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# Digital Technology's Role in Influencing Hotel Booking Intention: The Direct Impact of Negative Review Valence and the Moderating Effects of Brand Image, Star Category, and Gender within Indonesian Tourism OTAs

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#### **Abstract**

An increasing number of individuals are using online platforms particularly on travel and tourism online platforms, as individuals may now conveniently reserve hotel rooms and take advantage of online travel agencies (OTAs). Online customer reviews (OCR) especially on OTAs have been found to impact hotel booking intention. OCR can be positive (positive review valence/PCR) or negative (negative review valence/NCR). OCRs are quite useful for prospective customers when deciding what to book. In addition, variables like brand image, star category, and gender have an impact on how OCR influences hotel booking intentions. This research examines how negative review valence (NRV) impacts hotel booking intention. It also considers how the relationship is influenced by moderating variables such as brand image, star category, and gender. A quantitative method is employed in this research by utilizing PLS-SEM (Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modelling) data analysis tools together with surveys. The findings indicate that negative review valence significantly impacts hotel booking intention and that this influence is also influenced by brand image, star category, and gender. In addition, the implementation of digital technology in Indonesian tourism through OTAs amplifies the impact of such reviews by providing easy and transparent access to information for consumers, thus helping them make more informed booking decisions.

**Keywords:** Negative Review Valence, Brand Image, Star Category, Gender and Hotel Booking

#### 1. Introduction

The current era's internet growth suggests a move away from cutting-edge technology and toward online media. A survey conducted by the Association of Indonesian Internet Service Providers (APJII) indicates that the country's Internet user base is increasing yearly, with 79.15% of its 278.696.200 population having access to the Internet [1]. There are several advantages to using the internet, and online media for interaction marketing is growing quickly.

It has been demonstrated that widespread Internet use may expedite business procedures in a variety of industries, including hotel [2]. With the help of an online travel agent (OTA), individuals can now quickly book a hotel stay and receive many perks. An online travel agency, or OTA, is a company that arranges



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travel through a network of websites or applications. Its services include booking hotels, selling tickets for tourist attractions, ordering tickets for public transportation, sending packages, and even renting cars [3]. OTAs like Traveloka, Pegi-Pegi, Mister Aladin, Airbnb, Hotels.com, Trivago, Tiket.com, TripAdvisor, Ctrip.com, Qunar.com, and other comparable websites are becoming more and more popular these days for hotel room rentals. About 85% of Indonesian respondents to a June 2023 Rakuten Insight study about the country's most popular Online Travel Agencies (OTAs) said they used Traveloka, with Tiket.com and Agoda coming in second and third, respectively [4].

Digital technology helps hotels enhance their brand image by managing reviews and responding to negative feedback. Transparent information on OTAs influences consumer booking decisions. Digital platforms also act as virtual assistants, offering travel recommendations. Effective management of online reviews, particularly negative ones, can significantly boost a hotel's reputation. Additionally, digital innovation in the travel and tourism sector, though not yet fully realized, is a strong differentiator, aiding destination managers in visitor management and staffing needs.[5]

#### 2. Literature Review

Prior studies have indicated that online reviews have grown in importance as a means of assessing patrons' perceptions of hospitality services [6], [7], [8], [9]. An & Ozturk, (2021) and El-Said, (2020) claimed that online customer reviews (OCR), whether positive (positive review valence/PRV) or negative (negative review valence/NRV), are one of the elements that might affect hotel booking intention. Before booking through an Online Travel Agent, customers typically seek easily accessible information by reading reviews from various sources such as websites, blogs, and influencers. These reviews help them evaluate a hotel's benefits, drawbacks, features, and costs to avoid unpleasant surprises. Findings from [11] show that consumers have a significantly lower attitude towards hotels after reading a series of negatively framed online reviews. This highlights the importance of ensuring quality standards to minimize complaints. Therefore, the first hypotheses are:

#### H1: Negative Review Valence significantly influences hotel booking intention.

[6] goes on to say that the influence of online customer reviews on hotel booking intentions depends on factors like brand image, price importance, and star category. Maintaining a strong brand image is crucial in the hospitality sector, as it can determine success or failure. Hotel branding should provide a distinctive experience that will entice customers to stay at the establishment again, in addition to aiding in their decision to select one over another [10]. A brand's image is the collective perception that consumers have of a company and the services it offers. An individual's perceptions and ideas about a firm and its offerings together form its brand image. Customers will consistently recall and keep in mind a positive brand image. [6] added that the association between online customer reviews and brand image (which can have a positive or negative valence) is moderated. As a result, the following theory is produced:

## H2a: Brand Image acts as a moderator on the relationship between negative review valence on hotel booking intention

In addition to brand image, star category can also affect hotel booking Intention. Customers also see the hotel star category to make a hotel reservation, there are 5-star categories available on Traveloka including; hotels with 1-star, 2-star, 3-star, 4-star and 5-star classifications. The hotel star category system is assigned to each hotel property by the competent authority based on the type of services offered and the overall quality of service, with higher ratings reflecting higher service standards [12]. [6] found that star category has a strong and sensitive moderate effect on Negative Review Valence (NRV), because consumers who



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prefer properties with lower star categories have anticipated this, such as the quality of hotel services that are appropriate in terms of image and low facilities, will reflect lower ratings. As a result, the following theory is produced:

## H2b: Star Category acts as a moderator on the relationship between negative review valence on hotel booking intention

In addition to star rating and brand image, gender may also affect a consumer's decision to book a hotel. In studies on consumer behavior, gender is an essential factor. Previous research showed that the gender of a consumer may have an impact on their inclination to buy. The uniqueness of gender differences may affect how consumers receive information, which might result in a certain behavior. Male and female behaviors have been found to differ significantly in consumer and tourist studies [13], [14], [15]. [14] research shows that there are considerable differences between men and women in terms of purchase intentions. According to [16], Muslim visitors' intentions to book accommodations on Airbnb are positively influenced by their reputation and perceived value. Furthermore, it was shown that the purpose of guests to book accommodations on the Airbnb platform is moderated by their gender. As a result, the following theory is produced:

H2c: Gender acts as a moderator on the relationship between negative review valence on hotel booking intention

#### 3. Novelty and Originality

This study presents novelty by examining the role of digital technology in influencing hotel booking intentions, specifically through the lens of negative review valence on Online Travel Agencies (OTAs) within the Indonesian tourism context. The research is significant as it addresses a gap in the literature, where few studies have explored the impact of negative reviews specifically within the Indonesian tourism industry. Furthermore, the study introduces moderating variables such as brand image, star category, and gender, offering new insights into how these factors can amplify or mitigate negative reviews' effects on booking intentions.

This research is original in combining several elements that have not been extensively studied together. First, it focuses on negative review valence as a primary variable within the context of OTAs in Indonesia. Second, the inclusion of moderating variables like brand image, star category, and gender in analyzing the impact of negative reviews is a novel approach not commonly found in similar research. Lastly, the study is grounded in the context of Indonesian tourism, providing a unique perspective that is particularly relevant to the local industry

The presented research hypotheses are provisional responses or speculations to the research statement that serve as a guide for further investigation and conclusion-making. The research framework in Figure 1 presents the research hypothesis as well:

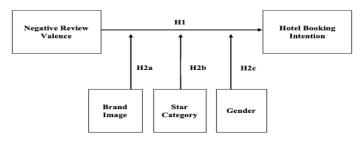


Figure 1 Research Framework



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#### 4. Research Methods

The present study used quantitative research methodologies to investigate the relationship between negative review valence and hotel booking intention. The moderating influences of brand image, star category, and gender are also investigated in this study. The positivist mindset that underpins this study is also utilized to examine a particular community or sample.

The study used a questionnaire to collect its data. [17] defines a questionnaire as a data collection instrument in which respondents are provided with a set of questions or written statements to fill out. This survey uses a Likert scale to assess values. The Likert scale is used to link the variables that need to be evaluated with variable indications. These indications function as a roadmap for creating inquiry items. There are five alternative answers for each question: 1 for strongly disagree (STS) and 5 for strongly agree (SS).

In this investigation, an ordinal measurement scale was used. There are 11 questions in the questionnaire, which correspond to five variables. There are three elements for each of the following variables: negative review valence, hotel booking intention, brand image, star category and gender, which contains five items. The study's population included of Indonesian users of Online Travel Agent (OTA) who made hotel reservations using the OTA platform, among them are: Traveloka, Tiket.com, Agoda, Booking.com, Trivago, Airbnb, TripAdvisor. SMART PLS Ver 4.1.0.6 aids Partial Least Square (PLS) applications based on structural equation modeling (SEM).

#### 5. Result and Discussion

In this research, questionnaires were distributed, and 515 respondents were obtained, but 15 respondents were considered invalid. So, this research used 500 respondents who were declared valid to be used in this research.

**Table 1 Characteristic of The Respondent** 

Profile of Respondent	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Female	327	65.4%
Male	173	34.6%
Age (years)		
16 - 20	82	16.4%
21 – 30	279	55.8%
31 – 40	98	19.6%
> 40	41	8.2%
<b>Monthly Income</b>		
> Rp 1.500.000	67	13.4%
Rp 1.500.000 - Rp 5.000.000	307	61.4%
Rp 5.000.000 - Rp 10.000.000	92	18.4%
< Rp 10.000.000	34	6.8%
Internet User		
User	500	100%
Not a user	0	0%
OTA User		



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User	500	100%
Not a user	0	0%

PLS-SEM analyses may be broadly categorized into two types: measurement (outer) model assessment and structural (inner) models. The purpose of the outer model evaluation is to appraise the validity and reliability of the relationships between latent variables and the statistical model's measurement variable indicators (Hair et al., 2022). Figure 2 illustrates how the construct's latent variables, are comprised of all 11 indicators. Figure 2 shows that the moderator variable is a blue circle with a dotted line, the independent and dependent variables are a blue circle with a straight line (no dotted lines), and the indicator is a yellow rectangle.

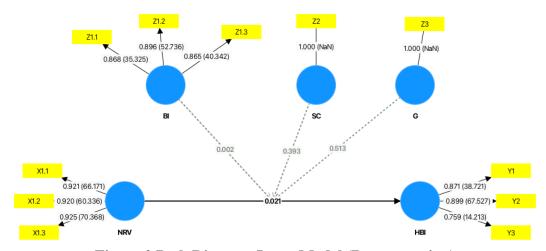


Figure 2 Path Diagram Inner Model (Bootstrapping)

To determine whether there are issues with any specific products, the corresponding outside loadings must first be checked. In general, standardized outer loadings should be 0.708 or more; nevertheless, because 0.70 is sufficiently close to 0.708, it is considered acceptable [18]. Upon analyzing the data using SmartPLS, it has been determined that every indication is more than 0.708, hence validating the outer loading. The Composite dependability value (CR), Cronbach's Alpha (CA), and rho\_A are all more than 0.7 for each construct's dependability. As so, every structure satisfies the necessary dependability.

The next step in ensuring that each concept in each latent model is different from the other variables is to run a discriminant validity test. Validity testing establishes the accuracy of a measurement tool. If a construct's AVE root is larger than its correlation with other latent variables, then its discriminant validity in SMART-PLS testing is excellent. These assessments are based on the Fornell-Lacker Criterion and cross-loading in the Fornell-Lacker Criterion test [19]. The indicators meet discriminant validity test standards since each indicator's AVE square root value is higher than the other correlation values between variables, based on tables 1 and 2, the Cross Loading Factor results, and the Fornel-Larcker criterion results below

AVE square root value is higher than the other correlation values between variables, based on tables and 2, the Cross Loading Factor results, and the Fornel-Larcker criterion results above.



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**Table 2 Fornel-Larcker criterion** 

Variable	Brand	Hotel	Negative	Price	Positive	Star
	Image	Booking	Review	Importance	Review	Category
		Intention	Valence		Valence	
Brand	0.869					
Image						
Hotel	0.650	0.845				
Booking						
Intention						
Negative	0.717	0.691	0.927			
Review						
Valence						
Price	0.772	0.725	0.822	0.872		
Importance						
Positive	0.750	0.716	0.806	0.820	0.902	
Review						
Valence						

**Table 3 Cross Loading Factor** 

Indica-	Negative Re-	Brand	Hotel Book-
tor	view Valence	Image	ing Intention
X1.1	0.921	0.643	0.636
X1.2	0.920	0.661	0.633
X1.3	0.925	0.688	0.652
Z1.1	0.601	0.868	0.541
Z1.2	0.647	0.896	0.583
Z1.3	0.617	0.865	0.568
Y1	0.580	0.561	0.871
Y2	0.676	0.631	0.899
Y3	0.471	0.429	0.759

Secondly, the subsequent test for latent variables employs an inner model, also known as a structural model. This core model processes R-Square, Q-Square, F-Square, Goodness of Fit Model, and Path Coefficient to evaluate the precision of the proposed model that is generated by bootstrapping. The inner model route diagram for this investigation is displayed in Figure 3. The coefficient of determination, or R2, indicates how well the statistical model in use can explain fluctuations in the dependent variable. The study's R2 value in the table is 0.544. Therefore, it makes sense that 54.4% of hotel booking intentions are accounted for by brand image, pricing priority, negative review valence, and positive review valence. Meanwhile, the remaining 45.6% is explained by other variables that were not included in our research.



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#### Table 4 The R<sup>2</sup> Value

Variable	R-Square	R-square adjusted
Hotel Booking	0.544	0.536
Intention		

Testing the  $Q^2$ , which denotes predictive relevance or out-of-sample power, is essential for assessing structural models. A model's Q-square value larger than 0 is considered predictively relevant, according to [18]. A model's predictive usefulness is worse when its Q-square score is less than 0.

**Table 5 Predictive Relevance Measurement Model** 

Variable	Q-Square Predict
Hotel Booking	0.516
Intention	

Table 5 clearly shows that 0.516 is the  $Q^2$  value. The fact that this number is greater than 0 (zero) indicates that the model has a predictive relevance value.

**Table 6 f-Square Test Result** 

Variable	Hotel Booking	
	Intention	
Negative Review Valence	0.023	
Brand Image	0.051	
Star Category	0.001	
Gender	0.003	

Table 6 shows that the values of 0.023, 0.051, 0.001, and 0.003 correspond to the variables of negative review valence, brand image, star category and gender. Therefore, this value shows that this variable does not have a strong influence or has a weak/small effect on the hotel booking intention variable.

Furthermore, to produce a model that fits the sample data, the SEM method's analysis step necessitates a model suitability test (Goodness of Fit). Table 6 demonstrates that this value satisfies the fit requirements for the data, with the SRMR Standard Mean Root Square value being 0.052 < 0.10.

**Table 7 Goodness of Fit Model Result** 

	Saturated Model	<b>Estimated Model</b>
SRMR	0.052	0.059
d_ULS	0.181	0.230
d_G	0.122	0.110
Chi-square	294.437	252.451
NFI	0.888	0.904

Lastly, Research hypothesis testing is a provisional solution derived from pertinent theory to the issue formulation that requires empirical data analysis for validation. This hypothesis is presented as a statement and is based on a theoretically constructed thinking framework [20]. The following circumstances can be met in order to conduct this hypothesis test:

• "If P-Values < 0.05 then H<sub>0</sub> is rejected and H<sub>1</sub> is accepted"



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• "If P-Values > 0.05 then H<sub>0</sub> is accepted and H<sub>1</sub> is rejected"

<b>Table 8 Summary</b>	of Path	Coefficient and	<b>Hypothesis</b>	<b>Testing</b>

Hypothesis	Path	Original Sample (O)	T-value	P Value	Description
H1	NRV -> HBI	0.307	3.540	0.021	Accepted
H2a	BI*NRV -> HBI	-0.066	3.038	0.002	Accepted
H2b	SC*NRV -> HBI	-0.169	0.854	0.393	Rejected
H2c	G*NRV -> HBI	-0.110	0.654	0.513	Rejected

#### Negative Review Valence on Hotel Booking Intention.

 $H_0$  was rejected and H1 was accepted in the hypothesis test because the p-value was 0.000 < 0.05. The results of this calculation are in line with previous research, specifically [NO\_PRINTED\_FORM] [6], claims that the regression analysis's results contradict the original theory on the significance of OCR. H1 was rejected because, according to El-Said (2020), this study did not conduct the recommended PRV moderation analysis and there was no direct relationship between OCR and PRV with hotel booking intentions ( $\ddot{y} = 0.004$ , P > .05). According to this study, OCR negatively affects customer perceptions, which means visitors will react and make or cancel reservations with if there is a negative review. This suggests that the presence of negative review valence affects the intention to book a hotel.

#### Negative Review Valence on Hotel Booking Intention moderated by Brand Image.

 $H_0$  was rejected and  $H_2$  was accepted in the hypothesis test because the p-value was 0.002 < 0.05. [6] asserts that brand image significantly influenced customers' perceptions of costs before the emergence and widespread use of the Internet. These calculations' outcomes are consistent with earlier research in this area. Research indicates that consumers who are familiar with a brand are less concerned with price comparisons when they are shopping for new products. It is shown that consumers who are unfamiliar with a product's brand give price more weight when comparing it to similar products. According to the study, strong BI significantly influences a hotel's perceived value and increases visitors' trust in the facility's offerings

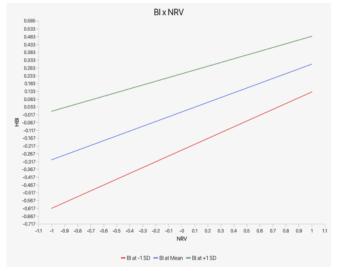


Figure 3 The Influence of the moderating effect of Star Category between Negative Review Valence and Hotel Booking Intention



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All three lines have a positive slope, indicating that as NRV becomes less negative, HBI increases for all levels of brand image. The green line (high brand image) has the highest position, followed by the blue line (average brand image), and then the red line (low brand image). Hotels with a stronger brand image are less negatively influenced by negative reviews than hotels with a lower brand image, according to the moderating effect of brand image between negative review valence and hotel booking intention.

#### Negative Review Valence on Hotel Booking Intention moderated by Star Category

 $H_0$  was accepted and H2b was rejected in the hypothesis test because the p-value was 0.393 > 0.05. The results of this calculation are not following previous research, namely [6] which demonstrates how different types of HSC stays have different relationships with NRV and hotel booking intents. However, other studies show that in line with this study, namely in the research of [21], argue that a hotel's HSC has no moderating effect between OCR valence and hotel booking intentions.

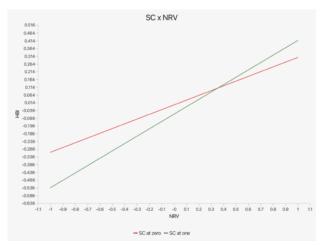


Figure 3 The Influence of the moderating effect of Star Category between Negative Review Valence and Hotel Booking Intention

All lines have a positive slope, indicating that as reviews become less negative (NRV increases), booking intention (HBI) rises across all star category levels. This implies that positive reviews generally improve booking intentions regardless of star category. The y-axis intercepts highlight that even with neutral reviews (NRV = 0), hotels with a higher star rating have a naturally higher booking intention compared to those with a lower star rating. The moderating effect of star category is evident: hotels with a higher star rating are less susceptible to the negative influence of bad reviews compared to those with a lower star rating.

#### Negative Review Valence on Hotel Booking Intention moderated by Gender

In the hypothesis test, H0 was accepted and H2c was rejected since the p-value was 0.513 > 0.05. This contradicts the earlier findings of [16], who found that visitors' intentions to book accommodations on the Airbnb site are moderated by gender. However, this study is in line with [14] which demonstrates that the hypothesis analysis indicates that the association between warm light and purchase intention is moderated by their interplay rather than gender and culture acting independently.



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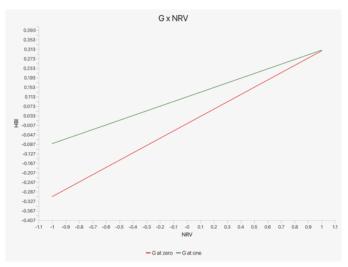


Figure 5 The Influence of the moderating effect of Gender between Negative Review Valence and Hotel Booking Intention

In comparison to the red line, the green line has a less steep slope. This implies that the influence of unfavorable reviews on the desire to book a hotel is less pronounced for a certain gender group than it is for another. Both lines intersect at a similar point on the y-axis. The gender moderating effect between the valence of bad reviews and hotel booking intention suggests that some gender groups are less impacted by negative reviews than others. This could be due to the higher perceived quality and reliability within a certain gender group, making potential customers more resilient to negative reviews.

#### 6. Result and Discussion

This study shows that negative customer reviews significantly influence hotel booking intentions on Online Travel Agents (OTAs) in Indonesia. While negative reviews can provide additional useful information for consumers, they also damage the hotel's image and reduce consumer interest. Besides reviews, other factors influencing hotel booking interest include brand image, star category, and gender, with brand image playing a crucial role in optimizing the impact of reviews on booking decisions.

The integration of digital technology in Indonesia's tourism industry through OTAs has increased accessibility and transparency of information for consumers. OTAs provide platforms for consumer reviews, price comparisons, and detailed hotel information, all of which affect booking decisions. Effective digital reputation management is essential for hotels to mitigate the negative effects of unfavorable reviews while enhancing booking interest through proper brand image management on OTA platforms.

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