are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Demographic characteristics of sample

Item		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	131	52.4
	Female	191	47.6
	Total	250	100.0
Age	19_30	88	35.2
	31_40	70	28.0
	41_50	62	24.8
	50 and above	30	12.0
	Total	250	100.0
Education level	Secondary	06	02.4
	Bachelor	19	07.6
	Master	48	19.2
	Postgraduate	177	70.8
	Total	250	100.0
Use booking.com	Once	47	18.8
	Twice	49	19.6
	Three times or more	154	61.6
	Total	250	100.0

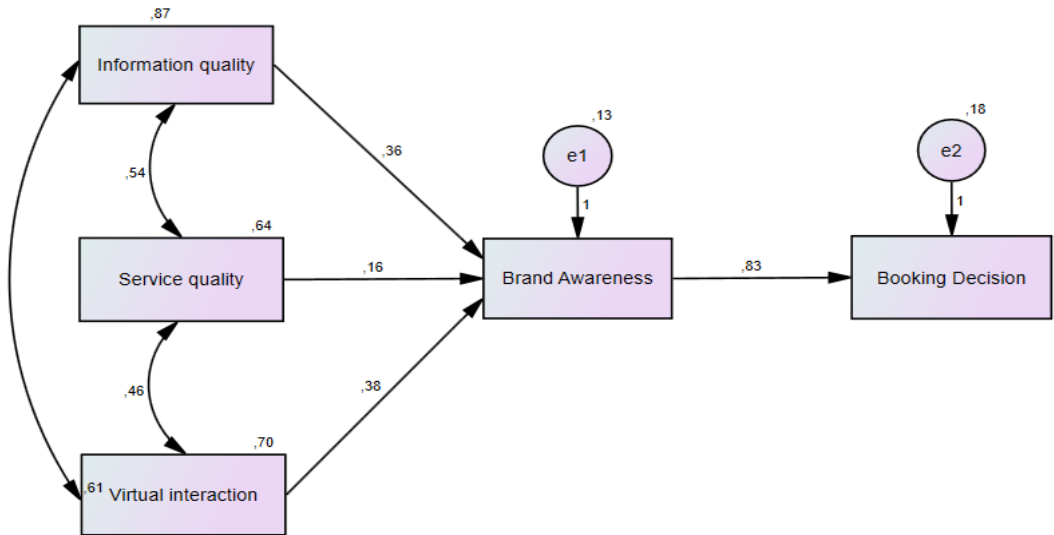
Source: Prepared by researchers based on SPSS 25 outputs

4.2.3. Test the measurement model

By evaluating the relationships between variables (median variable and dependent independent) in the structural model of the study. The researchers used SEM to examine the proposed framework by evaluating the measurement model and using structural equation modeling.

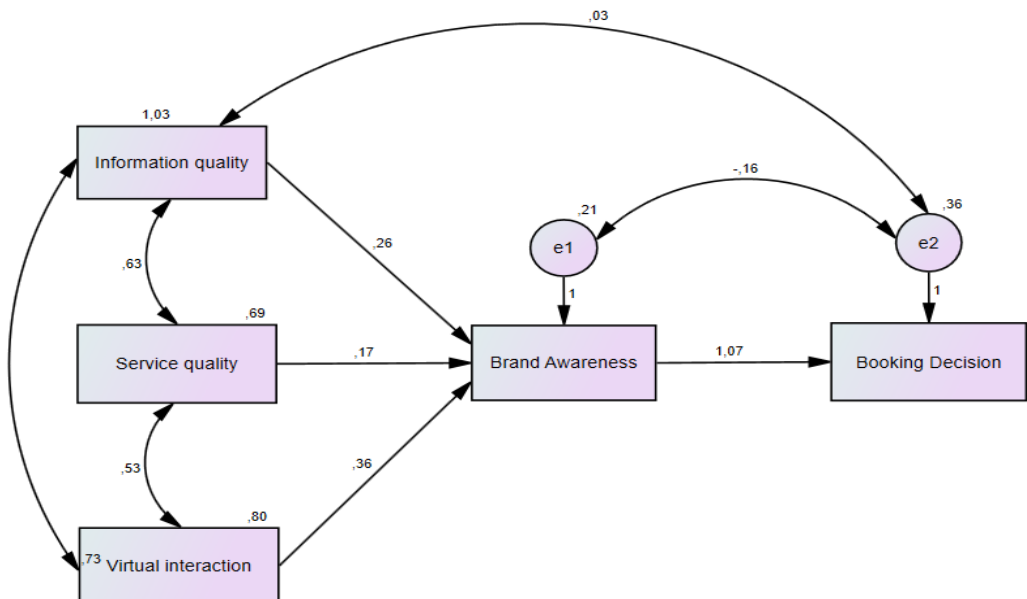
Confirmatory factor (CFA) analyses were performed to validate the measurement model. The results reveal that the proposed structural model does not explain the relationship to a high degree and is unreliable and should be improved (see Figure 3, this was done by linking the errors proposed by the Amos system see Figure 4. The results after improvement reveal that the model is appropriate, acceptably appropriate and there was no violation of the normal multivariate assumptions as shown in Table 5 based on the references cited in the same table.

Figure 3: Proposed model according to the study framework using AMOS



Source: Prepared by researchers based on AMOS 25 outputs

Figure 4: Proposed final model after improvement according to the study framework using AMOS



Source: Prepared by researchers based on AMOS 25 outputs

Table 5:Results of the suitability quality test for the proposed model

Goodness-of-Fit Measures	Cut-off value	Reference	Preliminary result	Final result	Model Evaluation
Absolute Fit Measures					
1 Probabilities 2 CMIN 3 DF 4 CMIN/DF 5 Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) 6 Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)	$> 0,05$ as small as possible (non-functional) < 5 ≤ 0.08 $GFI \geq 0.90$ good fit, $0.80 \leq GFI < 0.90$ marginal fit	(Hair J. , Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998)	,000 57,042 3 19,014 ,269 ,908	,563 ,335 1 ,335 ,000 ,999	Good Fit Good Fit Good Fit Good Fit Good Fit Good Fit
Incremental Fit Measures					
1 Trucker-Lewis Index (TLI) 2 Comparative Fit Index (CFI) 3 Normed Fit Index (NFI)	$TLI \geq 0.90$ good fit, $0.80 \leq TLI < 0.90$ marginal fit $CFI \geq 0.90$ good fit, $0.80 \leq CFI < 0.90$ marginal fit $NFI \geq 0.90$ good fit, $0.80 \leq NFI < 0.90$ marginal fit	(Hox, 1998) (Tabachnick , Fidell, & Osterlind, 2001)	-,717 ,485 ,504	1,063 1,000 ,997	Good Fit Good Fit Good Fit

4 Increased Fit Index (IFI) 5 Adjusted Goodness of Fit Indices (AGFI)	IFI ≥ 0.90 good fit, 0.80 $\leq$ IFI < 0.90 marginal fit ≥ 0.90		,517	1,006	Good Fit
			,542	,992	Good Fit
Parsimonious Fit Measures					
1 Parsimonious Normed Fit Index (PNFI) 2 Parsimonious Goodness of fit Index (PGFI)	The higher the better, compared to alternative models PGFI $<$ GFI	(Wibowo, Dirgantari, Hurriyati, Widjajanta, & Hijrianti, 2020)	,151 ,182	,100 ,067	Good Fit Good Fit

Source: Prepared by researchers based on AMOS 25 outputs and references mentioned in the table

4.2.4. The structural equation model and hypotheses testing

A structural equation model was used to examine the proposed hypotheses. Table 6 represents a summary of the results of the study, including the path coefficients for all four proposed hypotheses. The hypothesis test was performed using a t-value with a significance level of 0.05. This is the critical ratio (CR) value in AMOS version 25. If the critical ratio (CR) is ≥ 1.967 or the probability value (P) ≤ 0.05 , H0 is rejected and the research hypothesis is accepted. (Wibowo, Dirgantari, Hurriyati, Widjajanta, & Hijrianti, 2020)

Table 6: Standardized path coefficient and t-value for the structural model

Structural paths	Standardized path coefficients	Critical Ratio (CR)	p-Value	Hypotheses supported yes/no
H1 : IQ → (+) BA	,165	3,641	***	Yes
H2 : SQ → (+) BA	,360	6,894	***	Yes
H3 : VI → (+) BA	,257	4,850	***	Yes
H4 : BA → (+) BD	1,067	18,138	***	Yes

Note: IQ= information quality; SQ= system quality; VI= virtual interactivity; BA= brand awareness ;BD= Booking Decision. / $p < 0.01$. ** $p < 0.05$. *** $p < 0.001$.

Source: Prepared by researchers based on AMOS 25 outputs

AMOS 25 data processing obtained CR values of 3,641 from the information quality variable to brand awareness. That's a value greater than 1,967, so H1 was accepted, which means that there is an impact of information quality on brand awareness. The results of testing this hypothesis are in line with previous research conducted in the context of electronic systems in general, which indicated that the purchase decision is affected by the presence of information quality.(Biedenbach & Marell, 2009)

The agreement of this study regarding the site Booking.com previous studies may indicate that more visitors and users of this site receive rich, reliable and up-to-date information about hotels such as clear images and details that they rely on and that contribute significantly to their attraction. Supporting their chances of remembering hotels and recognizing the brand name.

Data processing also received CR values of 6,894 from the Service quality variable to brand awareness. Through it H2 is accepted, which means that there is a positive impact of service quality on brand awareness at 0,360. This finding is consistent with previous research.(McKnight, Kacmar, & Choudhury, 2004)

Virtual interaction was found to positively affect brand awareness of the path coefficient 0,257 And from it we prove the validity of H3. This

finding is consistent with previous research (Macdonald & Sharp, 2003), which means that when virtual users interact with the brand, site, and other users by displaying their personal experiences and sharing information, they are more likely to develop brand mental awareness. It is easier for them to remember and recognize the brand for example offering a great experience for a particular destination or hotel. Brand awareness also has a positive and significant impact on the decision to book with the 1,067Track coefficient. Which confirms the validity of H4. This is a similar result to previous research findings (Oktavia, Budi, & Febianti, 2018), as users tend to book hotels and buy brands in general that they are aware of.

5. CONCLUSION

This research proposes a model that gives insight into the relationship between brand awareness and booking decision making through online booking systems, especially the Booking.com online hotel booking system. The results of data analysis and hypothesis testing indicate the validity and acceptance of all hypotheses.

Service quality turns out to be the most influential on brand awareness, when the user is satisfied with the service quality they receive, the brand is more likely to take root in their minds, remember them and even spread their positive experience with it. The above comes after the virtual interaction and its positive impact on brand awareness, as direct communication of users with the brand creates a personal interactive experience that enhances brand awareness, in addition to sharing experiences and positive interaction with content increases the confidence and credibility of the brand and thus enhances all that awareness.

Then followed by the positive impact of the information quality of brand awareness, when the user receives sufficient, reliable, clear and credible information that is reliable and thus is aware of all the advantages of the brand and this in turn leads to awareness of it.

Here we have touched on the online booking system and its impact on brand awareness in its various dimensions and then the positive impact of brand awareness on making a booking decision, when the user is aware of the brand and the offers and services it provides and has confidence in it, he

is likely to be more willing to make a booking decision with it, and he may also have personal preferences for some brands based on previous experiences, recommendations from friends or reviews from the Internet.

Limitations and future research

There are still many limitations in this research, and there may be other factors that significantly influence brand awareness generation such as word-of-mouth. Another limitation in the study is the sample size. In this research, it is 250 and can be increased further to reduce error. A larger sample size can lead to decisive results by reducing the likelihood of error. Another limitation is that there may be other factors related to consumers' decision to use other sites to book hotels online.

Finally, it is advisable to conduct future studies to examine the impact of virtual interaction, system quality and quality of information about other brand elements, such as brand image, brand loyalty and its role in decision-making. This is done in different locations and online booking systems.

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