MINISTRY OF FINANCE
UNIVERSITY OF FINANCE AND MARKETING

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

Full name of PhD candidate: Ho Phi Dung

Course: 2020

Supervisor 1: PhD. Nguyen Xuan Hiep

Supervisor 2: PhD. Ao Thu Hoài

Ho Chi Minh City – 2026

THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE DISSERTATION

1. Theoretical contributions

First, this study contributes to the literature on online consumer behavior by developing and validating an integrated model to explain customers' online airline ticket booking intention. Unlike previous studies that have examined the effects of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), brand image, or psychological factors on behavioral intention separately, this study simultaneously investigates the relationships among eWOM, brand image, purchase motivation, perceived risk, and online airline ticket booking intention within a unified analytical framework. The findings indicate that eWOM influences booking intention both directly and indirectly through brand image, while the strength of these relationships varies across different psychological conditions. Accordingly, this study extends the conceptualization of eWOM from a mere source of information to a multi-layered mechanism in which cognitive and psychological factors jointly contribute to the formation of behavioral intention.

Second, this study provides additional theoretical evidence regarding the mechanism through which eWOM influences behavioral intention by confirming the mediating role of brand image. The findings show that brand image is not only influenced by eWOM but also affects online airline ticket booking intention, thereby serving as a bridge between eWOM and behavioral intention. This finding demonstrates that the influence of eWOM is transformed through the development of brand perceptions rather than being translated directly into behavioral intention. Consequently, the study offers a deeper understanding of the mechanism through which online information shapes customers' behavioral intention in digital environments.

Third, this study contributes to theory by clarifying the selective nature of moderating effects in online consumer behavior. The empirical findings indicate that purchase motivation and perceived risk do not moderate all relationships within the proposed model equally but exert their moderating effects only on specific relationships. Specifically, purchase motivation strengthens the effects of eWOM on both brand image and online airline ticket booking intention, whereas perceived risk strengthens only the relationship between brand image and online airline ticket booking intention. These findings enhance the understanding of the boundary conditions underlying the proposed model and provide further insights into the role of psychological factors in online consumer behavior.

Fourth, this study extends the applicability of theories related to eWOM, brand image, and consumer behavior to the context of online airline services in Vietnam. The findings not only reinforce the applicability of established theoretical frameworks, including the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), the Information Adoption Model (IAM), and the Heuristic–Systematic Model (HSM), but also provide empirical evidence of how direct, mediating, and moderating mechanisms jointly contribute to the formation of online airline ticket booking intention. In doing so, this study broadens the application of consumer behavior theories in online transaction environments and provides a foundation for future research in service contexts with similar characteristics.

2. Practical contributions

In addition to its theoretical contributions, this study provides practical implications for airlines, online airline ticket agencies, and service providers operating in digital environments.

First, this study helps businesses gain a better understanding of how customers develop online airline ticket booking intention. The findings indicate that booking intention is jointly influenced by electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), brand image, purchase motivation, and perceived risk, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing customer behavior in online transaction environments.

Second, this study provides a practical basis for businesses to identify priority areas in managerial decision-making and resource allocation. The empirical findings indicate that eWOM and brand image are the two most influential factors in shaping online airline ticket booking intention, particularly in the airline industry, where services are highly intangible and customers are required to make purchase decisions before experiencing the service.

Third, this study demonstrates that the moderating variables do not influence all relationships in the proposed model equally. Specifically, purchase motivation strengthens the effects of eWOM on both brand image and online airline ticket booking intention, whereas perceived risk strengthens only the relationship between brand image and online airline ticket booking intention. These findings provide a practical basis for customer segmentation and the development of marketing strategies tailored to different customer groups.

Fourth, this study develops and validates measurement scales for eWOM, brand image, purchase motivation, perceived risk, and online airline ticket booking intention. These validated scales may serve as practical tools for businesses to assess and monitor customer perceptions, as well as to evaluate the effectiveness of communication activities and service improvement initiatives.

Fifth, the practical value of this study extends beyond the airline industry to other online service sectors with similar characteristics, such as tourism, hospitality, transportation, accommodation booking, insurance, and digital financial services, where customers rely heavily on online information, brand image, and perceived risk when making purchase decisions.

Overall, this study provides empirical evidence that helps businesses better understand customer behavior, identify managerial priorities, and develop strategies that are better aligned with the characteristics of online transaction environments.