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PGRC – 051

Investigating Attitude and Behavioral Intentions among Senior Tourists toward Smart Hotels in Mainland China

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Taylor's University, Malaysia

After the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, the significance of smart technologies is rising (Jiang and Wen, 2020), hotel operators and academics are focusing more on the potential advantages of smart technologies in hotel management practices (Zabin, 2019), which can be referred as "smart hotel". Wu and Cheng (2018) coined the term "smart hotels" to describe the development of a novel business model that incorporates smart technologies or smart devices within the hotel industry. Due to the changing business model of the hotel industry, it would be beneficial to investigate how customers perceive smart hotels in the long run.

There are many studies that have focused on the behavior intention of AI and robotics in the hospitality industry. However, the impact of smart hotel on tourists willingness has been underexplored. Although few past studies have indeed investigated customer attitude towards smart hotel on demographically diverse respondents, the outcome of senior tourists still remain unknown. Since the global population is ageing, and the proportion of vacation expenditure accounted for by senior tourists is rising (Sangpikul, 2008). In particular, baby boomers (those born between 1946 and 1964) who have been found to have different attitudes and lifestyles compared to previous generations of retirees, are increasingly drawn to partake in a variety of tourism experiences (Patterson and Balderas, 2020). Besides, China hosts the world's largest senior population, thus, given the importance of senior tourists to the contemporary hospitality industry, further research on the behavioral intentions of smart hotel among seniors is required.

Therefore, the current research is going to apply a quantitative approach to test the experiential factors among seniors toward the attitude of smart hotels. The questionnaire will contain four distinct sections. The first section will consist of questions related to the demographic profile of respondents, while the second, third and last sections will devote to the constructs of the proposed framework. Each construct will be measured by scales that validated by prior research. More specifically, there will be eight reflective constructs: perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, perceived security, perceived convenience, perceived compatibility, perceived entertainment, attitude toward smart hotels and intentions to stay. The four-item scale of perceived usefulness and ease of use will be adapted from Venkatesh and Davis (2000) and Yang et al., (2021). Perceived security will be modified from Kim et al., (2021) and Chen et al., (2021) with four measurement scales. Perceived convenience will be derived from Kim and Han (2020) with five items. Perceived compatibility will be adapted from Taylors and Todd (1995) and Han et al., (2021) with five items. Perceived entertainment will take from the three-item scales proposed by Tussyadiah et al., (2018) and Kim et al., (2021). Attitude scale will be modified from Han et al., (2021) , while intention to stay will be derived from Yang et al., (2021), both with three items. All of the scales in this study will choose 7-point Likert scales, ranging from '1= strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree'. Measurement items will be created in English and translate into Mandarin

using the back-to-back translation technique for greater consistency (Brislin, 1970). Besides, pilot study will be conducted before the formal data collection in order to finalize the questionnaire.

The target respondents will be senior tourists from mainland China. To qualify for participation in this study, participants will be selected based on three judgement criteria: (1) Over 50 years old (including 50); (2) had travelled during the past five years; (3) had stayed in hotels during their trips. Self-administrated questionnaires will be created on Wjx. cn (https://www.wjx.cn/), and will be distributed through both WeChat and online survey platform. The partial least squares-structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) will be used to analyze the data since the current study is prediction-oriented research which aim to predict future behavioral intentions of senior tourists to visit and stay in a smart hotel (Hair et al., 2017).

By examining the effects of usefulness, ease of use, security, convenience, compatibility, and
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entertainment on attitude and behavioural intention of senior tourists in the context of smart hotels, this research will contribute to the sparse literature on smart hotel by extending technology acceptance model, meanwhile, this study will also contribute theoretically to the literatures on senior tourism. In addition, incorporating new constructs such as security, convenience, compatibility and entertainment based on TAM framework, this study provides a novel conceptual framework in relation to the behavioural intentions of senior tourists. Last but not least, this study will provide important insights for hotel management regarding to the impact factors that senior tourists value the most toward smart hotel.

Keywords: senior tourists, smart hotel, behavioural intentions, hotel industry, China

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