

ARTICLE

Electronic word-of-mouth and Indian solo female travellers' hotel booking intention: Moderating role of perceived risk

Md. Tariqul Islam¹  | Uma Pandey²  | Jeetesh Kumar³ 

¹School of Hospitality, Tourism and Events, Taylor's University, Subang Jaya, Malaysia

²School of Hospitality and Tourism, Jagran Lakecity University, Bhopal, India

³Faculty of Social Sciences and Leisure Management, Sustainable Tourism Impact Lab, Centre for Research and Innovation in Tourism (CRiT), Taylor's University, Subang Jaya, Malaysia

Correspondence

Md. Tariqul Islam, School of Hospitality, Tourism and Events, Taylor's University, Subang Jaya, Malaysia.

Email: tariqul.tonmoy812@gmail.com

Abstract

The female solo travel trend is getting very popular globally, but females often face challenges related to their safety and security during their travel. The current study aims to identify the association among electronic word-of-mouth (e-WoM), brand reputation, brand engagement, attitude towards the brand and Indian solo female travellers' hotel booking intention with the moderating role of perceived risk by incorporating the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) theory. A survey was conducted with 218 Indian solo female travellers to meet the study's objectives. Findings revealed that e-WoM positively impacts the hotel brand reputation, brand engagement, attitude of respondents towards the hotel brand and hotel booking intention. Moreover, brand reputation and brand engagement influence the hotel booking intention. However, no association is found between attitude towards hotel brands and hotel booking intention. Perceived risk moderates the association between e-WoM and Indian solo female travellers' hotel booking intention. In addition, theoretically, a research framework is developed by extending the S-O-R theory with perceived risk as a moderating factor. Moreover, this study contributes numerous practical implications for the stakeholders of the Indian hospitality industry.

1 | INTRODUCTION

Solo travel is becoming popular globally, and females are also significantly participating. While travelling solo, these females often face challenges related to their safety (Saigal et al., 2023; Yang, 2021). To overcome these challenges, female travellers often research the destination to stay self-conscious and alert about their safety (Nguyen & Hsu, 2022; Thomas & Mura, 2019). According to Solo Female Travelers (2022), various factors like safety, convenience and comfort impact their choice of destinations. As solo female travel contributes to an essential segment in tourism, their travel behaviour needs to be studied.

India is famous for its rich heritage, ancient culture, spiritual experiences and myriad attractions as the world's seventh-largest country. With its rich tourism attractions and unique characteristics, India is becoming an increasingly attractive destination for fearless female travellers (Nguyen & Hsu, 2022; Singh & Sharma, 2023; Thomas & Mura, 2019). However, women's safety is a key concern of the country. A United Nations study in Delhi found a pervasive safety concern for women, with a staggering 95% feeling unsafe in public spaces and nearly 73% feeling unsafe even in their surroundings (UN Women, 2013). The Georgetown Institute's 2023 Women Peace and Security Index ranked India 128th out of 177 countries, with a score of 0.595. The report also noted a decline in the percentage of Indian women feeling safe from 65.5% in 2017 to 58% in 2023 (Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace, & Security, 2023). Thomas and Mura (2019) highlighted the prevalent issues of physical and sexual violence against women in India, which significantly impact the travel experiences of solo female travellers. The Government of India has taken several initiatives to ensure the safety of women travellers (The Economic Times, 2024). Meanwhile, Nguyen and Hsu (2022) emphasised the importance of leveraging electronic word-of-mouth (e-WoM) to mitigate perceived risks and enhance travel intentions among solo female travellers. However, there is a scarcity of research on e-WoM, perceived risk factors and the behavioural aspects of Indian solo female travellers.

Travellers always try to find accommodation during their trips, and e-WoM has become a vital source of hotel information. Before hotel booking, travellers often rely on accounts of other travellers where they share their first-hand experiences through online platforms (e-WoM), including review websites and social media channels (Yang et al., 2023). E-WoM further influences perceived brand reputation, as online conversations and reviews shape public perceptions, trust and consumer decisions.

Perceived brand reputation is the subjective opinions, beliefs and impressions of consumers and the general public about a brand, mainly based on their experiences, interactions and information received through various channels like marketing efforts, word-of-mouth and so on (Mirzai et al., 2016). It has a substantial impact on traveller's views and decisions. A positive brand reputation fosters increased brand engagement, as customers are likelier to interact, trust and align with a brand they favourably perceive (Blasco-Arcas et al., 2016). Hollebeek (2011) defined brand engagement as the emotional connection a person establishes with a brand. If e-WoM highlights the hotel's commitment to security and safety and provides a hospitable ambience, it can boost engagement for that hotel brand. This brand engagement has the potential to develop a positive attitude towards the hotel brand, which can encourage long-term customer loyalty. In addition, according to Sekhon et al. (2015), attitude towards a brand is the opinion about a particular brand, which may include the sum of individuals' experiences and perceptions about that brand. Positive e-WoM encountered by customers has the potential to shape and build a positive attitude towards the hotel brand and vice versa (Elseidi & El-Baz, 2016). If females travelling alone encounter favourable e-WoM about hotels, they develop a positive attitude toward the brand.

While booking online, solo female travellers consider the 'risk factor' associated with the purchase before making any purchase decision. Park and Tussyadiah (2017) stated that perceived risk is the possible repercussions or dilemmas when customers consider online hotel booking. These females are conscious about their stay at unfamiliar properties at unknown destinations because of significant concerns related to safety and security and doubts about the accuracy of information through online channels like e-WoM (Chandrakala et al., 2024; Kour & Manhas, 2018; Wilson & Little, 2008). These concerns often increase perceived risk and impact the booking intention of solo female travellers (Karagöz et al., 2021). This article investigates the relationship among e-WoM, perceived brand reputation, perceived risk and booking intentions that will provide insights into the decision-making processes of solo female travellers. The remaining sections of this article will include the literature review and relevant theoretical background. Following this, the methodology, results and findings will be presented. The final section will provide conclusive remarks, including a brief discussion, implications, limitations and directions for future research.

2 | LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 | Solo female travellers, hotel booking intention and Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) theory

Solo female travellers always seek hotels that value female customers' comfort and safety. While checking out hotel options, when they encounter e-WoM shared by other female travellers, which highlights a hotel's safety and security initiatives, trust is developed towards that hotel brand (Serracantalops et al., 2020). Many researchers have found that in addition to e-WoM, several other factors like brand engagement, reputation, attitude toward the brand and perceived risk also impact solo female travellers' hotel booking intention (Garg & Kumar, 2017; Hussain & Kumar, 2015; Kumar et al., 2017; Kumari & Sangeetha, 2022). The Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) theory explains the relationship between e-WoM and the intention of solo female travellers to book hotels. As proposed by Mehrabian and Russell (1974), the theory states environmental stimuli (S) elicit emotional responses (O), consequently resulting in an individual's behavioural responses (R). The S-O-R theory suggests that interaction with external stimuli results in an organism's physiological changes, which trigger behavioural responses (Zhu et al., 2020). In the present study, e-WoM is the environmental stimuli that generate individual perceptions of brand reputation, engagement and attitude, subsequently triggering hotel booking intention for solo female travellers. When individuals come across the e-WoM (online reviews) regarding any hotel brand, they build a perception of the brand's reputation, become emotionally engaged with the brand, generate positive/negative attitudes and finally trigger their intention to book the hotel (Hu & Kim, 2018). However, there was no moderating factor associated with the S-O-R theory. In addition, Handoyo (2024) indicated perceived risk as an important factor in online purchasing through E-WoM. When consumers perceive a high degree of risk, trust becomes even more influential in their purchasing decisions, mitigating concerns related to financial loss, product performance and personal information security. The perceived risk factor is a significant factor that moderates the individual inclination to book a hotel (Biswas, 2023), based explicitly on e-WoM due to the intangible characteristics of hospitality and tourism products. Therefore, this study will assess the moderating effect of perceived risk between e-WoM and hotel booking intention.

2.2 | E-WoM and booking intention

Online reviews, a form of e-WoM, differ from online ratings and are helpful in comprehensive service assessment (Duverger, 2013). Various travellers produce online reviews that present information about the hotel features that aid prospective travellers. These reviews impact bookings, observing that positive reviews about a hotel boost reservations and room sales (Badilla & Castro, 2023). A prospective customer's likelihood of making a hotel reservation increases with the prevalence of positive reviews; conversely, a higher prevalence of negative reviews has the reverse effect. Garbariono and Strahilevitz (2004) denoted that e-WoM influences females' online purchasing decisions more than males. Moreover, several studies found that e-WoM impacts hotel booking intention (Azhar et al., 2023; Shukla & Mishra, 2023). Thus, this study hypothesises that

H1. E-WoM positively influences booking intention.

2.3 | E-WoM and perceived brand reputation

To shop safely online, customers depend on 'unbiased' third-party reviews and recommendations (Athapaththu & Kulathunga, 2018). Customers increasingly rely on online hotel ratings provided by travellers who booked these hotels earlier (Cho et al., 2024) and consider them as sources of

information to derive the quality of the hotel (Ananthakrishnan et al., 2023). These online reviews, also known as e-WoM, have a significant impact on consumers' decision-making process when it comes to booking hotels online. Solo female travellers can be reassured and find female-friendly hotels that address concerns related to safety and security by going through e-WoM (Sánchez-Franco & Alonso-Dos-Santos, 2021). Their interaction with positive e-WoM establishes a favourable image of the hotel brand, and they find the hotel trustworthy and reliable. Previous studies revealed that e-WoM impacts perceived brand reputation (Mathews et al., 2022; Wang & McCarthy, 2023). Thus, this study hypothesises that

H2. E-WoM positively influences perceived brand reputation.

2.4 | E-WoM and perceived brand engagement

Customers use social media to engage with brands in today's digital era. Customers can use e-WoM to engage with selected brands by actively participating in content creation (Srivastava et al., 2023). They can share their experiences with the brand through exciting stories. Customers can also look for recommendations and exchange product information through social media. Labrecque et al. (2013) investigated the role of social media and found that customers can observe, participate, interact and even create with other brands and customers. Abuhjeeleh et al. (2023) suggested that positive e-WoM is crucial for maintaining brand engagement and customer choices. They also found that positive e-WoM can boost trust, brand loyalty and brand engagement in the context of hotels. Their previous studies indicated that e-WoM impacts brand engagement (Srivastava et al., 2023; Wang & McCarthy, 2023). Thus, this study hypothesises that

H3. E-WoM positively influences perceived brand engagement.

2.5 | E-WoM and attitude towards brand

Customers can access information about services and products of any brand through e-WoM. These may be through reviews on social media, personal blogs or brands' websites. These social media reviews and other e-WoM often shape attitudes towards a particular brand (Wang & McCarthy, 2023). A highly credible e-WoM develops a positive attitude towards a brand, whereas a less credible e-WoM will develop a negative attitude towards a brand (Chaihanchai et al., 2024). E-WoM about a particular hotel can impact travellers' sentiments, booking decisions and long-term loyalty. Hotel brands can shape a positive attitude among their target audience by actively engaging with e-WoM, responding to comments and promoting positive online interactions (Salah et al., 2023). Previous studies revealed that e-WoM impacts attitudes toward hotel brands (Kudeshia & Kumar, 2017; Sharipudin et al., 2023). Thus, this study hypothesises that

H4. E-WoM positively influences attitude towards brand.

2.6 | Perceived brand reputation and booking intention

Travellers are more likely to make purchase decisions if they perceive that a hotel has a good brand reputation. A hotel's brand reputation can be shaped by its service quality and the traveller's satisfactory experience. They can even establish an emotional connection with hotels they perceive to have a favourable brand reputation (Dalimunthe, 2021). This connection may lead them to increased intention to make a purchase. They will be more inclined to select a hotel they perceive to pos-

sess a positive brand reputation (Hu & Yang, 2020). Moreover, solo female travellers will always find a hotel with a trustworthy brand reputation, eventually influencing their intention to book a hotel rather than its rivals. Previous studies indicated that brand reputation impacts hotel booking intentions (Chakraborty & Biswal, 2020; Shukla & Mishra, 2023). Thus, this study hypothesises that

H5. Perceived brand reputation positively influences booking intention.

2.7 | Perceived brand engagement and booking intention

Better brand engagement makes customers purchase the products (Hollebeek et al., 2014). Female travellers engage with hotel brands often through online channels. Hotels may use narratives, social media platforms, reviews and so on, to increase brand engagement. Better brand engagement can foster reliability and trust among solo females seeking to book hotels (Japutra et al., 2023), and they may prefer such hotels over others. A hotel's efficient branding and marketing efforts can engage solo female travellers, influencing immediate booking choices and building long-term loyalty. Previous studies highlighted that brand engagement significantly influences hotel booking intentions (Touni et al., 2022; Vayghan et al., 2023). Thus, this study hypothesises that

H7. Perceived brand engagement positively influences booking intention.

2.8 | Attitude towards brand and booking intention

A positive attitude towards a brand leads customers to purchase the product or service, even if they have to pay a hefty amount (Keller & Lehmann, 2006). For hotels, a favourable attitude towards the brand can be developed by providing various facilities, such as service quality, safety, security protocols and brand reputation. Travellers, specifically solo females, trust reputed brands. If they find hotels trustworthy and reliable, they are supposed to make booking decisions (Lien et al., 2015). A strong and reputable hotel brand can assure safety and security and build trust and a favourable attitude towards the hotel, ultimately influencing their booking intention. Therefore, prior studies confirmed that attitude towards the brand impacts booking intention (Ladhari & Michaud, 2015; Wen et al., 2021). Thus, this study hypothesises that

H6. Attitude toward brand positively influences booking intention.

2.9 | Moderating role of perceived risk

How customers perceive and react to e-WoM depends on their perceived risk associated with the product and service. Perceived risk is customers' ambiguity when purchasing because they cannot predict their choice (Crespo et al., 2009). In e-commerce, individuals' perceptions of risk determine whether they will make a purchase, as customers with high-risk perceptions will distrust sellers and customers with low-risk perceptions will do the opposite (Amarullah, 2023). They may seek the help of e-WoM. However, their perceived risks determine individuals' behaviour and readiness to accept information online (Guoyin et al., 2021). Media stories about inadequacies and fraud incidents fuel the risk perception of online purchasing (Lin et al., 2009). For instance, if individuals perceive a high risk associated with a product or service, they may consider the related e-WoM unreliable and avoid purchase (Amarullah et al., 2022). On the other hand, when they perceive a low risk associated with a particular product or service, they trust the e-WoM regarding it and show interest in purchase (Liao

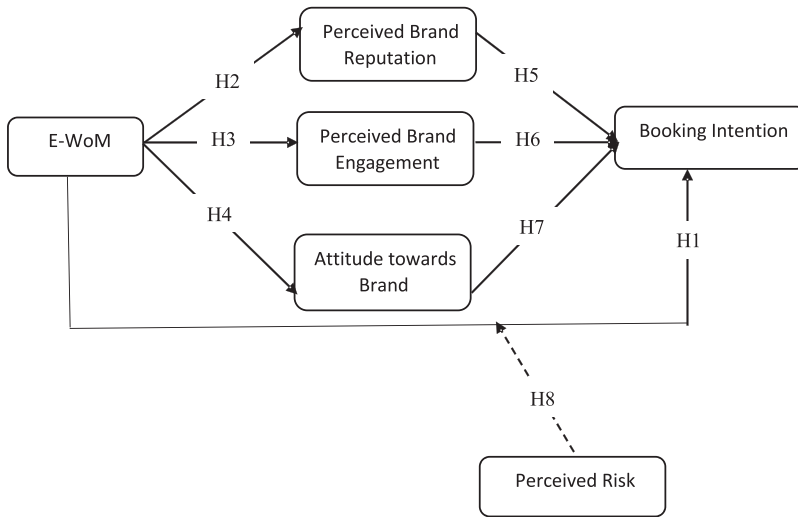


FIGURE 1 Conceptual research framework.

et al., 2021). In the tourism and hospitality industry, concerns about security and privacy are significant deterrents to booking trips online (San-Martin et al., 2020). Nguyen and Hsu (2022) identified that perceived risk significantly impacts the destination image, with solo female travellers associating the destination with high gender-specific risks, including unwanted attention and sexual harassment. If a solo female traveller has a high-risk perception, she might find the e-WoM about the hotel unreliable and will be less intended to book hotels online and vice versa. Thus, this study hypothesises that

H8. Perceived risk positively moderates the relationship between e-WoM and booking intention.

Based on the theoretical background and development of hypotheses, the authors propose the conceptual framework, illustrated in Figure 1.

3 | METHODOLOGY

3.1 | Measures

This study aimed to identify the relationship among e-WoM, brand reputation, brand engagement, attitude towards the brand and Indian solo female travellers' hotel booking intention with the moderating role of perceived risk. Therefore, a quantitative survey-based study seemed appropriate. All the measurement items were adapted from the previously published literature (see Table 2). For instance, four measurement items for e-WoM were adapted from Nguyen and Hsu (2022). Three mediating variables, perceived brand reputation, perceived brand engagement and attitude towards the brand, were measured using three items, respectively. Measurement items of perceived brand reputation and perceived brand engagement were adapted from Rather et al. (2024), and attitude toward brand was adapted from Ladhari and Michaud (2015). The moderating variable perceived risk was measured through three measurement items adapted from Nguyen and Hsu (2022), and three measurement items were utilised to measure the dependent variable booking intention, adapted from Garg and Pandey (2020). A 5-point Likert scale (5 – Strongly Agree and 1 – Strongly Disagree) was used to measure all the measurement items.

TABLE 1 Respondents' demographic profile.

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age group	18–24	67	30.73
	25–34	113	51.84
	35–44	29	13.30
	44 and above	09	4.13
Area of residence	Urban	111	50.91
	Rural	26	11.92
	Sub-urban	81	37.16
Education level	Higher secondary	06	2.75
	Undergraduate	99	45.41
	Postgraduate	101	46.33
	Others	12	5.50
Solo travelling frequency	Less than 2 times	61	27.98
	2–4 times	94	43.12
	5–7 times	43	19.73
	More than 7 times	20	9.17
Preferred accommodation type	Luxury hotels	23	10.55
	Budget hotels	162	74.31
	Homestays	16	7.34
	Others	17	7.80

3.2 | Data collection

An online structured questionnaire was employed for data collection from Indian female solo travellers. Among the two-part questionnaire, the first part consisted of the demographic profile of the respondents, whereas the second part consisted of the questions to meet the aim of the study. Initially, a committee of three academic experts pre-tested the questionnaire to check the accuracy of the content, and the authors modified the questionnaire according to the recommendations. Later, 38 solo female travellers participated in the pilot study to assess the reliability and readability of the questionnaire. A minor modification was carried out based on the outcome of the pilot study. The questionnaire distribution was initiated to collect data through social media platforms (e.g. WhatsApp and Facebook). The research population of this study was Indian female travellers who had experienced solo trips within India and booked hotels during their trips. A purposive sampling technique was employed to collect data from the research population. Two screening questions were asked before initiating the survey (*Q1: Are you a woman who resides in India and has experience of solo travelling within the country? Q2: Have you ever booked accommodation during your solo trips?*). Positive answers to all the questions allowed the respondents to participate in the survey. More statistical literature is needed on the number of solo female travellers in India; therefore, the G*power analysis was deemed appropriate for estimating the minimum sample size. A total of 132 minimum sample sizes were determined through the G*power analysis (Faul et al., 2009). A total of 223 data were collected from 15 February 2024 to 31 March 2024. After excluding all the incomplete responses, 218 data were taken for further analysis. Table 1 presents the respondents' demographic profile.

The demographic profile of the respondents indicates that a majority were in the 25–34 age range (51.84%). Most respondents were predominantly from urban areas (50.91%). Additionally, the highest percentage of respondents had attained an educational level up to postgraduation (46.33%).

Moreover, most respondents have experienced solo travelling 2–4 times (43.12%), claiming that they prefer budget hotels as their accommodation mode (74.31%).

4 | RESULT AND FINDINGS

Harman's single-factor tests and variance inflation factors (VIF) value were employed to examine the existence of common method bias (CMB) in this study. Findings revealed no CMB issues in this study, as one factor explained 48% of the total variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Moreover, Kock (2017) recommended that a VIF greater than 3.3 indicates excessive convergence and potential influence by CMB. Conversely, a VIF value of 3.3 or lower is considered free from CMB. The VIF values in the present study were below 3.3, indicating no CMB issues in this study. In addition, all correlation values between the constructs were below 0.9. PLS-SEM was employed to test the model as the dataset did not have a multivariate normal distribution according to Mardia's coefficients. The independent *t*-test results also demonstrated no statistically significant difference across any measures, indicating no existence of non-response bias (Sedgwick, 2010). The data analysis in this research was conducted using the SmartPLS software version 4. The validity and reliability of each construct were assessed to ensure the quality of the outer model. The findings of construct reliability and validity are shown in Table 2.

The statistical outcome revealed good internal consistency and strong reliability as Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values were found between 0.788–0.880 and 0.876–0.926, respectively. The average variance extracted (AVE) values indicated an adequate convergent validity, ranging between 0.683 and 0.808. The results confirm the construct reliability and validity of the measurement model (see Table 2), as Hair et al. (2021) suggested.

Discriminant validity was determined through the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) and the Fronell-Larcker criterion (see Table 3). The findings revealed no issues with discriminant validity in the current study, as the HTMT values ranged between 0.512 and 0.850, less than 0.9, as recommended by Henseler et al. (2015). Moreover, the Fronell-Larcker criterion value also confirmed the absence of a discriminant validity issue in the current study, as the square root of the AVE for each pair of components exceeded the correlation between them (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Moreover, the measurement model results indicated no issues with the multicollinearity in the current study, as the inner VIF value ranged between 1 and 2.599 (see Table 4). In addition, the *f*-square value indicated the existence of small (E-WoM → BI; BR → BI; BE → BI; PR × E-WoM → BI), medium (E-WoM → AB) and large (E-WoM → BR; E-WoM → BE) effects between the constructs, as recommended by Cohen (2013) (see Table 4). At the same time, no effect was found between AB and BI. The hypothesis was tested using the SmartPLS software, which used a bootstrapping approach with 5000 re-samples. Table 3 illustrates the outcomes of the structural model. The hypotheses were supported when the *p*-value was below 0.05, and the *t* value was above 1.96, as recommended by Hair et al. (2021). Therefore, except H7 (AB → BI), all the hypotheses were supported (Table 4 and Figure 2).

5 | DISCUSSION

Female solo travelers go on trips without companions, relatives, or acquaintances, seeking thrills and interactions with others. They get the opportunity to develop knowledge and personal growth, while possessing a strong sense of self-assurance. It is always important for female solo travellers to choose suitable accommodations to stay during their trip. e-WoM is a significant source for collecting information regarding the accommodation before booking. This study identified the influence of e-WoM on Indian female solo travellers' hotel booking intention with the mediating factor of perceived brand reputation, perceived brand engagement, perceived attitude towards the brand and the moderating impact

TABLE 2 Constructs reliability and validity.

Constructs	Measurement items	Factor loading	CA	CR	AVE
Attitude towards brand (AB)	AB1: Online reviews give me a positive impression of this hotel brand	0.881	0.88	0.926	0.806
	AB2: I feel positive about this hotel brand based on online reviews	0.908			
	AB3: Overall, online reviews give me a good impression of this hotel brand	0.905			
Perceived brand engagement (BE)	BE1: This hotel brand makes a strong impression on my senses	0.878	0.881	0.926	0.808
	BE2: This hotel brand induces positive feelings and emotions in me	0.908			
	BE3: This hotel brand stimulates my positive thoughts	0.909			
Booking intention (BI)	BI1: I will likely consider booking a hotel based on online reviews	0.878	0.81	0.887	0.724
	BI2: Online reviews strongly influence my decision to book a hotel	0.796			
	BI3: I am highly willing to book a hotel based on online reviews	0.877			
Perceived brand reputation (BR)	BR1: I believe this hotel brand has a good reputation	0.851	0.788	0.876	0.701
	BR2: I perceive this hotel brand as widely recognised	0.840			
	BR3: I believe this hotel brand is highly appreciated by its customers	0.821			
Electronic word-of-mouth (E-WoM)	E-WoM1: I often read online reviews about hotel brands to ensure I choose the right hotel	0.813	0.845	0.896	0.683
	E-WoM2: I frequently gather information from online reviews before booking a hotel	0.804			
	E-WoM3: I worry about my decision if I do not read online reviews when booking a hotel	0.821			
	E-WoM4: Online reviews make me confident about my decision when booking a hotel	0.865			
Perceived risk (PR)	PR1: I worry about unwanted attention from men at the hotel	0.880	0.88	0.926	0.806
	PR2: I worry about sexual harassment and assault at the hotel	0.904			
	PR3: I worry about crimes (theft, robbery, pickpocketing, etc.) near the hotel	0.910			

Abbreviations: AVE, average variance extracted; CA, Cronbach's alpha; CR, composite reliability.

TABLE 3 Discriminant validity.

Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT)						
Constructs	AB	BE	BI	BR	E-WoM	PR
BE	0.756					
BI	0.534	0.512				
BR	0.850	0.793	0.697			
E-WoM	0.551	0.754	0.665	0.673		
PR	0.581	0.712	0.707	0.708	0.755	
PR x E-WoM	0.543	0.540	0.615	0.634	0.611	0.655
Fronell-Larcker criterion						
AB	0.898					
BE	0.663	0.899				
BI	0.457	0.441	0.851			
BR	0.711	0.662	0.565	0.837		
E-WoM	0.480	0.655	0.564	0.555	0.826	
PR	0.511	0.627	0.600	0.596	0.655	0.898

Abbreviations: AB, attitude towards brand; BE, brand engagement; BI, booking intention; BR, brand reputation; E-WoM, electronic word-of-mouth; PR, perceived risk.

TABLE 4 Measurement model output with hypotheses test result.

Hypothesised relationship	Original sample	t Statistics	p-Values	Result	f-Square	Effect size	Inner VIF
H1: E-WoM → BI	0.238	2.59	0.010	Supported	0.049	Small	2.236
H2: E-WoM → BR	0.555	7.786	0.000	Supported	0.446	Large	1
H3: E-WoM → BE	0.655	11.99	0.000	Supported	0.753	Large	1
H4: E-WoM → AB	0.48	6.061	0.000	Supported	0.299	Medium	1
H5: BR → BI	0.251	3.175	0.002	Supported	0.047	Small	2.599
H6: BE → BI	0.174	2.139	0.032	Supported	0.022	Small	2.66
H7: AB → BI	0.054	0.65	0.516	Not supported	0.002	No effect	2.375
H8: PR × E-WoM → BI	0.087	2.546	0.011	Supported	0.031	Small	1.894

Abbreviations: AB, attitude towards brand, BE, brand engagement; BI, booking intention; BR, brand reputation; E-WoM, electronic word-of-mouth; VIF, variance inflation factors.

of perceived risk. The result indicated that individuals' hotel booking intention is positively triggered by e-WoM; therefore, the H1 was supported (t value – 2.59, p -value – 0.010). E-WoM may play a significant role in facilitating individuals' acquiring of intangible knowledge through shared feedback and reviews and in enhancing the perceived convenience of purchasing hospitality products, as the hospitality industry provides invisible or service-oriented products. E-WoM influences individuals' behavioural intentions, and e-WoM assists individuals with less or no knowledge of the hotel brand before booking.

The statistical outcome revealed that e-WoM has a positive relationship with a perceived brand reputation (t value – 7.786, p -value – 0.000), perceived brand engagement (t value – 11.99, p -value – 0.000) and perceived attitude towards the brand (t value – 6.061, p -value – 0.000); therefore, H2, H3 and H4 have been supported. Hotel brand reputation is the perception individuals have of a particular hotel brand. Findings revealed that e-WoM is a critical determinant that impacts solo female travellers'

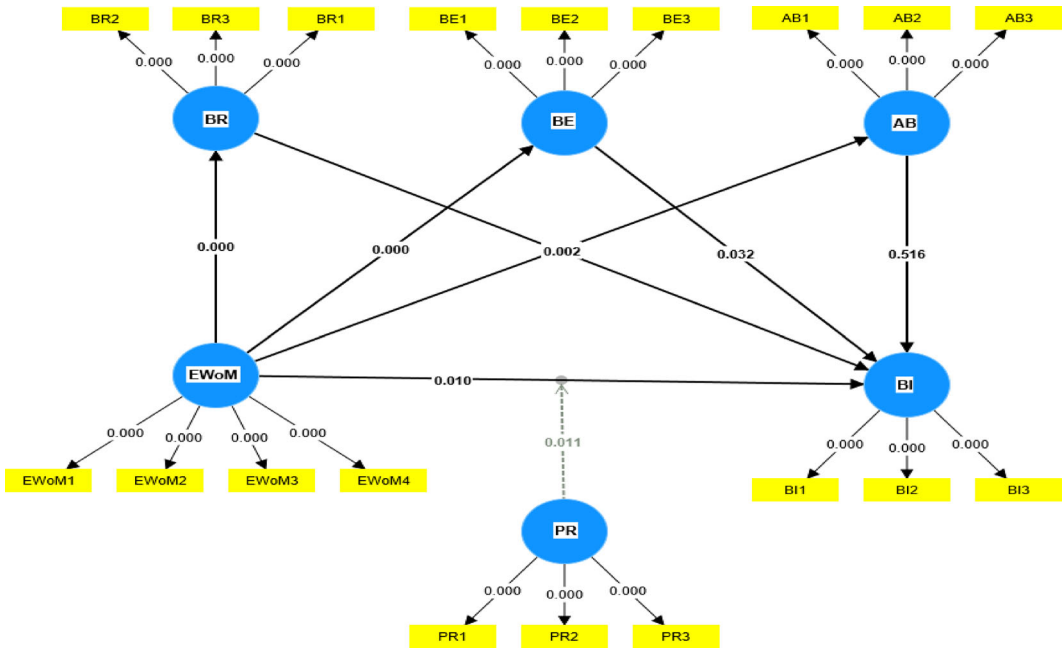


FIGURE 2 PLS-SEM output with *p*-value. [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

perception towards the hotel brand’s reputation, relating to the findings of Bhatti and Alawad (2023). A positive reputation fosters solo travellers’ trust, credibility and loyalty.

Moreover, e-WoM significantly impacts solo female travellers’ perceived engagement with hotel brands, aligning with the previous study’s findings (Srivastava & Sivaramakrishnan, 2021). The study’s findings indicated that e-WoM builds a positive relationship between the individuals and the hotel brand. Based on the e-WoM on hotel brands, solo female travellers emotionally connect with the brand. In addition, the attitude of solo female travellers toward the hotel brand is positively impacted by e-WoM. These findings relate to the findings of Ladhari and Michaud (2015). A positive e-WoM positively influences their positive attitude, whereas an adverse one can negatively impact travellers’ attitudes toward the hotel brands.

In addition, the study revealed that perceived brand reputation (*t* value – 3.175, *p*-value – 0.002) and perceived brand engagement (*t* value – 2.139, *p*-value – 0.032) have a significant and positive relationship with solo female travellers’ hotel booking intention. Brand reputation impacts the individuals’ perception that the hotel is reputable and trustworthy. Moreover, it assists solo female travellers in feeling the hotel brand’s quality concerning the brand name. In the current study, brand reputation is perceived as a significant determinant of respondents’ hotel booking intention. A hotel brand with a high reputation triggers the intention of solo female travellers to book that hotel.

Moreover, brand engagement builds relationships with solo female travellers with the specific brand. Brand engagement is a psychological factor, and in this study, hotel brand engagement is derived from solo female travellers’ intention to book and stay in that hotel. However, attitude towards the brand (*t* value – 0.650, *p*-value – 0.516) has no relationship with solo female travellers’ hotel booking intention. However, this finding contradicts Garg and Pandey’s findings (2020). Although a positive attitude towards the brand positively impacts individuals’ intentions, a negative attitude negatively impacts individuals’ intentions.

Nevertheless, in the present study’s context, solo female travellers’ attitude towards the hotel brand has no impact on their hotel booking intention. Moreover, perceived risk positively moderates the relationship between e-WoM and solo female travellers’ hotel booking intention; therefore, H8 was

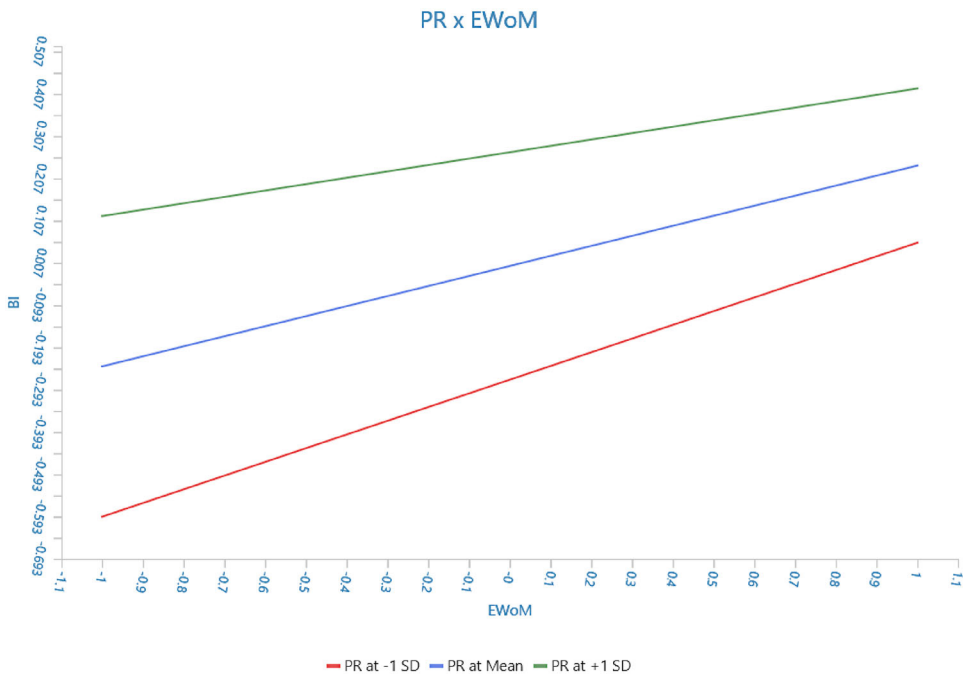


FIGURE 3 Moderation effect of perceived risk (PR) on electronic word-of-mouth (E-WoM) and booking intention (BI). [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

supported (t value -2.546 , p -value -0.011). Risk perception is a crucial determinant of hotel booking due to the intangibility nature of hospitality products. This finding aligns with the study of Biswas (2023). E-WoM risk perception and hotel booking are strongly associated, and Figure 3 also confirms that the high-risk perception lessens the solo female travellers' hotel booking intention. In contrast, less risk perception enhances their booking intention.

5.1 | Theoretical implications of the study

By incorporating the S-O-R theory with a moderator such as perceived risk, the study significantly strengthens the conceptual underpinnings of consumer behaviour and the decision-making process, particularly in the hospitality industry. The incorporation of S-O-R theory here reflects its distinct existence in the limited literature regarding Indian women travelling alone and their plans to book hotels. This study thoroughly analyses the impact of positive and negative word-of-mouth on the booking intentions of solo female travellers in India. The research incorporates variables such as perceived brand reputation, brand engagement, attitude towards brand and perceived risk. These variables uncover intricate behavioural patterns within this demographic and provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing consumer decision-making in this group.

5.2 | Practical implications of the study

This study substantially contributes to hoteliers and policymakers by highlighting the significance of perceived brand reputation and engagement in influencing hotel booking intention. Hoteliers should prioritise efforts to enhance their brand reputation by delivering consistent quality service and

showcasing positive guest experiences. Similarly, fostering meaningful brand engagement through personalised interactions and tailored services can develop stronger emotional connections with Indian solo female travellers, increasing their likelihood of booking.

Moreover, hotels should actively monitor and manage their online reputation through e-WoM platforms. Encouraging satisfied guests to leave positive reviews can significantly influence the decision-making process of solo female travellers. Implementing strategies to address and resolve negative feedback promptly can mitigate potential reputational risks. Hotels can also leverage e-WoM platforms to strengthen trust, credibility and loyalty among solo female travellers, ultimately enhancing their booking intentions. Hotels can adopt nuanced marketing strategies to mitigate the risk and encourage a positive attitude toward overall brand perception, brand reputation and engagement in booking intentions among this demographic. Hotel authorities can conduct training programmes for hotel staff to understand the specific needs and concerns of solo female travellers, which is crucial. Providing sensitivity training on gender-related issues, customer service excellence and crisis management can enhance the overall guest experience and contribute to positive word-of-mouth recommendations.

Furthermore, policymakers should enforce safety regulations for accommodations catering to solo female travellers. Implementing stringent standards and oversight can ensure a safe and secure environment, enhancing hotel confidence. By prioritising safety in accommodations, the hotels can attract more solo female travellers, boosting tourism and supporting economic growth. In addition, policymakers can also support economic growth by incentivising hotels to cater more effectively to solo female travellers. This can include financial support for safety enhancements, promoting destination marketing campaigns highlighting safe and welcoming environments for solo female travellers, and facilitating partnerships between hotels and local tourism authorities.

6 | CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The phenomenon of solo female travel has gained popularity and become a trend, with an increasing number of women participating. Although solo travel for women can lead to independence, safety concerns and risks are associated with booking accommodations online. Travellers employ various strategies to minimise such inconveniences, including researching online reviews, booking reliable accommodations and keeping a close eye on the trip. The travel patterns of independent female travellers are crucial, as their contribution to the tourist industry is evident.

E-WoM significantly impacts the hotel booking decisions of solo female travellers planning trips to their desired destinations. The impact of e-WoM is predominantly evident when solo female travellers make reservations for their desired destinations. Through online platforms, tourists usually rely on first-hand reviews from fellow travellers who have previously been in the same accommodations to assess a destination's safety, security and quality. Travellers frequently depend on e-WoM for recommendations. Consequently, the positive e-WoM significantly impacts brand reputation through the engagement and attitudes of female solo travellers towards specific hotel brands.

This study investigates the relationship between e-WoM, the perceived reputation of a brand and the level of engagement with the brand. It also explores the impact of these factors on attitudes towards the brand and the likelihood of booking a hotel. The study applies the S-O-R model to determine the associations between these variables. Furthermore, it examines how risk factors affect the association in a way that changes or influences it. Research findings indicate that e-WoM promotes the previously discussed indicators. However, when it comes to the purpose of solo female travellers in India to book hotels, the attitude towards the brand is of no significance in this process.

The impact of brand reputation and engagement on hotel booking intention emphasises the importance of maintaining a positive online reputation and effective customer relationship management. Afterwards, how individuals perceive risk influences how e-WoM affects their intention to book

a hotel, emphasising the significance of safety perceptions in consumers' decision-making process regarding travel. The research strongly suggests that addressing safety concerns and leveraging positive e-WoM are essential in satisfying the requirements of Indian female solo travellers. As a result, the sector becomes more receptive and dynamic, leading to a more inclusive and dynamic tourism business.

Similar to other studies, this research also has some limitations; first, the sampling technique employed may introduce sampling bias, as data were collected from a specific sample of Indian female solo travellers, potentially limiting the generalisability of the findings. Future research could address this limitation by employing a more diverse sampling strategy to ensure broader representation across different demographics and cultural backgrounds. Moreover, although the research employed well-established measurement scales, improving the validity of the constructs might be achieved through qualitative validation techniques like cognitive interviews or expert evaluations. Additionally, integrating qualitative research methods (e.g. interviews or focus groups) with quantitative findings could offer a detailed insight into the experiences, preferences and decision-making factors of Indian solo female travellers. Further, the current study included perceived risk as a moderator, which has inherent subjectivity and variability across individuals. Risk perception can differ significantly based on personal experiences, cultural backgrounds and individual characteristics, making it challenging to standardise measurement and interpretation in moderation analyses. Future researchers could explore alternative moderator variables that may provide more consistent and objective measures, such as personality traits, decision-making styles or environmental factors. These variables may offer deeper insights into the moderating effects on relationships between variables without the inherent subjectivity associated with risk perception.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data supporting the findings of this study are available upon request to the corresponding author.

PEER REVIEW

The peer review history for this article is available at <https://publons.com/publon/10.1111/issj.12529>.

ORCID

Md. Tariqul Islam  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7367-2989>

Uma Pandey  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8817-1546>

Jeetesh Kumar  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9878-1228>

REFERENCES

- Abuhjeleh, M., M. O. F. Al-Shamaileh, S. B. Alkilany, and K. Kanaan. 2023. "Interactive eWOM, Consumer Engagement, Loyalty, eWOM Sharing, and Purchase Behaviour Nexus: An Integrated Framework for Tourism and Hospitality Industry." *International Journal of Services Operations and Informatics* 12(3): 267–84. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJSOI.2023.132351>
- Amarullah, D. 2023. "How Trust and Perceived Risk Create Consumer Purchase Intention in the Context of E-Commerce: Moderation Role of eWOM." *International Journal of Electronic Marketing and Retailing* 14(1): 107–22.
- Amarullah, D., T. Handriana, and A. Maharudin. 2022. "E-WoM Credibility, Trust, Perceived Risk, and Purchase Intention in the Context of E-Commerce: Moderating Role of Online Shopping Experience." *Jurnal Ekonomi Bisnis Dan Kewirausahaan* 11(1): 61–83.
- Ananthakrishnan, U., D. Proserpio, and S. Sharma. 2023. "I Hear You: Does Quality Improve With Customer Voice." *Marketing Science* 42(6): 1143–61. <https://doi.org/10.1287/mksc.2023.1437>
- Athapaththu, J. C., and D. Kulathunga. 2018. "Factors Affecting Online Purchase Intention: Effects of Technology and Social Commerce." *International Business Research* 11(10): 111
- Azhar, M., S. Nafees, and S. Hamid. 2023. "Understanding Post-Pandemic Travel Intention Toward Rural Destinations by Expanding the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)." *Future Business Journal* 9(1): 1–17.

- Badilla, M. C., and C. F. Castro. 2023. "Travel Vlogging and Its Role in Destination Marketing." In *Routledge Handbook of Trends and Issues in Tourism Sustainability, Planning and Development, Management, and Technology*, 313–25. England, UK: Routledge.
- Bhatti, M. A., and W. A. Alawad. 2023. "Online Reviews and Brand Reputation Management in the Digital Landscape: Exploring Moderating Role of Product Type." *Transnational Marketing Journal* 11(2): 40–59.
- Biswas, A. 2023. "Reconnoitering Enablers of Travelers' Online Hotel Booking Intention: Moderation of Service Affordability and Perceived Pandemic Risk." *International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management* 40(2): 542–65. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJQRM-10-2021-0363>
- Blasco-Arcas, L., B. I. Hernandez-Ortega, and J. Jimenez-Martinez. 2016. "Engagement Platforms: The Role of Emotions in Fostering Customer Engagement and Brand Image in Interactive Media." *Journal of Service Theory and Practice* 26(5): 559–89.
- Chaihanchanchai, P., S. Anantachart, and N. Ruangthanakorn. 2024. "Unlocking the Persuasive Power of Virtual Influencer on Brand Trust and Purchase Intention: A Parallel Mediation of Source Credibility." *Journal of Marketing Communications*. 11: 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527266.2023.2301390>
- Chakraborty, U., and S. K. Biswal. 2020. "Impact of Online Reviews on Consumer's Hotel Booking Intentions: Does Brand Image Mediate." *Journal of Promotion Management* 26(7): 943–63.
- Chandrakala, C. B., P. Somarajan, S. Jadhav, and A. Kapoor. 2024. "Empowering Safety-Conscious Women Travelers: Examining the Benefits of Electronic Word of Mouth and Mobile Travel Assistant." *International Journal of Interactive Mobile Technologies* 18(5): 112–34.
- Cho, S., P. Pekgün, R. Janakiraman, and J. Wang. 2024. "The Competitive Effects of Online Reviews on Hotel Demand." *Journal of Marketing* 88(2): 40–60. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00222429231191449>
- Cohen, J. 2013. *Statistical Power Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences*. (2nd ed.). England, UK: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203771587>
- Crespo, Á. H., I. R. del Bosque, and M. M. G. de los Salmones Sánchez. 2009. "The Influence of Perceived Risk on Internet Shopping Behavior: A Multidimensional Perspective." *Journal of Risk Research* 12(2): 259–77. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13669870802497744>
- Dalimunthe, F. I. 2021. "Behavior Analysis of Brand Loyalists and Brand Switcher in 5-Star Accommodation Services in Medan City." *Society* 9(1): 54–71.
- Duverger, P. 2013. "Curvilinear Effects of User-Generated Content on Hotels' Market Share: A Dynamic Panel-Data Analysis." *Journal of Travel Research* 52(4): 465–78.
- Elseidi, R. I., and D. El-Baz. 2016. "Electronic Word of Mouth Effects on Consumers' Brand Attitudes, Brand Image and Purchase Intention: An Empirical Study in Egypt." *The Business & Management Review* 7(5): 268.
- Faul, F., E. Erdfelder, A. Buchner, and A. G. Lang. 2009. "Statistical Power Analyses Using G*Power 3.1: Tests for Correlation and Regression Analyses." *Behavior Research Methods* 41(4): 1149–60. <https://doi.org/10.3758/BRM.41.4.1149>
- Fornell, C., and D. F. Larcker. 1981. "Structural Equation Models With Unobservable Variables and Measurement Error: Algebra and Statistics." *Journal of Marketing Research* 18(3): 382–88. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002224378101800313>
- Garbarino, E., and M. Strahilevitz. 2004. "Gender Differences in the Perceived Risk of Buying Online and the Effects of Receiving a Site Recommendation." *Journal of Business Research* 57(7): 768–75.
- Garg, A., and J. Kumar. 2017. "The Impact of Risk Perception and Factors on Tourists Decision Making for Choosing the Destination Uttarakhand/India." *Ottoman Journal of Tourism and Management Research* 2(2): 144–60.
- Garg, P., and A. Pandey. 2020. "Examining Moderating Role of Personal Identifying Information in Travel Related Decisions." *International Journal of Tourism Cities* 6(3): 621–38. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJTC-06-2019-0083>
- Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security. 2023. *Women Peace and Security Index*. Washington, D.C.: GIWPS. <https://giwps.georgetown.edu/country/india/>
- Guoyin, J., F. Liu, W. Liu, S. Liu, Y. Chen, and D. Xu. 2021. "Effects of Information Quality on Information Adoption on Social Media Review Platforms: Moderating Role of Perceived Risk." *Data Science and Management* 1(1): 13–22. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dsm.2021.02.004>
- Hair, J. F. Jr, G. T. M. Hult, C. M. Ringle, and M. Sarstedt. 2021. *A Primer on Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage publications.
- Handoyo, S. 2024. "Purchasing in the Digital Age: A Meta-Analytical Perspective on Trust, Risk, Security, and E-WOM in E-Commerce." *Heliyon* 10(8): e29714. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e29714>
- Henseler, J., C. M. Ringle, and M. Sarstedt. 2015. "A New Criterion for Assessing Discriminant Validity in Variance-Based Structural Equation Modeling." *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* 43(1): 115–35. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-014-0403-8>
- Hollebeek, L. 2011. "Exploring Customer Brand Engagement: Definition and Themes." *Journal of Strategic Marketing* 19(7): 555–73.
- Hollebeek, L. D., M. S. Glynn, and R. J. Brodie. 2014. "Consumer Brand Engagement in Social Media: Conceptualization, Scale Development and Validation." *Journal of Interactive Marketing* 28(2): 149–65.
- Hu, X. S., and Y. Yang. 2020. "Determinants of Consumers' Choices in Hotel Online Searches: A Comparison of Consideration and Booking Stages." *International Journal of Hospitality Management* 86: 102370.

- Hu, Y., and H. J. Kim. 2018. "Positive and Negative eWOM Motivations and Hotel Customers' eWOM Behavior: Does Personality Matter?" *International Journal of Hospitality Management* 75: 27–37. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2018.03.004>
- Hussain, K., and J. Kumar. 2015. "Destination Perception and Loyalty: Exploring the Difference Between Local and Foreign Tourists." *Journal of Tourism* 16(2): 27–42.
- Japutra, A., S. M. C. Loureiro, S. Molinillo, and H. Primanti. 2023. "Influence of Individual and Social Values on Customer Engagement in Luxury Thermal Spa Hotels: The Mediating Roles of Perceived Justice and Brand Experience." *Tourism and Hospitality Research* 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14673584231188847>
- Karagöz, D., C. Işık, T. Dogru, and L. Zhang. 2021. "Solo Female Travel Risks, Anxiety and Travel Intentions: Examining the Moderating Role of Online Psychological-Social Support." *Current Issues in Tourism* 24(11): 1595–612.
- Keller, K. L., and D. R. Lehmann. 2006. "Brands and Branding: Research Findings and Future Priorities." *Marketing Science* 25(6): 740–59.
- Kock, N. 2017. "Common Method Bias: A Full Collinearity Assessment Method for PLS-SEM." In *Partial Least Squares Path Modeling*, 245–57. Cham: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-64069-3_11
- Kour, P., and P. S. Manhas. 2018. "Analysis of Travel Constraints Among Indian Women Travelling Alone Across Himalayan Destinations." *Avahan: A Journal on Hospitality and Tourism* 6(1): 38–45.
- Kudeshia, C., and A. Kumar. 2017. "Social E-WoM: Does It Affect the Brand Attitude and Purchase Intention of Brands." *Management Research Review* 40(3): 310–30.
- Kumar, J., A. Garg, and G. Sangaran. 2017. "Consumer Preferences for Hotel Brand and Brand Sustainability: Luxury Hotels in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia." *Journal on Tourism & Sustainability* 1(1): 15–29.
- Kumari, P., and R. Sangeetha. 2022. "How Does Electronic Word of Mouth Impact Green Hotel Booking Intention." *Services Marketing Quarterly* 43(2): 146–65.
- Labrecque, L. I., V. M. Patrick, and G. R. Milne. 2013. "The Marketers' Prismatic Palette: A Review of Color Research and Future Directions." *Psychology & Marketing* 30(2): 187–202.
- Ladhari, R., and M. Michaud. 2015. "E-WOM Effects on Hotel Booking Intentions, Attitudes, Trust, and Website Perceptions." *International Journal of Hospitality Management* 46: 36–45. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2015.01.010>
- Liao, S. H., D. C. Hu, Y. C. Chung, and A. P. Huang. 2021. "Risk and Opportunity for Online Purchase Intention—A Moderated Mediation Model Investigation." *Telematics and Informatics* 62: 101621.
- Lien, C. H., M. J. Wen, L. C. Huang, and K. L. Wu. 2015. "Online Hotel Booking: The Effects of Brand Image, Price, Trust and Value on Purchase Intentions." *Asia Pacific Management Review* 20(4): 210–18.
- Lin, P. J., E. Jones, and S. Westwood. 2009. "Perceived Risk and Risk-Relievers in Online Travel Purchase Intentions." *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management* 18(8): 782–810. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19368620903235803>
- Mathews, S., C. Prentice, A. Tsou, C. Weeks, L. Tam, and E. Luck. 2022. "Managing E-WoM for Hotel Performance." *Journal of Global Scholars of Marketing Science* 32(3): 331–50.
- Mehrabian, A., and J. A. Russell. 1974. "The Basic Emotional Impact of Environments." *Perceptual and Motor Skills* 38(1): 283–301. <https://doi.org/10.2466/pms.1974.38.1.283>
- Mirzai, A., Y. S. Fard, and A. Slambolchi. 2016. "The Branding: A Study of Brand Image, Brand Associations and Reputation." *Advanced Social Humanities and Management* 3(1): 52–64.
- Nguyen, D. T. A., and L. Hsu. 2022. "Exploring Visit Intention to India Among Southeast Asian Solo Female Travelers." *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management* 25: 100725.
- Park, S., and I. P. Tussyadiah. 2017. "Multidimensional Facets of Perceived Risk in Mobile Travel Booking." *Journal of Travel Research* 56(7): 854–67.
- Podsakoff, P. M., S. B. MacKenzie, J. Y. Lee, and N. P. Podsakoff. 2003. "Common Method Biases in Behavioral Research: A Critical Review of the Literature and Recommended Remedies." *Journal of Applied Psychology* 88(5): 879–903. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.88.5.879>
- Rather, R. A., T. Rasul, H. Khan, and I. Khan. 2024. "Unveiling the Dynamics Between Consumer Brand Engagement, Experience, and Relationship Quality Towards Luxury Hotel Brands: Moderating Investigation of Brand Reputation." *International Journal of Hospitality Management* 116: 103572. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2023.103572>
- Saigal, T., A. K. Vaish, and N. V. M. Rao. 2023. "Gender Gap in Travel Behaviour and Public Opinion on Proposed Policy Measures: Evidence From India." *International Social Science Journal* 73(247): 51–71.
- Salah, M. H. A., A. H. Abdou, T. H. Hassan, M. A. M. M. El-Amin, A. B. A. Kegour, H. M. M. Alboray, A. S. D. Mohamed, H. S. A. Mohamed Ali, and E. F. A. Mohammed. 2023. "Power of E-WoM and Its Antecedents in Driving Customers' Intention to Revisit: An Empirical Investigation on Five-Star Eco-Friendly Hotels in Saudi Arabia." *Sustainability* 15(12): 9270.
- Sánchez-Franco, M. J., and M. A. D. Santos. 2021. "Exploring Gender-Based Influences on Key Features of Airbnb Accommodations." *Economic Research-Ekonomska Istraživanja*, 34(1): 2484–505.
- San-Martín, S., N. Jiménez, and F. Liébana-Cabanillas. 2020. "Tourism Value vs Barriers to Booking Trips Online." *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services* 53: 101957. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2019.101957>
- Sedgwick, P. 2010. "Independent Samples T Test." *BMJ. British Medical Journal* 340: c2673. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.c2673>
- Sekhon, T., B. Bickart, R. Trudel, and S. Fournier. 2015. "Being a Likable Braggart: How Consumers Use Brand Mentions for Self-Presentation on Social Media." In *Consumer Psychology in a Social Media World*, 23–39. England, UK: Routledge.

- Serra-Cantalops, A., J. Ramón Cardona, and F. Salvi. 2020. "Antecedents of Positive E-WoM in Hotels. Exploring the Relative Role of Satisfaction, Quality and Positive Emotional Experiences." *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* 32(11): 3457–77.
- Sharipudin, M. N. S., M. L. Cheung, M. J. De Oliveira, and A. Solyom. 2023. "The Role of Post-Stay Evaluation on E-WoM and Hotel Revisit Intention Among Gen Y." *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research* 47(1): 57–83.
- Shukla, A., and A. Mishra. 2023. "Role of Review Length, Review Valence and Review Credibility on Consumer's Online Hotel Booking Intention." *FIIB Business Review* 12(4): 403–14.
- Singh, K., and R. Sharma. 2023. "Perceptions, Motivations and Revisit Intentions: A Narrative Study of Solo Married Women Traveller in Delhi NCR, India." *International Journal of Tourism Policy* 13(5): 481–98. <https://doi.org/10.1504/ijtp.2023.133202>
- Solo Female Travelers. 2022. *Solo Female Travel Trends & Statistics*. Bali: Solo Female Travelers. <https://www.solofemaletravelers.club/solo-female-travel-stats/>
- Srivastava, M., and S. Sivaramakrishnan. 2021. "The Impact of E-WoM on Consumer Brand Engagement." *Marketing Intelligence & Planning* 39(3): 469–84. <https://doi.org/10.1108/MIP-06-2020-0263>
- Srivastava, M., S. Abhishek, and N. Pandey. 2023. "Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WoM) and Customer Brand Engagement (CBE): Do They Really Go Hand-in-Hand." *Electronic Commerce Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10660-023-09743-z>
- The Economic Times. 2024. "Govt Decides to Continue Women Safety Scheme Till 2025–26." *The Economic Times*, February 23, 2024. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/govt-decides-to-continue-women-safety-scheme-till-2025-26/articleshow/107905080.cms?from=mdr>
- Thomas, T. K., and P. Mura. 2019. "The 'Normality of Unsafety'-Foreign Solo Female Travellers in India." *Tourism Recreation Research* 44(1): 33–40.
- Touni, R., W. G. Kim, K. Haldorai, and A. Rady. 2022. "Customer Engagement and Hotel Booking Intention: The Mediating and Moderating Roles of Customer-Perceived Value and Brand Reputation." *International Journal of Hospitality Management* 104: 103246.
- UN Women. 2013. *UN Women Supported Survey in Delhi Shows 95 Per Cent of Women and Girls Feel Unsafe in Public Spaces*. New York, United States: UN Women—Headquarters. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2013/2/un-women-supported-survey-in-delhi>
- Vayghan, S., D. Baloglu, and S. Baloglu. 2023. "The Impact of Utilitarian, Social and Hedonic Values on Hotel Booking Mobile App Engagement and Loyalty: A Comparison of Generational Cohorts." *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights* 6(5): 1990–2011.
- Wang, P., and B. McCarthy. 2023. "Beyond Positive and Negative eWOM: The Role of Trust Propensity and Individuation in Shaping Consumers' Perception of Brand Image." *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration* 24(3): 387–414. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15256480.2021.1988881>
- Wen, J., Z. Lin, X. Liu, S. H. Xiao, and Y. Li. 2021. "The Interaction Effects of Online Reviews, Brand, and Price on Consumer Hotel Booking Decision Making." *Journal of Travel Research* 60(4): 846–59.
- Wilson, E., and D. E. Little. 2008. "The Solo Female Travel Experience: Exploring the 'Geography of Women's Fear.'" *Current Issues in Tourism* 11(2): 167–86.
- Yang, C., Y. Sun, N. Wang, and X. L. Shen. 2023. "Disentangling the Antecedents of Rational Versus Emotional Negative Electronic Word of Mouth on a Peer-to-Peer Accommodation Platform." *Internet Research*, 34(2): 563–85.
- Yang, E. C. L. 2021. "What Motivates and Hinders People From Travelling Alone? A Study of Solo and Non-Solo Travellers." *Current Issues in Tourism* 24(17): 2458–71.
- Zhu, L., H. Li, F. K. Wang, W. He, and Z. Tian. 2020. "How Online Reviews Affect Purchase Intention: A New Model Based on the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Framework." *Aslib Journal of Information Management* 72(4): 463–88. <https://doi.org/10.1108/AJIM-11-2019-0308>

How to cite this article: Islam, M. T., U. Pandey, and J. Kumar. 2024. "Electronic Word-of-Mouth and Indian Solo Female Travellers' Hotel Booking Intention: Moderating Role of Perceived Risk." *International Social Science Journal* 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1111/issj.12529>