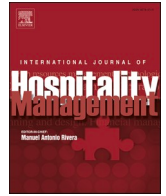




Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

International Journal of Hospitality Management

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/ijhm

Customer word-of-mouth for generative AI: Innovation and adoption in hospitality and tourism

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Generative AI
Word-of-mouth (WOM)
Five-state customer adoption
Innovation
Hospitality and tourism

ABSTRACT

Generative artificial intelligence (AI), such as ChatGPT, is increasingly utilized to facilitate decision-making processes in various aspects of our lives, including travel activities. Despite its growing adoption in the travel service industry, a research gap focusing on the innovation characteristics of ChatGPT, customer adoption, and word-of-mouth (WOM) remains. By utilizing stringent methodologies through variable- and case-based approaches, this study explores the influence of ChatGPT innovation characteristics and customer adoption factors in inducing WOM. The formal set-theoretic approach further explores the intersections between the empirical model, theory, and outcome (WOM). The results provide novel insights into customer WOM for generative AI, examining whether innovation attributes, such as relative benefits, complexity and compatibility, and/or states of customer adoption factors – particularly in terms of cognitive, affective, and behavioral response individually or in combination – contribute to WOM, thereby leading to theoretical and practical implications in the hospitality and tourism industry.

1. Introduction

The Fourth Industrial Revolution is characterized by the integration of digital technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI) tools, chatbots, and robotics, into the fabric of everyday life (Huang et al., 2024; Tusyadiah, 2020). This era represents a transformative period where the mechanisms for creating and distributing innovation are evolving, impacting not only the economy but also the daily experiences and social interactions of individuals (Gursoy et al., 2023). Similar to other industries, the adoption of AI technologies in the travel sector has seen increasing popularity. Specifically, ChatGPT, a generative AI platform, assists travelers in navigating their travel decisions through innovative services, such as an always-on assistant, which provides tailor-made information to meet individual travel demands (Ali et al., 2023; Kim

et al., 2023a). By February 2024, ChatGPT had surpassed the milestone of 180 million users, establishing itself as the quickest to gain popularity among all consumer applications ever introduced (Duarte, 2024). By leveraging this innovative technology, the travel industry can significantly reduce customer service expenses, enhancing efficiency and customer engagement.

While AI technologies bring progress and advancement, they also encounter obstacles that can lead to failures in the innovation process (Rather, 2024; Shin and Perdue, 2022). For example, a challenge resulting from the adoption of generative AI, such as ChatGPT, may include customer trust and ethical usage of private and public databases (Dwivedi et al., 2024). As Kim et al. (2022) mentioned, one significant factor that contributes to innovation failures is the wrong prediction of consumer adoption patterns and a failure to recognize the diverse needs

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2024.104070>

Received 1 April 2024; Received in revised form 1 September 2024; Accepted 12 November 2024

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