Decoding tourist behavior on online travel agencies: Insights from Da Nang city

Giải mã hành vi du khách trên các đại lý du lịch trực tuyến:
Nghiên cứu tại thành phố Đà Nẵng

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Abstract

The rapid growth of online booking platforms has significantly impacted the tourism industry, particularly in destinations that rely on tourism and are promoting digital transformation in hospitality, such as Da Nang, Vietnam. Understanding tourists' consumer behavior in this digital landscape is crucial for optimizing marketing strategies and enhancing customer satisfaction. This study aims to investigate the factors influencing tourists' intentions to book accommodations online in Da Nang City, focusing on the roles of quality of benefit value, monetary value, social status value, preference value, and information value. A mixed-method approach was employed, combining qualitative interviews with quantitative surveys. Qualitative data were gathered through interviews with industry experts and tourists, while a structured questionnaire was distributed to a sample of 400 tourists who have experience with online hotel bookings. This study employed analytical techniques, including confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to assess the reliability and validity of the measurement scales, followed by structural equation modeling (SEM) to evaluate the structural path of the proposed conceptual model using SMARTPLS 4, ensuring robust findings. The findings reveal that tourists' intentions to book accommodations online (Purchase Intention - PI) is positively influenced by quality of benefit value (QBV), monetary value (MV), preference value (PV), and information value (IV). Conversely, social status value (SSV) negatively affects purchase intentions, indicating that higher social status perception may lead to reluctance in online bookings. The study highlights the importance of understanding consumer behavior on online hotel bookings. Marketers should emphasize the information value and preference value while addressing the complexities surrounding social status perception to enhance booking intentions among tourists in Da Nang City. These insights can inform strategic marketing initiatives aimed at improving the online booking experience.

Keywords: Online hotel booking channels; tourists' consumer behavior; Da Nang, Viet Nam.

Tóm tắt

Sự phát triển nhanh chóng của các nền tảng đặt phòng trực tuyến đã ảnh hưởng đáng kể đến ngành du lịch, đặc biệt tại các địa phương phụ thuộc vào du lịch và đẩy mạnh chuyển đổi số trong lưu trú như Đà Nẵng, Việt Nam. Việc hiểu rõ hành vi tiêu dùng của du khách trong bối cảnh kỹ thuật số này rất quan trọng để tối ưu hóa chiến lược tiếp thị và nâng cao

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sự hài lòng của khách hàng. Nghiên cứu này nhằm mục tiêu khám phá các yếu tố ảnh hưởng đến ý định đặt phòng trực tuyến của du khách tại thành phố Đà Nẵng, tập trung vào vai trò của giá trị lợi ích, giá trị tiền tệ, giá trị địa vị xã hội, giá trị ưu tiên và giá trị thông tin. Một phương pháp kết hợp đã được áp dụng, kết hợp giữa phỏng vấn định tính và khảo sát định lượng. Dữ liệu định tính được thu thập thông qua phỏng vấn các chuyên gia trong ngành và du khách, thông qua bảng câu hỏi đã được phân phát cho mẫu 400 du khách có kinh nghiệm với việc đặt phòng khách sạn trực tuyến. Nghiên cứu này đã sử dụng các kỹ thuật phân tích, bao gồm phân tích nhân tố khẳng định (CFA) để đánh giá độ tin cậy và tính hợp lệ của các thang đo, và mô hình phương trình cấu trúc (SEM) để đánh giá đường dẫn cấu trúc của mô hình khái niệm đề xuất bằng SMARTPLS 4, nhằm đảm bảo kết quả chắc chắn.

Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy ý định đặt phòng trực tuyến của du khách (Purchase Intention - PI) chịu ảnh hưởng tích cực bởi giá trị lợi ích (QBV), giá trị tiền tệ (MV), giá trị ưu tiên (PV), và giá trị thông tin (IV). Ngược lại, giá trị địa vị xã hội (SSV) có ảnh hưởng tiêu cực đến ý định mua hàng, chỉ ra rằng nhận thức về địa vị xã hội cao có thể dẫn đến sự do dự trong việc đặt phòng trực tuyến. Nghiên cứu này nhấn mạnh tầm quan trọng của việc hiểu hành vi tiêu dùng trong đặt phòng khách sạn trực tuyến. Các nhà tiếp thị nên nhấn mạnh vào giá trị thông tin và giá trị ưu tiên đồng thời giải quyết các phức tạp xung quanh nhận thức về địa vị xã hội để tăng cường ý định đặt phòng của du khách tại thành phố Đà Nẵng. Những hiểu biết này có thể hỗ trợ các ý tưởng tiếp thị chiến lược nhằm cải thiện trải nghiệm đặt phòng trực tuyến.

Từ khóa: Kênh đặt phòng khách sạn trực tuyến; Hành vi tiêu dùng của du khách; Đà Nẵng, Việt Nam.

1. Introduction

The Vietnamese tourism industry has witnessed significant growth in recent years, with Da Nang emerging as a popular travel destination. The advancement of information technology has led to the increasing prevalence of online travel agency (OTA) channels, providing travelers with greater convenience and a wider array of options for booking accommodations. Understanding consumer behavior in OTA channels is crucial for hotel businesses and policymakers to develop effective strategies to attract tourists and promote the growth of the tourism sector.

Research on tourists' consumer behavior within OTA channels has gained attention from scholars in recent years. Several studies have focused on the factors influencing tourists' online booking decisions, such as pricing, location, amenities, and customer reviews [11][20]. Other studies have examined the impact of OTA channels on tourists' behavior, including satisfaction levels, loyalty, and revisit intention [3][20].

Currently, there is a limited number of in-depth studies on tourists' consumer behavior in OTA channels at specific destinations like Da Nang. This research aims to fill this gap by investigating consumer behavior in OTA channels in Da Nang city. The study will employ both quantitative and qualitative methods to collect data from international and domestic travelers. Quantitative data will be gathered through online surveys, while qualitative data will be collected through in-depth interviews. Data analysis will be conducted using appropriate statistical methods.

This research is expected to provide valuable insights into tourists' consumer behavior in OTA channels in Da Nang. These insights could be utilized by hospitality and tourism businesses and policymakers to develop effective strategies to attract tourists and promote the growth of the tourism industry.

2. Literature review

An Online Travel Agency (OTA) is an online business platform that provides consumers with booking services for hotels, flights, tours, and other related services through the internet. OTAs typically offer convenience and a wide range of options for customers, allowing them to easily compare and book travel services quickly and efficiently.

Research on the factors influencing tourists' intention to choose OTAs has received significant attention in consumer behavior studies. According to Tan et al. (2014) [27], factors such as website trustworthiness, service quality, convenience, and

the features of the OTA platform have a considerable impact on customers' choices. Hua and Saxena (2015) [10] also found that competitive pricing and promotional programs offered by OTAs are important factors in customers' purchasing decisions.

Conrady and Buck (2011) [5] emphasized that "the ability to create trust in the website" is one of the key factors for customers to trust and choose OTAs for booking travel services. This highlights the importance of security and professionalism of OTA platforms in building a trustworthy relationship with customers.

The consumption values perspective offers a robust framework for understanding consumer behavior, particularly within the context of Online Travel Agencies (OTAs). Rooted in the Theory of Consumption Values (TCV), this perspective conceptualizes consumer-perceived value through five dimensions: functional, social, emotional, epistemic, and conditional value [25][2]. These dimensions are structurally interrelated, influencing consumer decision-making processes and behavior. Importantly, this framework emphasizes that consumption values are shaped by self-image and self-evaluation, suggesting that consumers assess the worth of products or services not only based on functional attributes but also on how these align with their self-perception and social context.

When applied to the study of OTA purchase intentions, the consumption values perspective provides a comprehensive approach for analyzing various factors that influence tourists' decisions. Specifically, five key components are used to measure OTA purchase intentions: Quality-of-Benefits Value (QBV), Monetary Value (MV), Social Status Value (SSV), Preference Value (PV), and Information Value (IV).

Quality-of-Benefits Value (QBV) reflects the perceived usefulness and advantages of OTAs, including service quality and convenience, which strongly impact consumer preferences [14].

Monetary Value (MV) pertains to the perceived financial benefits, such as competitive pricing and promotional offers, which drive tourists toward OTA platforms [4][17].

Social Status Value (SSV) highlights the role of OTAs in reinforcing a consumer's social standing, influencing decisions through perceived prestige or alignment with their social identity [9,19,22,23,31].

Preference Value (PV) emphasizes individual preferences shaped by past experiences, personal biases, and specific needs, guiding choices based on perceived satisfaction [15,16,23,24].

Information Value (IV) addresses the ease of accessing and utilizing information on OTA platforms, where clear, accurate, and reliable data can significantly boost consumer trust and decision-making [1,21,23].

This multidimensional approach not only accounts for the tangible benefits of using OTAs but also incorporates intangible, psychological factors that affect perceived value and purchase intentions. By analyzing consumer behavior through these interrelated values, researchers can gain a more nuanced understanding of why tourists choose specific OTAs and how these choices are influenced by broader personal, social, and contextual factors. Ultimately, the consumption values perspective enriches the study of OTA purchase behavior, offering a more holistic and psychologically informed view of consumer decision-making.

The use of the consumption value perspective in studying tourist consumer behavior when choosing Online Travel Agencies (OTAs) offers numerous advantages compared to traditional approaches. It is broader, encompassing both tangible and intangible factors, such as emotional value, social value, conditional value, and curiosity value. By adopting the consumption value perspective, consumer

behavior research moves beyond merely measuring functional efficiency to explore the intangible factors that influence tourists' decisions. It offered more comprehensive approaches that fully reflect the diverse motivations behind consumers' choices.

3. Methodology

3.1. Data collection

3.1.1. Interview question themes

The primary objective of this study is to investigate tourists' consumer behavior when using online hotel booking channels in Da Nang City. The development of the interview questionnaire was based on the conceptual framework of the research model. To ensure relevance and comprehensiveness, we constructed the questionnaire by considering key variables related to consumer behavior, including booking preferences, decision-making factors, and perceived value of online booking channels. In building the questionnaire, we consulted with five tourism experts. These experts included two lecturers specializing in hotel management, two managers from tourism companies, and one hotel accommodation manager. Their input was essential in shaping the questionnaire to reflect the practical and theoretical aspects of the tourism industry. After constructing the initial questionnaire, we conducted a pre-test with 50 tourists to evaluate the clarity and suitability of the questions. The pre-test ensured that respondents fully understood the survey items and the measurement scales used. All participants reported that the questions were clear and easy to comprehend, confirming the questionnaire's appropriateness for the study.

3.1.2. Interview data collection

The formal data collection for this study took place between June 1, 2024, and July 30, 2024, in Da Nang City. Tourists were approached in key tourism areas and invited to participate in the survey by scanning a QR code that directed them to an online questionnaire hosted on Google Form. This approach enabled quick and efficient data collection, with more than 200 valid responses recorded. Face-to-face interactions ensured clarity, allowing participants to ask questions or request clarifications as needed, while the digital format allowed for precise time-stamping of responses, adding accuracy to the data collection process. A convenience sampling method was employed, targeting tourists present in high-traffic areas of Da Nang, including major beaches, cultural attractions, and popular shopping areas. The aim was to capture a broad spectrum of tourists engaged in leisure activities, ensuring diversity in terms of demographics, travel motivations, and booking behaviors. This method provided real-time access to tourists actively involved in hotel booking decisions, which is relevant to the study's focus on consumer behavior on online hotel booking channels. The interview process was semi-structured, with a combination of face-to-face interactions and digital self-reporting. After a brief introduction explaining the purpose of the study, tourists were asked to scan a QR code using their smartphones to access the survey. The questionnaire was designed to take no more than 10-15 minutes, covering key topics related to online hotel booking behaviors, decision-making criteria, and satisfaction levels with current booking platforms. Respondents could complete the survey at their own pace, with researchers available nearby to assist if needed. Ethical guidelines were strictly followed throughout the data collection process. Before participation, tourists were informed of the study's purpose, assured that their responses would remain anonymous, and provided with the option to decline participation without consequence. No personal identifying information was collected, and participants were given the opportunity to

exit the survey at any time. Informed consent was obtained digitally before starting the questionnaire, in line with ethical standards for research involving human subjects.

All data was recorded directly through Google Form, ensuring that responses were securely stored and accessible for analysis. The use of QR codes allowed for real-time entry of responses, minimizing the risk of data loss or manual input errors. Each submission was automatically time-stamped, providing an accurate log of when responses were received. After the survey period concluded, the data was exported for analysis, ensuring that only authorized personnel could access the dataset.

Several challenges were encountered during data collection, including fluctuating tourist traffic in certain areas due to weather conditions and local events. To adapt, the research team extended data collection hours in busy periods and relocated to alternative high-traffic areas when needed. Additionally, some tourists were unfamiliar with scanning QR codes, requiring brief explanations from the researchers. Despite these challenges, the combination of in-person engagement and digital data collection ensured that the target number of valid responses was met efficiently.
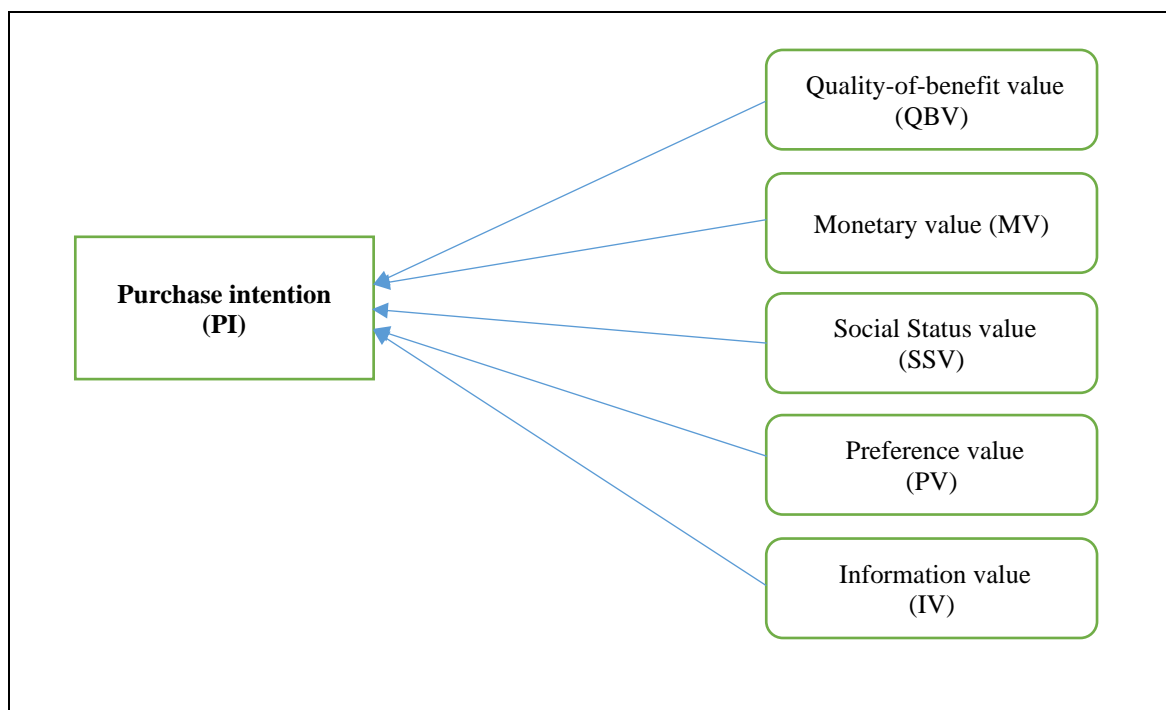

Figure 1. Proposed research model

3.2. Data analysis techniques

In this study, a comprehensive approach was employed to analyze the data collected from tourists and industry experts. The primary tools and techniques used for data analysis include:

Analytical Tools: To assess the reliability and validity of the measurement scales, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted. CFA is essential for verifying the factor structure of the questionnaire items and ensuring that the constructs are accurately measured [2]. Following CFA, structural equation modeling (SEM) was applied using SMARTPLS 4. SEM helps evaluate the structural paths in the proposed conceptual model and understand the relationships between variables [13].

Reliability and Validity Testing: The study utilized CFA to assess the reliability and validity

of the measurement scales. Reliability was examined through Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability, which measure the internal consistency of the scales (Cronbach, 1951) [6]. Validity was assessed through convergent validity and discriminant validity. Convergent validity ensures that items within a construct are correlated, while discriminant validity confirms that constructs are distinct from one another [8].

Statistical Significance: To determine the significance of the relationships and paths within the model, path coefficients and their significance were evaluated. Statistical significance was assessed using bootstrapping procedures which provide confidence intervals and t-values for the path coefficients [7]. This technique helps identify whether the relationships observed in the model are statistically significant.

4. Findings and discussions

4.1. Characteristics of the survey sample

The survey sample consisted of 382 tourists, of whom 55% were international visitors and 45% were Vietnamese. In terms of gender, the distribution was relatively balanced, with 49.2% male, 47.9% female, and 2.9% identifying as other genders. Age-wise, the majority of tourists were between 18-25 years old (55.2%), followed by the 26-35 age group (30.4%), indicating that the survey mostly involved young people. Notably, regarding education level, 59.2% had a college or university degree, while 29.6% held postgraduate degrees, reflecting a well-educated group of tourists.

In terms of employment status, 34.3% of the tourists were students, 30.4% were employees, and 19.4% were self-employed, showcasing a diverse range of occupations. When considering travel frequency, 43.2% had taken 3-5 trips in the past year, 39.5% had traveled 1-2 times, and 17.3% had gone on more than five trips. Travel

purposes were also well-defined, with 68.1% traveling for leisure, 17.5% for business, and 14.4% for other reasons. Lastly, regarding the use of online booking channels, 44% of the tourists used them occasionally (2-5 times/year), 34.6% frequently (more than five times/year), and 21.5% rarely (one time/year or less). These characteristics suggest a diverse, young, and active traveling population.

4.2. Validity and reliability

To assess the reliability and validity of the constructs, a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted. The factor loadings, Composite Reliability (CR), Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and Cronbach's alpha values for all constructs were examined, and the results are summarized in Table 1.

Reliability: The internal consistency of the constructs was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha. All constructs showed satisfactory reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2010) [12]. Specifically, the Cronbach's alpha values for Information value (IV), Monetary value (MV), Preference value (PV), Quality-of-benefits value (QBV), Social Status value (SSV), and Purchase intention (PI) ranged from 0.908 to 0.947, indicating high internal consistency.

Convergent Validity: Convergent validity was assessed through factor loadings, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). All items loaded significantly onto their respective constructs, with factor loadings ranging from 0.900 to 0.947, surpassing the acceptable threshold of 0.70 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) [8]. The CR values for the constructs ranged from 0.912 to 0.948, which are well above the recommended threshold of 0.70, demonstrating good construct reliability. Additionally, the AVE values for all constructs ranged from 0.822 to 0.894,

exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.50, further confirming convergent validity (Hair et al., 2010).

Discriminant Validity: To establish discriminant validity, the AVE values for each construct were compared with the squared correlations between constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) [8]. The AVE for each construct was greater than the squared correlations with other constructs, indicating satisfactory discriminant validity (Table 2).

Table 1. Results of CFA

Constructs	Items	Factor loadings	CR	AVE	Cronbach's α
Information value (IV)	IV1	0.907	0.915	.848	0.910
	IV2	0.930			
	IV3	0.925			
Monetary value (MV)	MV1	0.920	.929	.822	0.928
	MV2	0.906			
	MV3	0.902			
	MV4	0.900			
Preference value (PV)	PV1	0.928	0.912	.845	0.908
	PV2	0.927			
	PV3	0.902			
Quality-of-benefit value (QBV)	QBV1	0.942	.926	.869	0.925
	QBV2	0.930			
	QBV3	0.925			
Social Status value (SSV)	SSV1	0.923	.948	.863	.947
	SSV2	0.947			
	SSV3	0.928			
	SSV4	0.917			
Purchase intention (PI)	PI1	0.946	.941	.894	.941
	PI2	0.945			
	PI3	0.945			

Note(s): n =382

Table 2. Discriminant Validity - Fornell-Larcker criterion

	IV	MV	PI	PV	QBV	SSV
IV	0.921					
MV	0.827	0.907				
PI	0.846	0.856	0.945			
PV	0.861	0.857	0.859	0.919		
QBV	0.773	0.864	0.812	0.784	0.932	
SSV	0.623	0.624	0.546	0.586	0.652	0.929

4.3. Structural model

The research model with an SRMR coefficient of 0.035 indicates that the model is highly compatible with the data, and the discrepancy between the actual data and the predicted values is very small.

The variables IV, MV, PV, and QBV all have a positive and statistically significant impact on Purchase Intention (PI). The variable SSV has a negative impact on PI, but it is still statistically significant. The P values are all very small, indicating that the relationships between the independent variables and purchase intention are statistically significant.

The table 3 shows the moderating effects of "Purpose of Travel" on "Purchase Intention" (PI) and "Social Status Value" (SSV). There is a negative but small effect of travel purpose on online hotel booking purchase intention, with a significant P-value of 0.030 (<0.05), indicating that the relationship is statistically significant. The effect of social status value on purchase intention is negative and statistically significant, as the P-value is 0.010 (< 0.05). This suggests

that SSV has significant direct impact on purchase intention in this case. The interaction effect of "Purpose of Travel" and "Social Status Value" on purchase intention is positive and significant, with a P-value of 0.001 (highly significant, well below 0.05). This indicates that when both variables are considered together, they have a significant and positive impact on online hotel booking purchase intention. While the individual effects of travel purpose and social status value on online hotel booking intention are small, their combined interaction has a strong, positive influence on online hotel booking intention. This implies that certain combinations of travel purpose and social status value may enhance consumers' likelihood of purchasing.
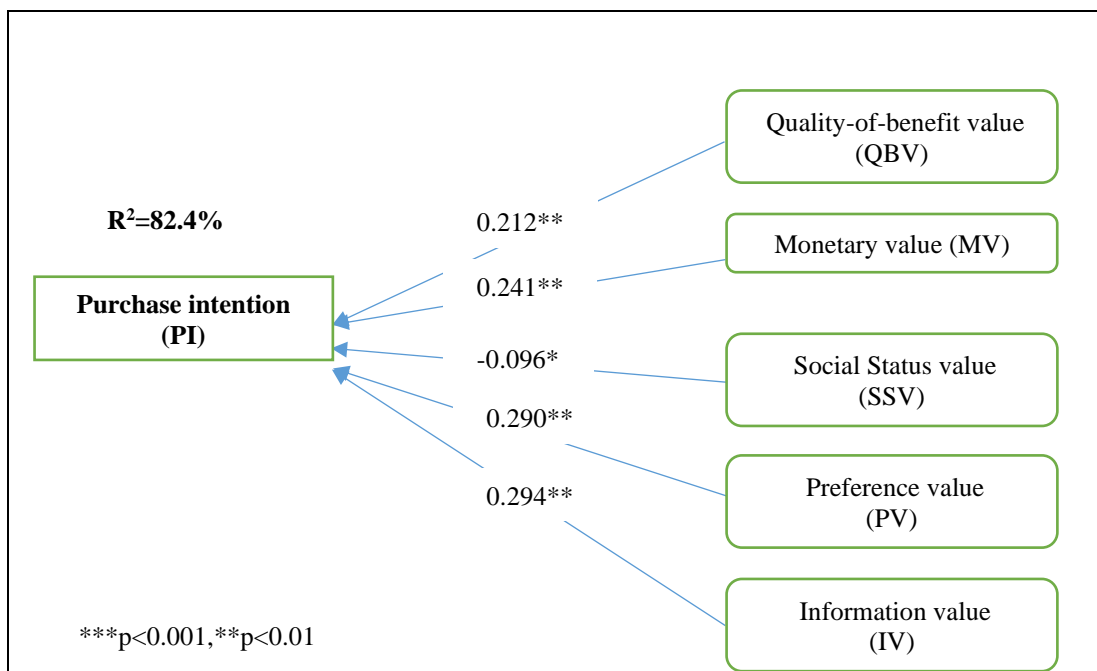

Figure 2. Hypothesized model results

Table 3. Moderating Effects of Travel Purpose on Purchase Intention and Social Status Value

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics	P values
Purposeoftravel -> PI	-0.051	-0.051	0.024	2170	0.030
SSV -> PI	-0.060	-0.059	0.039	1553	0.010
Purposeoftravel x SSV -> PI	0.117	0.110	0.035	3323	0.001

The study investigates the factors influencing tourists' intentions to choose Online Travel Agencies (OTAs). Based on a survey of 382 respondents, the research model explains 82.4% of the variance in tourists' purchase intentions, demonstrating its strong predictive power. The model evaluates five key values: Quality-of-Benefits Value (QBV), Monetary Value (MV), Social Status Value (SSV), Preference Value (PV), and Information Value (IV).

The findings indicate that four values (QBV, MV, PV, IV) positively influence tourists' intentions to use OTAs, while Social Status Value (SSV) has a negative impact. Specifically, Preference Value ($\beta = 0.290$, $p < 0.01$) and Information Value ($\beta = 0.294$, $p < 0.01$) exhibit the strongest positive effects, emphasizing the importance of personalized services and transparent information. This aligns with modern tourism trends, where travelers prioritize platforms that cater to their preferences and provide clear, reliable information.

Meanwhile, Social Status Value has a negative impact ($\beta = -0.096$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that tourists do not perceive OTAs as a means to enhance social status but rather choose them based on utility and efficiency. However, this effect may vary depending on the purpose of travel. The results reveal that travel purpose has a significant moderating effect ($\beta = -0.051$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that certain types of travel—such as luxury or high-end tourism—may increase the role of social status in OTA selection ($\beta = 0.117$, $p < 0.01$).

These findings provide crucial theoretical insights into how tourists make decisions on online travel environments. Additionally, the study highlights the necessity for OTAs to implement personalized service strategies and enhance information transparency to optimize the customer experience.

5. Conclusions

This study provides valuable insights into the key factors influencing tourists' intentions to choose Online Travel Agencies (OTAs). The findings indicate that Quality-of-Benefit Value (QBV), Monetary Value (MV), Preference Value (PV), and Information Value (IV) have significant positive effects on tourists' purchase intentions, whereas Social Status Value (SSV) negatively influences their decisions. However, the moderating effect of travel purpose suggests that under certain circumstances, such as luxury travel, the role of social status in OTA selection may become more relevant. These findings contribute to the theoretical understanding of online tourism consumer behavior by highlighting the importance of personalized experiences, transparent information, and competitive pricing in shaping tourists' choices.

From a practical perspective, the study emphasizes the need for OTAs to enhance service personalization through AI and Big Data, allowing for customized travel recommendations that align with individual preferences. Additionally, improving information quality and transparency—such as providing clear pricing, cancellation policies, and verified user reviews—can further strengthen customer trust and decision-making confidence. Competitive pricing strategies, including flexible promotions and loyalty programs, are also crucial in attracting and retaining OTA users. Furthermore, businesses should develop specialized travel packages tailored to different customer segments, particularly high-end travelers who may place greater importance on social status.

Despite its contributions, this study has certain limitations. The sample size of 382 respondents, while adequate for analysis, may not fully represent the entire OTA user

population. Future research should expand the sample size and include a more diverse demographic to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, further studies could explore other potential factors influencing OTA adoption, such as the impact of social media, online reviews, and cultural differences, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of tourists' online booking behaviors.

In conclusion, this study offers both theoretical and practical contributions by providing a deeper understanding of consumer behavior in the online travel market. The findings serve as a foundation for tourism businesses and OTAs to refine their marketing strategies, optimize service offerings, and enhance customer engagement, ultimately shaping the future of digital tourism.

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