MINISTRY OF FINANCE
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THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE DISSERTATION

RESEARCH ON THE IMPACT OF ELECTRONIC WORD-OF-MOUTH ON CUSTOMERS' ONLINE AIRLINE TICKET BOOKING INTENTION: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF AIRLINE BRAND IMAGE, THE MODERATING ROLES OF PURCHASE MOTIVATION AND PERCEIVED RISK

Speciality: Business Administration
Code: 9340101

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Course: 2020

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Ho Chi Minh City – 2026

THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE DISSERTATION

1. Theoretical contributions

Compared with previous studies that have often examined the relationships among eWOM, brand image (BI), and behavioral intention separately, this study makes a theoretical contribution by developing and testing an integrated model. In this model, eWOM is examined not only as a direct predictor of online flight booking intention but also in relation to BI, purchase motivation (PM), and perceived risk (PR). The findings show that eWOM directly affects booking intention and also influences BI, which subsequently contributes to the formation of behavioral intention. Thus, eWOM operates through multiple interconnected pathways. The study's contribution lies not only in confirming the influence of eWOM on online flight booking intention but also in explaining how that influence occurs.

Another important theoretical contribution is the clarification of the mediating role of BI. While many previous studies have primarily emphasized the direct effect of eWOM or examined the role of brand image separately, this study shows that BI is influenced by eWOM, subsequently affects online flight booking intention, and mediates the relationship between eWOM and behavioral intention. These findings demonstrate that the influence of eWOM is also transmitted through brand perceptions before contributing to behavioral intention. The study therefore offers a deeper understanding of how eWOM exerts its influence, extending beyond its treatment as a source of information with a direct effect.

The study also contributes by clarifying the selective nature of moderation. The empirical findings show that PM strengthens the effects of eWOM on BI and online flight booking intention but does not significantly moderate the effect of BI on behavioral intention. Meanwhile, PR does not significantly moderate the relationships originating from eWOM but strengthens the effect of BI on online flight booking intention. Compared with previous studies that have often treated moderators as relatively uniform amplifiers, this study demonstrates that moderation varies across mechanisms of influence. Its contribution therefore extends beyond

adding moderators to the model: PM primarily strengthens the influence of eWOM information, whereas PR highlights the importance of brand image in decision-making. This finding helps clarify the boundary conditions of relationships in online consumer behavior.

Furthermore, compared with studies focusing on individual effects, this study demonstrates that direct, mediating, and moderating mechanisms coexist within a unified explanatory framework. The supported relationships indicate that online flight booking intention develops through the combined influence of eWOM, its indirect effect through BI, and variations in the strength of these effects depending on PM and PR. The integrative contribution lies in providing a theoretical framework that explains customer intentions through multiple interconnected relationships. This distinguishes the study from approaches that examine these relationships in isolation.

Finally, the study contributes theoretically by showing that not all moderation hypotheses are supported and that these findings also have scholarly value. Rather than assuming that psychological factors such as PM and PR alter every relationship in the model, the findings demonstrate that their moderating effects vary across relationships, helping refine theoretical understanding of online consumer behavior. The study's contribution therefore lies both in the relationships supported by the findings and in identifying those for which statistically significant moderation was not found, thereby improving the precision and depth of the theoretical model.

2. Practical contributions

The practical value of this study lies in providing empirical evidence and a basis for understanding how customers in Vietnam form online flight booking intentions. The findings help airlines, online flight booking agencies, and ticketing platforms better understand the factors influencing customer intentions in digital environments. They also provide a foundation for developing specific managerial implications.

First, the study helps businesses in Vietnam's airline sector better understand the relationships among the factors influencing online flight booking intention, including the effects of eWOM, the mediating role of brand image (BI), and the

moderating roles of purchase motivation (PM) and perceived risk (PR). In services characterized by high intangibility, customers often have to evaluate alternatives before experiencing the service. The findings provide further evidence of the roles of eWOM information and brand perceptions in shaping booking intention.

Second, against the backdrop of digital transformation in Vietnam's airline industry, the study provides evidence of eWOM's role in shaping booking intention through online channels. eWOM affects booking intention both directly and indirectly through BI. The practical value of this finding lies in clarifying the connections among online reviews, perceptions of airline brands, and customers' intentions to select services. The study thus provides a basis for using eWOM to strengthen online flight booking intention in Vietnam.

Third, the study provides a reference for businesses seeking to identify priority areas, particularly online flight booking agencies and booking support providers with limited resources. The roles of eWOM and BI in the model help businesses better understand the factors associated with the formation of customer booking intention. This contribution supports the identification of management priorities; corresponding actions are presented in the managerial implications section.

Fourth, the study clarifies the psychological conditions associated with the strength of the effects of information and brand image. Specifically, PM strengthens the effects of eWOM, while PR highlights the role of BI in booking intention. These findings provide a basis for businesses to consider both the influencing factors and the conditions under which their effects become more pronounced, supporting the analysis and interpretation of customer perceptions on digital platforms.

Fifth, the measurement scales for eWOM, BI, PM, PR, and online flight booking intention were adapted and validated in the Vietnamese research context. Businesses may draw on these scales to measure and assess customer perceptions during online flight booking transactions. Their practical value lies in providing a basis for systematically understanding customers and supporting management and digital communication activities.