



FACTORS INFLUENCING THE INTENTION OF HIGH-INCOME TOURISTS FROM
GUANGZHOU TO STAY IN FIVE-STAR HOTELS IN HONG KONG

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Abstract

This study explores five major elements that affect Guangzhou's wealthy tourists' decision to stay in Hong Kong's five-star hotels. Service quality, perceived price, brand image, guest experience, and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) are the five key components. Both quantitative and qualitative methodologies were used in the study. Five hundred seven people were given a questionnaire, and focus groups were conducted to obtain more in-depth information. Reliability tests, factor analysis, regression analysis, and correlation were used in the analysis of the data using SPSS to ascertain the links between the variables. The findings indicated that visitors' intentions to remain in Hong Kong's five-star hotels are most positively influenced by brand image and guest experience. Perceived cost and eWOM are also significant factors. When tourists believe the experience is memorable, reasonably priced, and consistent with the hotel's positive reputation, they are more inclined to make a reservation. The findings highlight the need for hotels to focus on quality service, emotional connection, and digital reputation to attract overnight guests. Outcomes provide hotel managements with guidance on how to enhance service quality, strengthen brand image, and design unique guest experiences that motivate tourists to stay overnight.

Keywords – Five-star hotels, Guangzhou tourists, service quality, brand image, perceived price, guest experience, eWOM, intention to stay.

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
SQ	Service Quality
BI	Brand Image
PP	Perceived Price
EXP	Experience
eWOM	Electronic Word of Mouth
INT	Intention to Stay (in a Five-Star Hotel)
PR	Perceived Risk
T	Trust
IQ	Information Quality
EB	Economic Benefits
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (Measure of Sampling Adequacy)
VIF	Variance Inflation Factor
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TPB	Theory of Planned Behavior
Df	Degrees of Freedom
MLR	Multiple Linear Regression
SLR	Simple Linear Regression

Chapter 1: Introduction

Tourism and hospitality are two interdependent industries. Any increase in international tourists to a place tends to boost demand in the hospitality sector, as hotels fill up. In Southeast Asia, Hong Kong ranks among the most popular destinations. However, the hospitality industry is affected in the long run by the growing number of day visitors, a trend that has become more common after the pandemic. This study seeks to investigate and comprehend the impact of service quality, brand image, perceived pricing, experience, and electronic word of mouth (eWOM) on high-income tourists from Guangzhou's intention to stay in five-star hotels in Hong Kong. This chapter describes the planned research's context, reasoning, objectives, aim, layout, and potential limitations.

1.1 Research Background

Hong Kong is a top tourism destination in the Asia-Pacific region. The Hong Kong Tourism Board estimates that incoming arrivals increased from 13.6 million to 55.9 million between 2000 and 2019 (Tai et al., 2022). During the same time span, tourism revenue increased from \$7.9 billion to \$32.8 billion. In Hong Kong, mainland Chinese visitors accounted for 78% of all sportified visitor visits (Tai et al., 2022). As a result, Hong Kong's tourism industry expanded until the COVID-19 epidemic.

The COVID-19 epidemic had an impact on Hong Kong's tourism economy, as it did on other popular tourist locations. The pandemic affected the hotel industry worldwide, and Hong Kong was no exception. The number of international visitors decreased by over 90% in 2021 compared to 2020, and the number of international visitors staying dropped by 93.4% to 89,190 -93.4% (Knight Frank, 2022). These effects were not limited to Hong Kong. Thailand, another popular tourist destination, also experienced nearly the same results. In 2019, prior to the pandemic, Thailand welcomed up to 40 million visitors (Saxon, Sodprasert and Sucharitakul, 2021). By September of 2021, the volume of visitors to the country had fallen as much as 95%, and hotels were only 9% full (Saxon, Sodprasert and Sucharitakul, 2021). The government was implementing public measures directly related to the drastic drop in international arrivals, in addition to travel restrictions and border closures.

Despite early signs of a post-pandemic recovery, expectations to bring back quotas were not realized. While borders opened in early 2023 in Hong Kong, there were only 34 million arrivals

that year – well below the pre-2018 levels of more than 65 million, as illustrated in Figure 1 (Colliers, 2024). Chinese travelers were once a critical source of overnight stays. However, now they prefer day trips, which is disadvantageous for five-star hotels whose business model depends on overnight guests. In 2023, the average hotel occupancy rate rose to 76% and the average daily rate increased to HKD 2,347, up 37.5% year-to-date. However, it still fell short of pre-pandemic levels, suggesting an unbalanced recovery (Knight Frank, 2022). To be in sync with reality in Hong Kong, other short-stay tourist destinations, such as Thailand, experienced average hotel occupancy rates of 76% during the same period.

The day-tripper phenomenon not only shortchanges room revenue but also the services associated with the room, prompting luxury hotels to rethink their value proposition. As the name describes, the day-trip guests are guests who only spend a few hours in the destination intended for travel, where they do not follow through and spend the night (Nicolau, Casado-Díaz and Navarro-Ruiz, 2023). In research on this segment of consumers, it is often combined.

Even though day-trippers can influence the local economy by spending money, they can also reduce the full potential and financial potential of the hotel industry due to occupancy problems, as not only are day-trippers day-trippers, but they also go on day trips (Nicolau, Casado-Díaz and Navarro-Ruiz, 2023).

Besides day-trippers, other concerns raised by the luxury hotels must be addressed. Increased prices and labor crunches have had a toll on profitability and service (Statista, 2024). Besides that, customer expectations are changing; customers now want contactless services, a customized experience, and a convenient experience through technology, which is transforming the competitive environment. To attract and retain high-value guests, hotels are investing in innovative technology (e.g., AI concierge services and mobile check-in) and immersive virtual experiences.

The Greater Bay Area integration plan, aimed at increasing connectivity and strengthening economic collaboration among Hong Kong, Macau, and nine cities in Guangdong, brings both opportunities and challenges. The enhanced transportation infrastructure (e.g., high-speed rail and the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau bridge) for easier border crossings is increasing intra-regional competitive rivalry amongst regional destinations.

Five-star hotels in Hong Kong need to know what high-income GBA tourists expect and the reasons they are motivated, as they have the means and expectations to choose from many luxury options. These trends suggest that the motivations of high-income Greater Bay Area tourists for

choosing to spend the night in Hong Kong warrant further investigation. The understanding derived from this study can contribute to sustainable recovery by informing market-driven strategies for marketing, service innovation, and guest experience enhancement (Maingi, Serrem and Kyalo, 2025)

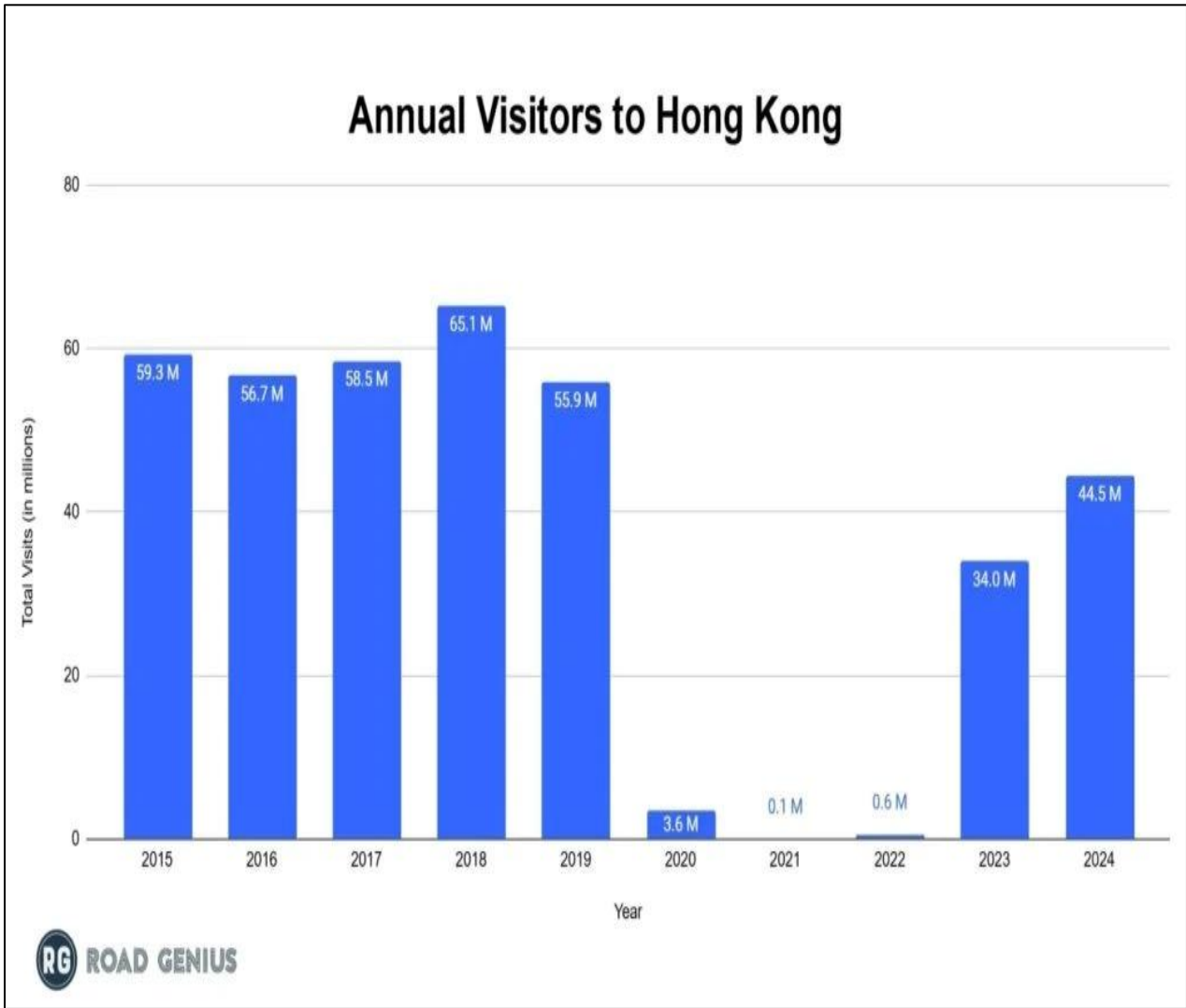


Figure 1: The Number of Tourists Staying in Hotels Until 2024

Accessed from Hong Kong Tourism Statistics (Road Genius, 2025).

Figure 1 above shows the number of visitors to Hong Kong between 2018 and 2024. The period 2020-2022 is low considering the adverse implications of the pandemic (Li et al., 2025). The

increase witnessed between 2022 and 2023 reflects the post-pandemic surge driven by border openings and the easing of public health measures put in place at the height of the pandemic (Road Genius, 2023). With 604,000 visitors in 2022 and 33.9 million in 2023, Hong Kong tourism grew. Arrivals increased by 31% to 44.5 million in 2024 compared with 2023, but were still 20.4% below 2019 levels, as shown in Figure 1. The rise is expected to continue in 2025, as evidenced by the mid-term numbers (Trading Economics, 2024). Also, as of 2024, Hong Kong recorded 44.5 million visitors, 85% occupancy, and an ADR of HKD 1,332. 2025 is encouraging, although it requires more spending by tourists (Colliers, 2025)

1.2 Research Motivation

This understanding of changes in tourist behavior following the pandemic is critical to the rehabilitation and growth of Hong Kong's five-star hotels. The toughest year was 2021, with a further reduction to 91,000 visitors (Road Genius, 2023). Visitors increased to 44.5 million in 2024, up 31 per cent from 2023, and accounted for two-thirds of the high of 65 million in 2018. This market should be segmented by visitor behavior, particularly those who take the opportunity to stay overnight at these hotels. Hong Kong received 21 million tourists in the first half of 2021 (The Standard, 2024).

Half of the visitors were overnight visitors (The Standard, 2024). By Q3 2024, the number of visitors spending overnight will total 16.2 million, of whom about 4,950 will be visiting the city (Colliers, 2024). The trend suggests that this has led many more visitors to opt for day visits to the hotel rather than night stays, resulting in decreased occupancy and revenue. This tendency poses a specific concern for luxury hotels, which earn their most significant income from guests, not only through room bookings but also through high-margin services such as dining, spas, and event organizing.

Another factor that motivated this study is the limited empirical and scholarly research on the economic or financial effects of tourists visiting a day versus staying overnight in a hotel. As well, there is a chronic shortage of studies evaluating the shift from overnight to day visitors post-pandemic. All of this said, case studies from around the world have revealed a negative trend that threatens the hospitality industry. In 2023, London welcomed 174.5 million day visitors and 18.3 million overnight visitors (Penwill, 2025). While this appears to be symptomatic of a global problem, there is nevertheless a need to isolate the contextual factors relevant to Hong Kong. The findings may be relevant to the development of tailor-made solutions.

This study focuses on high-income tourists from Guangzhou, one of the most populous and economically dynamic cities in the Greater Bay Area. These individuals typically have the financial means to be able to afford five-star hotel rooms costing HKD 3,000 or more a night while traveling for leisure, business, or luxury experiences. However, despite their spending power, many are choosing alternative accommodation or shorter visits, raising questions about what influences their decision-making.

Several challenges may be contributing to this shift. Service quality has been impacted by labor shortages, rising operational costs, and inconsistent guest experiences (Mohebifar et al., 2016). Additionally, the rise of digital platforms and peer-to-peer lodging options has increased competition, offering high-income travelers more choices with greater flexibility. Concerns about hygiene, convenience, and personalization have also become more prominent in the post-COVID era, reshaping expectations of what a luxury stay should offer.

To be competitive, five-star hotels must identify and respond to the key factors influencing overnight stay decisions. These factors include service quality, perceived value, brand image, experience, and electronic word-of-mouth. By analyzing the changing tastes of affluent Guangzhou tourists in a post-COVID setting, this study fills that gap and advances academic research while enhancing the body of knowledge on tourism and hospitality management and providing useful information for hotel owners and marketers.

1.3 Research Questions

Despite the apparent recovery in the luxury hotel industry in Hong Kong, obstacles remain. The quality of service attracts customer satisfaction and loyalty, but faces pressure as operational, budgetary, and labor pressures increase and guest demands change (Zhao, Xu and Wang, 2018). Most hotels do not offer personalized service and will always provide a high standard of service to affluent travelers. Also, the increasing popularity of short-distance journeys instead of long-term stays has decreased demand for high-standard accommodation, including services such as dining, spas, and gyms. Chinese tourists now prefer day trips or staying overnight in nearby Shenzhen because hotels in Hong Kong are too expensive (Liu, Ge and Ren, 2021).

A study by Jiang et al. (2021) found that many Chinese tourists perceive service quality in Hong Kong hotels as declining and hotel prices as unreasonably high, leading some to prefer staying overnight in Shenzhen instead, where they find better value for money and more positive

experiences. The strong Hong Kong dollar and high living costs make the city less attractive than regional alternatives (He, Shao and Li, 2024).

Thus, the study's research question is: What factors affect Guangzhou's wealthy tourists' desire to spend the night at Hong Kong's five-star hotels?

1.4 Research Aim

To gauge Guangzhou visitors' propensity to stay in five-star hotels in Hong Kong by looking at a number of important variables, including experience, perceived cost, brand image, service quality, and electronic word-of-mouth.

1.5 Research Objectives

Due to COVID-19, which disrupted international travel, transformed consumer habits, and reshaped the competitive landscape, Hong Kong's hotel industry has seen a significant change. The industry is finding it challenging to attract affluent GBA tourists. The bleak reality in Hong Kong is addressed here. Tourists in Guangzhou are increasingly opting for day trips rather than staying over. This is causing the hotels to record dwindling penetration/occupancy rates and reduced revenues on their up-market dining, wellness, and guest experience services. Alterations in behavior also pose a strategic challenge for hotel operators: they must examine their value proposition and adjust their offerings to meet the new needs of affluent travelers (Kandampully and Hu, 2007). It is also essential to understand why they travel, particularly why they stay overnight, since this will help you market and improve your services and remain relevant in the post-COVID-19 world.

The study will examine the drivers of high-income Guangzhou tourists' intention to stay at five-star hotels in Hong Kong, with particular attention to the impact noted above. In so doing, it adds to the hospitality industry literature and offers implications for industry practitioners.

The following are the research objectives:

- I. To identify the major factors that influence tourists' intention to stay in five-star hotels in Hong Kong.
- II. To develop a research model that includes the identified elements that influence tourists' intentions to stay in five-star hotels in Hong Kong.
- III. To employ the triangulation method in primary research.

- IV. To give strategic recommendations for five-star hotels to enhance the intention to stay among high-income guests, insights from primary data on service quality, perceived price, brand image, guest experience, and electronic word of mouth were used. They will support the implementation of hotel stakeholders' initiatives to enhance competitiveness within the luxury hospitality market.

1.6 Research Direction

Hong Kong's declining number of night visitors may negatively impact the hospitality industry's economic viability. Given the impact of COVID-19, the hospitality industry in Hong Kong should be recovering. However, as people's behavior changes, it is necessary to examine the reasons behind these changes so that actions can be taken to sustain the sector. By studying service quality, brand image, perceived price, and customer experience, this research may reveal barriers that prevent customers from seeking night services at restaurants in Hong Kong. The study also targeted high-income tourists from Guangzhou.

The proposal has a well-defined structure. Chapter 2 will present the literature review of this topic. In this case, the key variables will be measured through the eyes of the scholars. To address the research question, the methodology, as described in Chapter 3, employs a mixed-methods design integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches. Figure 2 presents the research structure flowchart. Research begins with the introduction, followed by the literature review. Research methodology is examined in the literature review of the research process. Subsequently, the results are reviewed during the research process. Last but not least, conclusions and recommendations are presented to conclude the process. A horizontal arrow with a blue rounded box representing each stage illustrates the efficiency between stages (start to finish).

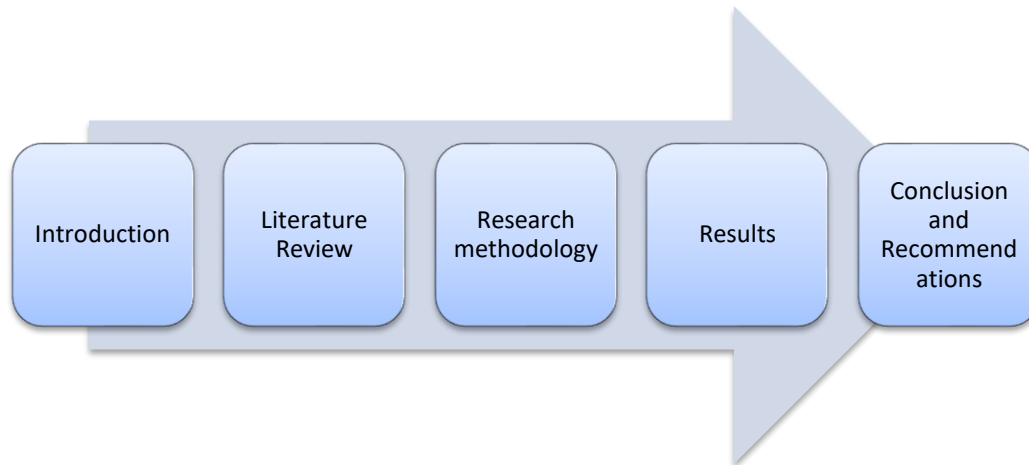


Figure 2: Flowchart of the Research

As illustrated in Appendix A, this dissertation was developed through a structured timeline from May to October 2025.

1.7 Limitations on Research Background

The proposed study has several limitations that may negatively affect the outcomes. The study is based on five specified variables: service quality, brand image, perceived pricing, experience, and eWOM. These characteristics may influence the intention of high-income Guangzhou tourists to stay in five-star Hong Kong hotels. These are the factors developed before the study is undertaken. The results of the mixed-methods study must have identified other reasons or causal factors beyond those identified. Moreover, this fixed framework can ignore other possible determinants that will impact the choice of booking. Therefore, in this method, it might not be easy to identify all the factors that deter high-end Chinese from staying at specific hotels in Hong Kong. Secondly, it is not apparent why e-WOM is the sole identified marketing variable. Though e-WOM is very important as a marketing tool in the hospitality industry, other effective methods can also influence the information flow within facilities. Other possible marketing-related variables that appeal to consumers include digital advertising, social media engagement, and loyalty. With the background, objectives, and research plan established in this chapter, the following chapter will provide a review of the literature and theoretical perspectives that will guide this study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The literature research on the hotel business and the COVID-19 pandemic reveals numerous studies. This study begins with an overview of the current situation in Hong Kong at the international and hotel levels, including disruptions in visitor behavior and changes in hotel occupancy. It will address the factors that influence guests' intention to stay, such as service quality, pricing, brand, experience, and eWOM.

2.1 Overview of Hotel Industry Post-COVID-19

As Colmekcioglu, Dineva and Lu (2022) and Shapoval et al. (2020) demonstrate, the pandemic had a massive influence on the global hotel business, resulting in hotel closures and low occupancy and income. The company's crisis management efforts, such as increasing sanitation, implementing contactless service, and offering flexible booking, have gradually restored consumer confidence and demand (Kim, Li, & So, 2022). Occupancy in Hong Kong has fallen below pre-COVID levels as visitors from the Greater Bay Area take more day trips (Yang, Siu and Huang, 2022). Around the world, recovery is uneven. Luxury hotels are driving innovation to meet changing guest expectations. Guests are still looking for things they prefer. This incorporates wellness, digital engagement, and sustainability. Therefore, hotels must shape these services to regain market share, as noted by Colmekcioglu, Dineva and Lu (2022) and Kim, Li and So (2022). The trends will determine what five-star hotels in Hong Kong will face in a post-pandemic world.

2.2 Factors Influencing Guests' Intention to Stay in Five-Star Hotels

Several factors influence customers' decisions to stay in five-star hotels. This part investigates the key variables, which include service quality, perceived price, brand image, experience, and electronic word of mouth. These qualities will serve as independent variables for the proposed study.

2.2.1 Intention to stay in a five-star hotel in Hong Kong

2.2.1.1 Definition

In this study, intention to stay refers to a tourist's likelihood or willingness to choose a five-star hotel in Hong Kong during their visit. Intention represents a behavioral tendency and is widely recognized as a strong predictor of purchase decisions (Peña-García et al., 2020).

2.2.1.2 Measurement

A multi-item Likert scale modified to represent the impact of augmented/virtual reality (AR/VR) and cutting-edge technology in hotels will be used to measure intention to remain. On a 5-point scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree), respondents will indicate how much they agree with each of the four assertions (Alam et al., 2024).

2.2.2 Service Quality

Service quality remains an essential factor that influences guests' intentions to stay in a five-star hotel. It describes how well a hotel fulfills or surpasses the expectations of its guests (Al-Ababneh, 2017). The tangibles—facilities and their appearance, reliability—consistent service, responsiveness—quick service, assurance—staff appearances, competence, trust, and empathy—individualized care, are the five aspects that define outstanding customer service. Luxurious hotels frequently charge more for superior service. They frequently rely on product brands with high levels of involvement to do this. A crucial initial step in hotel management is ensuring service dependability. Additionally, studies have shown that opinions about the quality of services have a direct impact on people's inclination to stick around and refer others (Kim, Li, & So, 2022; Llego, 2022). After the pandemic, travelers require reassurance and personalization. Thus, the quality of service must be good.

2.2.2.1. Definition

The subjectivity and intangibility of the concept make it increasingly difficult for researchers to provide a standard description. However, a number of authors have tried to define service quality in the service sector. In general, the provision of exceptional or superior service in comparison to the client's expectations is regarded as service quality (Ramya, Kowsalya and Dharanipriya, 2019). According to Prakash's (2019) alternative definition, service quality is defined as the degree and direction of discrepancy or variance between the customer's expectations and their impression of the service. Other writers have opted to consider service quality from the perspectives of many stakeholders other than the client. For example, Strauss and Schoeman (2022) defined it as the customer's impression of a company establishment's offering and, more crucially, the entire stakeholders' perception of the services being provided. Service quality is the degree of superiority or inferiority of a provider's offerings.

Literature	Key Findings
Al-Ababneh (2017)	• Defines service quality. • Service quality directly affects stay intention.
Pakurár et al. (2019); Crossman (2024)	• Five SERVQUAL dimensions: reliability, responsiveness, empathy, tangibles, and assurance.
Lee et al. (2016)	• Examines service quality as a determinant of customer satisfaction and loyalty in the hotel industry. • Finds that reducing gaps between guest expectations and perceptions enhances satisfaction and return intention. • Measures differences between expected and perceived service quality across five dimensions
Ali et al. (2021)	• High quality increases satisfaction, encourages repeat bookings, and promotes positive referrals.
Kim et al. (2021); Llego et al. (2022)	• Quality shapes guest perceptions and drives recommendation likelihood.

Table 1: Significant Findings from the Preceding Discussion of Service Quality

Sources: From this research

2.2.2.2. Measurement

In this study, service quality will be operationalized as the extent to which hotel staff reliably, promptly, and dependably meet guest needs, as evaluated across aspects such as guest concern, timely service, problem handling, and responsiveness. SERVQUAL captures clients' perceptions and expectations across five primary dimensions: reliability, tangibility, assurance, responsiveness, and empathy (Rolo et al., 2023). This is considered a modified SERQUAL method, as there are only four questions, meaning not all dimensions are represented. The first and the second questions focus on the reliability domain, while the third question interrogates the facility's responsiveness. The fourth question, which asks whether the staff have the guest's best

interests at heart, could be interpreted as testing assurance or empathy. A study established that SERVQUAL showed high reliability (0.908) and validity (Jakupovic et al., 2018). The validity and reliability can be enhanced by defining the questions for the hotel industry, since they can be widely used in other industries, as shown in the survey.

Service quality is generally a subjective, intangible factor that is difficult to measure, but researchers have developed empirical, objective methods to assess it. Along with SERVQUAL, the SERVPERF (service performance) model, developed by Cronin and Taylor (1992), is one of the oldest and most stable approaches to assessing service quality. The quality measurement model comprises 22 questions, divided into five items: reliability, tangibility, assurance, responsiveness, and empathy (Mohebifar et al., 2016). Both measures have been widely adopted in the hospitality industry. One study employed SERVPERF in evaluating the quality of service of a five-star hotel. It was found that the tool worked well, and empathy was the most fundamental variable affecting the customers' summative appraisal of quality (Yilmaz, 2009).

A study conducted by Akbaba (2006) that tested the suitability of SERVQUAL in the hotel sector found that respondents rated the three as the key determinants of service quality, viz., convenience, assurance, and tangibility (Akbaba, 2006). Despite the usefulness of this tool, it was determined that SERVQUAL needed to be customized to reflect the needs of different service segments (Akbaba, 2006). That is the primary difference between the two most common options. SERVPERF, in contrast, is primarily grounded in customer perceptions of service delivery; SERVQUAL is based on the disjuncture that may arise between customer perceptions and pre-service expectations of service provision. Regardless of the tool's usefulness, it was determined that SERVQUAL needed to be modified to better meet the requirements of various service segments (Akbaba, 2006). The main contrast between the two most outstanding approaches is that, as opposed to SERVPERF, where the main center of interest is the perceptions of customers towards service performance, the primary center of interest for SERVQUAL is the gap that might exist between the perceptions of customers and their previous expectations towards service.

In addition to the two primary methodologies of quality measurement, another method was identified during the research: INTQUAL. Caruana and Pitt (1997) explain that INTQUAL defines the international activities that management must address to ensure the quality customers require. Commonly used INTQUAL scales consist of 17 items probing two core dimensions: service quality and service performance (Caruana and Pitt, 1997). Low scores on items indicate where

change should be introduced appropriately. The study was conducted using a 7-point Likert-scale self-administered survey, employing convenience sampling, with 415 Korean and Chinese tourists visiting nature-based attractions on Jeju Island. It then

Literature	Measurement
Cronin & Taylor (1992); Mohebifar et al. (2016); Duc Thanh et al. (2023)	• SERVPERF model. • 22 items, five dimensions. • Focus: service performance perceptions.
Akbaba (2006)	• SERVQUAL in the hotel sector. • Key: convenience, assurance, tangibles. • Needs adaptation by segment.
Duc Thanh et al. (2023)	• SERVQUAL vs. SERVPERF difference. • SERVQUAL: expectation–perception gap. • SERVPERF: actual performance focus.
Caruana & Pitt (1997).	• INTQUAL model. • 17 scale items. • Focus: service quality & performance. • Low scores → change needed.

Table 2 Service Quality Measurements

Sources from this research

2.2.2.3. Hypothesis

The relevance of service quality to booking decision-making in the hotel industry is a widely studied phenomenon. Ali et al. (2021) examined four aspects of service quality (empathy, responsiveness, assurance, and tangible). They discovered that these elements affect customer satisfaction, hence driving demand for hospitality services. Primadi, Susanto and Mahaputra

(2023) note that the level of service a hotel provides is directly proportional to the amount of room occupancy it offers. It is because better service usually relates to good reputation, improved customer experience, responsive customer service, and clear and effective communication. According to Schweiggart et al. (2025), negative destination experiences (ONDEs) can lead tourists to feel anger and betrayal, thereby diminishing their intention to stay at a destination. Nonetheless, this study will examine service quality in depth in relation to customers' well-being. **H1:** Service quality has a considerable beneficial impact on high-income Guangzhou travelers' intentions to stay in five-star hotels in Hong Kong.

2.2.3. Perceived Price

The behavior and satisfaction of hotel guests are primarily influenced by perceived price. Rondan-Cataluña and Rosa-Diaz (2014) believe that the price and value-for-money that customers perceive are stronger variables in segmentation and purchasing decisions than objective price points. It is, therefore, not price but rather the communication of the price. According to Upton and Klieb (2019), luxury hotel guests in Thailand evaluate acceptable prices using sensitivity analysis. They assessed that a hotel guest will pay more for a service offering greater quality and more amenities. Value perception underpins customers' willingness to book. According to Guizzardi, Ballestra and D'Innocenzo (2022), changes in perceptions of price fairness resulting from COVID-19 led to dynamic pricing as guests' expectations and demand were shocked. Ansari, Singh and Singh (2023) also found that varying pricing strategies across booking channels affect how guests perceive service quality and overall satisfaction. Overall, perceived price is at the core of hotel choice, revenue management, and guest loyalty (Ansari, Singh and Singh, 2023; Guizzardi, Ballestra and D'Innocenzo, 2022; Rondan-Cataluña & Rosa-Diaz, 2014; Upton and Klieb, 2019).

2.2.3.1. Definition

The actual price of a commodity may differ from the perceived price. Overall, price is considered an important market mix and a critical component in determining the customers' purchase decisions. It reflects the monetary value of a product or service (Costello et al., 2022; Forde et al., 2023). However, the variable being studied in this proposed study is perceived price. The term perceived pricing refers to customers' beliefs about the monetary value of a product or service. Zeithaml (1988) distinguished between objective pricing, which refers to the real price of the product or service, and perceived price, which includes the encoded cost, that is, the monetary

value perceived by the client. Likewise, Dodds, Monroe and Grewal (1991) viewed price beyond empirical numbers. For them, while price is a monetary value, it depends on customers' evaluations of the good or service's perceived quality and value.

Literature	Key Findings
Rondan-Cataluña & Rosa-Diaz (2012)	Value perception drives booking more than actual price.
Upton & Klieb (2019).	Guests pay more if the quality/amenities are higher.
Guizzardi et al. (2022).	Price fairness shifts with demand shocks (e.g., COVID-19).

Table 3: Significant Findings from the Preceding Discussion of Perceived Price

Sources from this research

2.2.3.2. Measurement

In this study, perceived price will be operationalized as the consumers' evaluation of the monetary value of a hotel's services relative to the benefits received. It captures several aspects, including how reasonable, fair, and worthwhile potential guests consider the costs of the services and the quality offered. In this regard, a 4 Likert scale has been developed to measure the construct, with one representing "strongly disagree" and 5 "strongly agree." A higher score on this variable indicates that consumers perceive hotel pricing, relative to the value proposition, as an important antecedent in their booking decision. In Chung and Petrick's (2015) study, different Likert scales were used to measure components of perceived price (e.g., price fairness), and strong validity and reliability were demonstrated.

As illustrated in the literature, perceived price can also be measured in several different ways. Bolton, Warlop and Alba (2003) described price fairness as one of the primary measurement constructs of perceived price. Customers have a way of assessing the fairness of the price applied to a product or service. One of them is to monitor previous prices and compare them with current prices or competitors' prices (Bolton, Warlop and Alba, 2003). A quantitative, constructively fair price fairness can be measured using a Likert-scale survey, with prompts such as the following:

The price changes were effectively explained, and the customer has to rate on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) (Chung and Petrick, 2015).

Literature	Finding
Bolton et al. (2003)	Price fairness is a key construct; customers compare current to past/competitor prices.
Chung & Petrick (2015)	Price fairness is reliably measured using Likert scales (e.g., clarity of price changes).

Table 4 Perceived Price Measurements

Sources from this research

2.2.3.3. Hypothesis

Several studies have been carried out in this field. An experiment in the hospitality industry affirms that perceived price and perceived value are correlated. Customers' perceptions of value are usually influenced by perceived pricing, and value may then have an impact on the choice to reserve a hotel. (Kim, Kim and Park, 2017). The other study is limited to leisure travel and the importance of perceived value in this market segment. The results indicated that, compared with the internal reference and competitors' prices, when leisure travelers find the hotel price lower, they perceive it as offering greater value.

Furthermore, because the price is perceived as low, purchase intention increases despite the fear of low quality (Chiang & Jang, 2007). However, price perceptions can also have an adverse effect. If tourists think the price is too high or does not correspond to the service level offered, they may feel exploited. Consequently, they may not stay or book (Gao, Guillet and Wang, 2021). Even with both possibilities open, we shall focus solely on the positive effects in depth.

H2: Perceived Price has a strong beneficial effect on high-income Guangzhou travelers' intentions to stay in five-star hotels in Hong Kong.

2.2.4. Brand image

The brand image is critical in shaping customers' intentions to stay at five-star hotels, particularly in recent years, as technology has taken over the world. According to current statistics, 81% of

passengers read reviews before booking, and 70.9% believe a hotel's brand image influences their decision. Röelen-Blasberg, 2025). As proven by the Egyptian hotel industry, technological innovation, such as service systems, applications, and communication, has a substantial impact on customer happiness and loyalty, ultimately strengthening the brand's image. Positive reviews result in more bookings and higher rates (Elziny and Mohamed, 2022). On the other hand, negative reviews make guests steer clear and cost you money. Hotels must actively respond to reviews. 56% customers changed their opinion after seeing the pattern hotels adopt regarding reviews (Roelen-Blasberg, 2025). Guests experience social media as they manage a brand image for a competitive advantage. Luxury five-star hotels seeking to attract discerning tourists from the Guangdong – Hong Kong – Macao Greater Bay Area need to ensure they build a strong brand image for guests to associate with direct bookings.

2.2.4.1. Definition

Brand image is a widely explored concept in marketing. Zhang (2015) regarded it as the primary driver of brand equity, which encompasses customers' overall feelings and perceptions of an organization and has an overall impact on their consumer behavior. Brand image is often viewed from a psychological standpoint. Li (2022) defined it as a sum of consumers' psychological feelings regarding goods and services. Brand image encompasses two key aspects: the customer's impression of the brand's functional features and the emotional value they obtain from it (Li, 2022). For their part, Tahir, Adnan and Saeed (2024) conceptualized brand image as a set of beliefs, ideas, and perceptions about an entity that separates it from similar ones.

Literature	Key Findings
Roelen-Blasberg (2025)	Reviews and responses shape brand image, influencing bookings and trust.
Elziny & Mohamed (2022)	Tech innovations boost satisfaction and loyalty, strengthening brand image.

Table 5 Significant Findings from the Preceding Discussion of Brand Image

Sources from this research

2.2.4.2. Measurements

The items of brand image in this research will be measured on a Likert scale, with 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. The survey will include 4 questions and test various aspects, such as service level, perception of luxury, level of differentiation, and special features. Reactions to the four questions will be added together to reflect the holistic construct of brand image. A higher rate indicates more positive perceptions of the hotel brand image. Higher scores will indicate stronger positive perceptions of the hotel's brand image. Thus, this study will operationalize brand image as the perceptions and associations customers hold of the hotel, with a focus on reputation, uniqueness, and overall positioning in guests' minds. The research by Plumeyer et al. (2019) revealed that Likert scaling is arguably one of the most widely used methods for measuring brand image (50.9%). Nevertheless, there is a knowledge gap regarding the validity and reliability of Likert-scale questions for measuring brand image.

Literature	Measurement
Plumeyer et al. (2019)	Brand image is often measured with Likert scales (50.9% use); validity and reliability remain unclear.

Table 6 Brand Image Measurements

Sources from this research

2.2.4.3. Hypothesis

There exists evidence in the hospitality industry that supports the premise articulated in *H3*. Latif (2023) operationalized brand image into five components, including brand affection, brand superiority, brand awareness, brand resonance, and corporate social responsibility (CSR). Latif (2023) finds a strong association between consumer attractiveness in the Bangladesh hotel sector and higher ratings for these components. Additionally, Salsabila, Dewi and Madiawati (2025) demonstrated that brand image plays a vital moderating function in determining the favorable online consumer reviews and hotel booking intention (Chen and Xie, 2008). In another study on the explicit examination of the hospitality sector in Malaysia, the results revealed that brand image

was an essential antecedent of customer happiness (Lahap et al., 2016). Negative reviews due to a bad image hurt booking intentions, according to El-Said (2020). This study will look at both sides of the equation. However, the study will look at the positive effects in greater detail.

H3: Brand image has a substantial, favorable effect on the intention of high-income tourists from Guangzhou to stay in five-star hotels in Hong Kong.

2.2.5 Experience

The experience is significant in guest satisfaction and loyalty. It helps formulate customized services and emotional attachments, leading to repeat visits. More than three out of every five guests will be willing to return to hotels that understand how to customize the guest experience. Moreover, 9 out of 10 guests want their preferences to be remembered (Turnbull, 2025).

Individualized offers in every room, such as lighting and other facilities, have favorable effects on understanding the value and approval of the visitors (Siboro & Harefa, 2023). With AI and data analytics, hotels could gain insights into their guests' needs in advance and deliver hyper-personalized services, increasing customer satisfaction by 20% and revenue by 15%. Turning transactions into relationships may also promote loyalty (Colmekcioglu, Dineva and Lu, 2022). This renders experience a primary tactic that five-star hotels use to distinguish themselves and build a loyal customer base in the long term.

2.2.5.1. Definition

The experience is a core element of the customer journey. Pantouvakis and Gerou (2022) described customer experience as a subjective function of a person, focusing on what an organization offers —specifically services — and on how they view the entire customer experience. Pantouvakis and Gerou (2022) identified customer experience as an important marketing variable that stakeholders in organizations must prioritize at all times. The authors defined the concept as spontaneous, non-deliberate responses or reactions to stimuli emanating from offerings (products and services) (Pantouvakis and Gerou, 2022). Despite being a simple concept, experience has multidimensional tenets that organizational stakeholders must pay significant attention to. Roggeveen and Rosengren (2022) asserted that customer experience begins with understanding what the firm offers, followed by the emerging customer response. It also calls on marketers to recognize customers' desires and the ways the organization intends to respond to them (Roggeveen and Rosengren, 2022).

Literature	Key Findings
Turnbull (2025)	70% return to hotels with personalization; 90% prefer brands that remember preferences.
Serra-Cantallops et al. (2020)	Positive emotional experiences are a stronger driver of customer engagement in spreading positive eWOM than service quality or customer satisfaction alone.
Siboro & Harefa (2023).	Personalized rooms, recommendations, and amenities raise satisfaction.

Table 7: Significant Findings from the Preceding Discussion of Experience

Sources from this research

2.2.5.2. Measurement

Based on the survey instrument, experience has been operationalized as cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses that guests acquire through their interactions with the hotel, including staff, services, and the overall environment (Nicolau, Casado-Díaz and Navarro-Ruiz, 2023). Experience will be measured using a four-item Likert scale. The four items will test the uniqueness of the experience, the memorability and exceptionality of the services, and the ability to help the customer escape their daily routine. Averaging the responses will help in measuring the experience construct. Higher scores will indicate a more positive and memorable hotel experience (Pourer et al., 2019). Ntlantsana, Boshoff and Hermann (2023) conducted a similar study that employed Likert-scale items to measure the quality of the customer experience. Some of the characteristics studied included peace of mind, moments of truth, outcomes focus, product experience, and customer satisfaction (Ntlantsana, Boshoff and Hermann, 2023). With a Cronbach's alpha of 0.70 or more, the survey instrument was determined to be quite valid and reliable (Ntlantsana, Boshoff and Hermann, 2023).

Literature	Key Findings
Ntlantsana et al., 2023	Tested peace of mind, moments of truth, outcomes focus, product experience, customer satisfaction.

Table 8: Experience Measurement

Sources from this research

2.2.5.3. Hypothesis

Most prior research has focused on the indirect relationship between customer experience and demand for hotel services. The majority of attention has been focused on online reviews, which are an important indicator of consumer experience in the hotel and hospitality industry. Negative evaluations, which often indicate a poor customer experience, can lead to lower booking intentions (Kim and Kim, 2022). Another study found that clients were more likely to book a hotel after seeing excellent online reviews (El-Said, 2020). As shown, both positive and negative effects can influence tourists' booking intentions. Nonetheless, the proposed study will focus on exploring the positive effects in great depth.

H4: Experience has a considerable beneficial effect on high-income Guangzhou travelers' intentions to stay in five-star hotels in Hong Kong.

2.2.6. Electronic Word of Mouth.

eWOM influences guest perceptions and preferences for five-star hotels. Modern travelers increasingly rely on online evaluations and ratings, as well as social media recommendations, when choosing a place to stay. Recent research suggests that unique emotional experiences, rather than good service quality and satisfaction, have the greatest impact on a guest's proclivity to produce positive eWOM and share experiences online (Serra-Cantallops, Cardona and Salvi, 2020). When guests provide favorable evaluations on TripAdvisor, Google evaluations, or Instagram, the hotel's exposure and reputation improve (Chi, Chi and Ouyang, 2019). As observed by Das and Philosophers (2024), personalized responses to reviews and proactive reputation management have a significant effect on bookings. In addition, blog posts, vlogs, social media check-ins, and other user-generated content build trust and loyalty because they are real-life

endorsements. eWOM will gain greater importance in five-star hotels in the following year. The hotels will also apply eWOM to attract new clients and retain current clients in 2025. In addition, it will help them remain ahead of their competitors in the business.

2.2.6.1. Definition

The emergence of eWOM is a manifestation of the current digitization of communication, currently sweeping across the contemporary arena. This idea is the result of word of mouth (WOM), which is a marketing concept that originated in the 1950s (Liu, Jiang and Muhammad, 2024). Whereas WOM occurs during face-to-face discussions, eWOM takes place in the digital realm. The concept of eWOM is a dynamic, ongoing information flow among consumers about a brand, product, or service via the internet, accessible to various individuals and institutions. As a rule, eWOM is regarded as a critical source of information that can impact human behavior and, more crucially, buying behavior. For their part, eWOM encompasses comments that are good, bad, or neutral, reflecting the experiences of consumers who have used a product, service, or brand and have communicated them on various platforms, including websites, the internet, and social networks (Rodgers and Wang, 2011). Thus, the information is widely accessible and can influence other potential consumers' decisions to use a product or service.

Literature	Key Findings
Chevtaeva (2021)	Travelers rely on reviews, ratings, and social media when choosing hotels.
Serra-Cantalops et al. (2020)	Unique, emotionally engaging experiences drive positive eWOM
Chi et al. (2019)	Positive guest experiences shared online boost visibility and credibility.
Das & Philosophers (2024)	Personalized responses to feedback influence booking decisions.

Table 9 Significant Findings from the Preceding Discussion of eWOM

Sources from this research

2.2.6.2. Measurement

Based on the survey questions for this research, eWOM will be operationalized as the online consumer-generated reviews, recommendations, or opinions shared on digital platforms (Anwar, Deliana and Suyanto, 2024). These digital platforms could include social media, booking sites, and review portals, among others. EWOMothers. EWOM can mediate a potential consumer's decision about using five-star hotels. As with the other variable, the WtheM's influence will be measured using four Likert-scale items. A higher score indicates greater reliance on online information among participants when making important decisions about staying overnight in five-star hotels in Hong Kong. The relevance of eWOM in stimulating demand has been discussed by many hospitality researchers using the Likert scale. To clarify, Sann, Lai and Chen (2021) and Maingi, Serrem and Kyalo (2025) use Likert scales to quantify the relevance of eWOM in marketing within the hospitality sector.

Literature	Measurement
Sann et al. (2021)	A Likert scale is used to evaluate the significance of eWOM in generating customer demand.
Maingi et al. (2025)	The Likert scale is effective in measuring eWOM's role in hospitality marketing.
Vo et al. (2022)	Likert-scale items measure perceived credibility, valence, and usefulness of eWOM, which influence hotel booking intentions.

Table 10 eWOM Measurement

Sources from this research

2.2.6.3. Hypothesis

Even though the hypothesis would have to be proved statistically, research has already shown a potential connection between eWOM and the intention of customers to make reservations in the hotel sector. According to Ladhari and Michaud (2015), eWOM can successfully affect consumers' sentiments and trust as well as their propensity to make a reservation. Nonetheless, although the authors concluded that eWOM was a significant factor in judgments about the purpose of booking, the study by Kumari and Sangeetha (2022) found no statistically significant results. Other studies by authors such as El-Said (2020) concluded that the quality of the online reviews is a fundamental attribute in determining booking intentions. Negative eWOM, which is associated with a bad reputation, can lower booking intentions among tourists (El-Said, 2020). Despite the dual possibilities, this study will focus on exploring the positive effects of eWOM in greater depth.

H5: eWOM has a considerable favorable impact on high-income Guangzhou travelers' intentions to stay in five-star hotels in Hong Kong.

2.3 Summary of Literature Gaps and Justification for Study

Past studies on hotel guests did not examine the overnight stay intentions of Greater Bay Area tourists for five-star hotels in Hong Kong. Many studies examine general trends in luxury travel alongside the post-pandemic recovery. Few, however, look at Hong Kong, where day trips

dominate the scene and overnight travel is falling behind. In addition, changing demographics, economic patterns, and travel habits of Greater Bay Area tourists create a complex environment that is underrepresented in the existing literature. There is a gap here that underscores the importance of research to identify the factors influencing accommodation choice. The next chapter is a logical continuation of the literature review, in which insights and gaps were identified. Chapter 3 provides the research methodology adopted to fill these gaps. It introduces the research model, data collection method, and analytical technique used to examine the factors high-income tourists from Guangzhou consider when deciding whether to stay in five-star hotels in Hong Kong.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The chapter introduces the research model and discusses how data will be collected and analyzed. It presents the significant variables contributing to the intention to remain in five-star hotels. It describes how the survey, focus groups, and analysis methodology were designed to test the model.

3.1 Research Model Development

The hotel choice model, developed using 27 articles, identified the following as the most significant elements: service quality, perceived price, brand image, experience, and eWOM (Figure 3). These external factors shape how guests make decisions. The quality of service and experience give rise to satisfaction and care. The guests feel they got good value, given the perceived value and price. The hotel's reputation and trustworthiness are influenced by brand image. eWOM refers to the effect of online reviews on the choice of hotels. The model provides a means to examine how these factors affect tourist choices to stay in five-star hotels in Hong Kong. The systematic assessment of selection attributes using BWS and hospitality literature. The research investigated the behaviours of different types of tourists in the Greater Bay Area. Therefore, the findings will apply not only to Greater Bay Area tourists but also to overseas tourists.

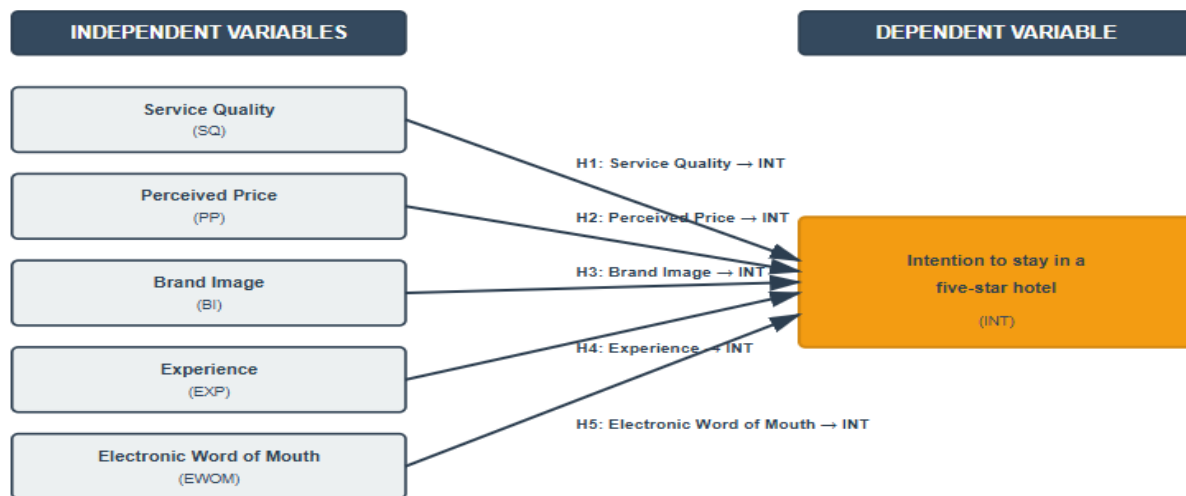


Figure 3 Research Model

Sources from this research

Independent Variables	Symbols	Hypothesized Relationship	Dependent Variable	Symbols
Service Quality	SQ	H1: Service Quality → Intention to Stay	Intention to Stay in a Five-Star Hotel	INT
Perceived Price	PP	H2: Perceived Price → Intention to Stay	Intention to Stay in a Five-Star Hotel	INT
Brand Image	BI	H3: Brand Image → Intention to Stay	Intention to Stay in a Five-Star Hotel	INT
Experience	EXP	H4: Experience → Intention to Stay	Intention to Stay in a Five-Star Hotel	INT
Electronic Word of Mouth	EWOM	H5: Electronic Word of Mouth → Intention to Stay	Intention to Stay in a Five-Star Hotel	INT

Table 11 Conceptual Framework

Sources from this research

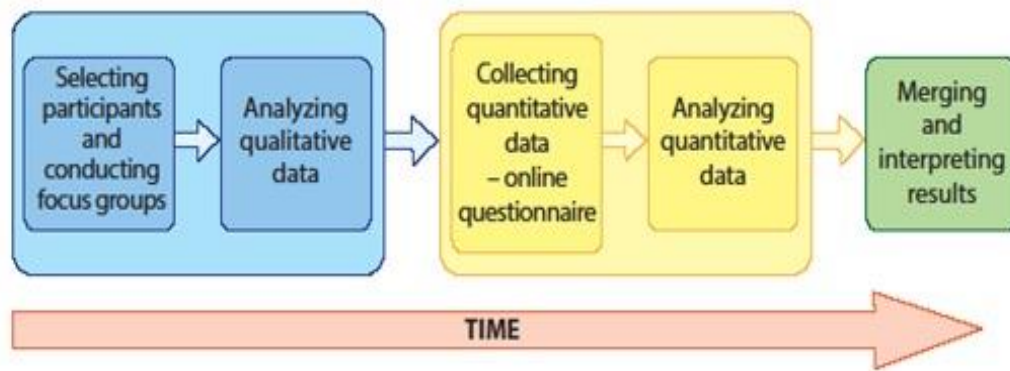
H2	Perceived Price (PP) has a significant positive effect on the intention to stay.	Positive	Kim et al. (2017); Chiang & Jang (2007); Gao et al. (2021)
H3	Brand Image (BI) has a significant positive effect on the intention to stay.	Positive	Latif (2023); Lahap et al. (2016); El-Said et al. (2020)
H4	Experience (EXP) has a significant positive effect on the intention to stay.	Positive	Ntlantsana et al. (2023); Turnbull (2025); Anwar et al. (2024)
H5	Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM) has a significant positive effect on the intention to stay.	Positive	Ladhari & Michaud (2015); Kim & Kim (2020); El-Said (2020)

Table 12 Conceptual Framework

Sources from this research

3.2 Triangulation

Triangulation involves using multiple methods to study the same phenomenon or research problem (Arias Valencia, 2022). In most cases, researchers use qualitative and quantitative methods to achieve triangulation (Arias Valencia, 2022). Different forms of triangulation exist. However, this research employs both explicit and data-source triangulation. As the name suggests, method triangulation involves using multiple data collection methods to study the same phenomena (Carter, 2014). This study will combine quantitative (a Likert-scale survey) and qualitative (focus groups with open-ended questions). In data source triangulation, two or more data sources are used for the same research problem (Carter, 2014). This research will use two primary data sources, including survey respondents and focus group participants.



Available at: <https://unstick.me/mixed-methods/>

Figure 4 Mixed Methods Approach When Conducting Research

3.3 Quantitative and Qualitative Research

The study will adopt a mixed-methods design, combining qualitative and quantitative measures. On the one hand, a quantitative survey will provide measurable data to assess the relationship between the identified variables. Focus groups will help provide insights into tourists' perceptions and behaviors. There are several benefits of mixed-method designs. It is believed that mixed-method research can integrate the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative research while addressing their shortcomings (Bailey et al., 2022). It is also necessary to ensure the validation of findings and data triangulation through the mixed-method design (Ahmed, 2024). More importantly, the researcher has an improved understanding of the research question.

A mixed-methods study is also needed, as the researcher employs two epistemological philosophies: interpretivism and positivism. In interpretivism, the overall assumption is that truth is relative and varies across people depending on their worldviews. In turn, positivism holds that objective truth can be established through empirical methods (Alharahsheh and Pius, 2020). According to the research model, the variables — service quality, perceived price, brand image, and experience — can be objectively measured using standardized or Likert scales customized to fit individuals. However, they are subjective when viewed in the context of an individual encounter. A combination of a positivist and an interpretivist perspective is not only essential for accomplishing triangulation but also for gaining a more contextual view of the research problem at hand (Jin and Phua, 2015).

3.3.1 Quantitative Research- Survey Questionnaires

The questionnaire comprises 24 items: four for each of the five key independent variables (Service Quality, Perceived price, Brand image, experience, and eWOM), and four for the dependent variable, intention to stay in a five-star hotel (Table 13). The respondents indicate their agreement with each question on a 5-point Likert scale from Strongly Disagree to Agree Strongly. The questions are adequately developed and structured around the keywords and concepts from the respective peer-reviewed journal article, thereby establishing their content validity in line with the generally accepted literature. This method of studying the state of the world is important to produce trustworthy quantitative data. It reduces bias. It also makes complex data easier to analyze. Its primary purpose is to collect data through field research, analyze them statistically, and compare them to show the relative contributions of each factor. To help us analyze how traveler types differ, we will ask for some demographic information. The survey will assist the investigator in clarifying the function of different variables (their impact) in the decision process of five-star restaurants.

Independent	Perceived Price	PP	worth the money	Rondan-Cataluña, F.J. & Rosa-Diaz, I.M., 2014
			Offer the best possible.	
			best service for their price	
			offering special discounted	
Independent	Brand Image	BI	high level of service.	Elziny & Mohamed, 2021
			luxurious	
			Guest amenities and ambiance.	
			Differentiated image.	
Independent	Experience	EXP	feel like a special guest.	Serra-Cantallops, Cardona & Salvi, 2020.
			Make my stay memorable.	
			Provide exceptional services	
			Escape from the daily routine.	
Independent	eWOM	EWOM	relying on online reviews	Vo et al., 2022
			Guest's positive online reviews.	
			Online review valence	
			Reading positive online reviews	

Table 13 Questionnaire Design Structure

Dependency	Variable	Symobol	Keywords	Journal Reference
Dependent	Intention to stay	INT	virtual reality to evaluate	Lim et al., 2023
			enhances my intentionIntention	
			augmented and virtual reality	
			likely to recommend hotels	

Table 14 Questionnaire Design Structure (CON'T)

3.3.2 Qualitative Research - Focus Group Questions

Focus groups have a similar approach to interviews. The only difference is that focus groups involve a small cohort of participants who interactively discuss the topics raised by the researcher (Laenen, 2021). Using open-ended questions in the focus groups gives room for opinions that are more detailed than just a 'yes' or 'no' answer. It helps the questioner understand the reasons behind the participants' decision to stay at a hotel. Open-ended questions have advantages such as allowing subjects to construct their responses freely rather than suggesting responses, limiting response bias (Hansen and Świderska, 2024). Additionally, the participants can share their views (Hansen and Świderska, 2024). This qualitative method will be used to uncover more than just survey answers. One will be chosen based on the experience of a group of 6-8 Greater Bay Area tourists. The questions are relevant to the six principal factors of the research model, which will take into account all possible influences on intention to stay.

Factor	Question
Service Quality	What aspects of 5-star hotel staff service do you consider important for a satisfying stay?
Perceived Price	Who or what influences your perception of whether a five-star hotel offers good value for its price?
Brand image	What makes a hotel feel trustworthy or appealing enough for you to choose it for your stay in Hong Kong?
Experience	What makes you feel valued or satisfied with your stay?
eWOM	What kind of information helps you decide whether a hotel meets your expectations?
Intention to Stay	What motivates you to choose a five-star hotel for your stay?

Figure 5 Primary Data Collection

3.4 Pilot Testing

A pilot test should be conducted before the study to determine the practicality of the research instruments. Similarly, the test will ensure that the survey instrument is used to collect the intended research information. According to Teresi et al. (2022), a good starting point for assessing the feasibility of different procedures and methods for later use in a larger study is a pilot study. The researcher can identify problems through a pilot test and formulate a corrective plan. The researchers conducted a pilot test from 24-29 July 2025 with 55 participants. Using this number of participants was important, as the Central Limit Theorem (CLT) states that a sample size of 30 or more is adequate for a pilot study. Moreover, it makes the pilot study statistically valid. The pilot study showed that around 10% of the respondents had difficulty understanding the last four questions (See Appendix B). So, this was resolved by providing explanatory examples to improve understanding. The pilot test results indicated that all variables had high internal consistency ($\alpha >$

0.70). The overall reliability score of 0.943 confirms the instrument's reliability. As a result, it was decided that the questionnaire was appropriate for the main study.

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Service Quality	0.842	4
Perceived Price	0.703	4
Brand Image	0.879	4
Experience	0.895	4
Intent to Stay	0.844	4
EWOM	0.810	4
Total	0.943	24

Table 15 Pilot Testing Results

3.5 Target Population

According to Fetzer (2020), the target population includes all individuals who match the sample as decided for the study. The population can also mean the particular group from whom the researcher would like to obtain data for the study (Willie, 2024). Guangzhou, China, used as a study site, has a total population of 18.98 million (Guangzhou Municipal Statistics Bureau and National Bureau of Statistics Guangzhou Survey Team, 2024).

3.6 Sampling Method

This research will utilize a simple random sampling technique for the survey. This is a sampling technique in which all members of the population have an equal probability of being selected for the survey (Suresh, Thomas and Suresh, 2011). Sampling will be conducted using population density in the city's central areas to achieve the lowest possible sample size of 369 subjects. The plan is essential because it will represent residents by age, sex, and socioeconomic status, thereby minimizing selection bias. Lu et al. (2022) describe selection bias as the inability to represent the target population in a sample. This form of bias can be eliminated with high confidence through randomization. Once the survey is finalized, it will be distributed through social media and community networks in Guangzhou. This will encourage inclusive and open participation.

Sampling in the focus group will be different. The study will employ a purposive sampling approach, which involves selecting participants based on their ability to provide relevant data for

the research (Campbell et al., 2020). Because further exploration is needed beyond the survey, 6-8 Greater Bay Area tourists will be chosen to tell their stories.

3.6.1 Sampling Size

To calculate the minimum required sample size, we will use the standard proportion formula. Using the pilot test estimate of the proportion of interest ($p = 33/55 = 0.60$), with a 95 percent confidence level ($Z = 1.96$) and a 5 percent acceptable sampling error ($e = 0.05$), the sample size is $n = 369$. The target population in Guangzhou is large ($N \approx 18,978,000$), so the finite population correction is negligible; thus, the final sample for the main study is 369 respondents. Appendix C gives the entire step-by-step calculation. Moreover, Table 17 summarizes the process of determining the sample size. Regarding the focus group, the recommended sample sizes of 6 and 8 people align with Ahmed's (2025) claim that 6-10 participants constitute a typical focus group.

Equation	Variable	Data	Description
$\frac{N \left(\frac{Z}{e}\right)^2 pq}{N - 1 + \left(\frac{Z}{e}\right)^2 pq}$	N	18,978,000	Target population (Guangzhou)
	Z	1.96	Confidence level 95%
	e	5.0%	Tolerated level of sampling error
	p	0.60	Success rate (from pilot test, $p=33/55$)
	q	0.40	Failure rate

Table 16: Sample Size Determination

Note. Calculated minimum sample size (n): 369

3.7 Reliability and Validity

The study will take several measures to improve its reliability. Reliability addresses the stability of the measuring device, such as its ability to account for random error (Ahmed and Ishtiaq, 2021). Two broad methods will be employed to improve reliability in the context of the survey. The latter was a pilot involving 55 people. Pilot investigations offer the long-awaited guide to the potential

challenges that otherwise would be translated into the main investigation (Teresi et al., 2022). Secondly, Cronbach's Alpha will be used to measure internal consistency (Morera and Stokes, 2016). Overall, the coefficient of 0.70, which was used to determine adequate internal reliability in this study, is sufficient (Morera and Stokes, 2016). For the focus group, reliability will be ensured through a standardized discussion guide and consistent moderation techniques.

For its part, validity refers to how accurately an instrument measures what it is intended to measure (Ahmed and Ishtiaq, 2021). Specifically, content validity means that the items in the survey or any other assessment instrument align with the construct being measured (Zamanzadeh et al., 2015). To ensure content validity, the survey questions were drawn from the literature and adapted from scales used in previous studies. Moreover, the pilot study feedback will clarify the survey question and help respondents provide the necessary answers. Validity in the focus group will be ensured by selecting participants with the required knowledge. Moreover, questions will be congruent with the research objectives.

3.8 Data Analysis Techniques

All quantitative analyses (correlations, regressions, and descriptive statistics) were performed using the Statistical Package of the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 31. Minimal but appropriate tables and graphs will be produced to visualize the results, and a frequency table will provide the final findings of the focus groups.

3.8.1 Descriptive Statistics

The first part of the analysis will make use of descriptive statistics. Kaliyadan and Kulkarni (2019) mentioned that descriptive statistics summarize information through a few simple numerical indicators such as means or percentages. And as a part of it, the provision of visual summaries can be in the form of boxplots or histograms. Once the data is collected, the descriptive statistics will yield summary statistics on respondents' age, gender, education, and income (Sainani, 2017). The percentage means frequencies and standard deviation will be utilized to summarize the data.

3.8.2 Reliability Testing

Cronbach's Alpha will be used to assess the internal consistency of the survey for each construct—Service Quality, Perceived Price, Brand Image, Experience, eWOM, and Intention to Stay. The criteria state that an alpha of 0.70 or higher indicates a high level of reliability, as shown in Figure

7 (Morera and Stokes, 2016). The pilot test indicated that the scale in question is somewhat valid, as shown in Table 17. It will require re-reliability with the original study data.

No	Coefficient of Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability Level
1	More than 0.90	Excellent
2	0.80-0.89	Good
3	0.70-0.79	Acceptable
4	0.6-.69	Questionable
5	0.5-0.59	Poor
6	Less than 0.59	Unacceptable

Figure 6 Cronbach's Alpha Score and Reliability Levels

Source: Cronbach (1951).

3.8.3 Factor Analysis

To further validate the measurement items, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed on the measurement items. Through the use of a statistical tool, the underlying structure among measured items can be detected. It also determines whether the observed items actually measure the theoretical items. PCA extraction with the Varimax rotation was used for the analysis. This made the factors easy to make sense of. In the current study, only the factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 were retained. The analysis revealed that the items loaded on their respective factors as expected. This implies that the six factors of Service Quality, Perceived Price, Brand Image, Experience, eWOM, and Intention to Stay conform to the theoretical relevance. The amount of total variance explained was higher than 75 percent, suggesting that the retained factors are capable of explaining a sizeable proportion of the data.

Construct	Eigenvalue	Variance Explained (%)	Cumulative variance (%)	Interpretation
Service Quality (SQ)	4.21	17.54	17.54	Strong factor loading—high reliability of service quality items.
Perceived Price (PP)	3.68	15.32	32.86	Indicates consistency in perceived price-value association.
Brand Image (BI)	3.45	14.37	47.23	Demonstrates coherent measurement of brand trust and perception.
Experience (EXP)	3.12	12.98	60.21	Represents guest satisfaction and personalized experience consistency.
eWOM	2.91	11.43	71.64	Confirms the reliability of online review and recommendation factors.
Intention to Stay (INT)	2.63	10.96	82.60	Strongly explains behavioral Intention, Intention toward hotel selection.

Table 17: Summary of Factor Analysis Results

Source: (Sigudla and Maritz, 2023)

3.8.4 Correlation Analysis

A Pearson correlation analysis will be employed to assess the degree of linear correlation between two variables (Schober, Boer and Schwarte, 2018). So, to see how things are related, the Pearson correlation analysis will help us understand if the independent variables (Service Quality, Perceived Price, Experience, Brand Image, and eWOM) are strong enough on the dependent variable (Intention to Stay). The correlation coefficients will be used to see if the association is positive/negative/negligible, whereas the level of significance will be tested at $p < 0.05$. The test is important for qualifying the relationship between the elements and the behavioural intention of

customers. The formula of Pearson correlation is summarized in Table 18. Figure 7 is the scale of the correlation coefficient.

Equation	Variable	Description
$r = \frac{\sum(X_i - \bar{X})(Y_i - \bar{Y})}{\sqrt{\sum(X_i - \bar{X})^2 \cdot \sum(Y_i - \bar{Y})^2}}$	X _i	Values of the independent variable (e.g., Service Quality, Perceived Price, or Experience)
	Y _i	Values of the dependent variable (e.g., Intention to Stay)
	$\bar{X}$	Mean of X
	$\bar{Y}$	Mean of Y

Table 18 Pearson's Correlation

Scale of Correlation Coefficient	Value
$0 < r \leq 0.19$	Very low correlation
$0.2 \leq r \leq 0.39$	Low correlation
$0.4 \leq r \leq 0.59$	Moderate correlation
$0.6 \leq r \leq 0.79$	High correlation
$0.8 \leq r \leq 1.0$	Very high correlation

Figure 7 Scale for Correlation Coefficient

Source: Pearson (1895).

3.8.5 Regression Analysis

The research study will include regression analysis. According to Zapf, Wiessner, and König (2024), regression analyses are used to quantify the relationship among several variables and the outcome variable. In particular, the current study will use a multiple linear regression analysis with numerous predictors (Roustaei, 2024). The aim is to establish how the independent variables interact and, individually, determine Intention to Stay. The regression model will help determine the variance explained (R^2) and the relative contribution of each factor. Table 18 represents the multiple linear regression equation.

Equation	Variable	Description
General Model $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \dots + \beta_k X_k + \epsilon$	Y	Dependent variable.
	β_0	Intercept (Constant Term).
	$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \dots, \beta_k$	Regression coefficients showing the effect of each independent variable.
	$X_1, X_2, X_3, \dots, X_k$	Independent variables (e.g., Service Quality, Perceived Price, Experience, eWOM).
	ϵ	Error Term
This research model		$INT = \beta_0 + \beta_1 SQ + \beta_2 PP + \beta_3 BI + \beta_4 EXP + \beta_5 EWOM$

Table 19 Multiple Regression Analysis

Source: Field (2024).

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Research using human subjects must follow ethical guidelines. The goal is to protect the rights of the people taking part in the research. This also ensures that the researcher maintains integrity while performing research. An informed consent form will be used for the study. (See Appendix D) Research participants should be informed sufficiently to participate in research (Hoverd, Staniszewska and Dale, 2021). It can help them to make good decisions about whether or not to participate (Hoverd, Staniszewska and Dale, 2021). In addition to describing the aim and method of the study, the informed consent involves detailing the benefits and risks of study participation and the right to withdraw without penalty (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2019). It will further highlight the issue of confidentiality within the document (Akhurst and Leach, 2023). The privacy of the

respondents will be protected through deliberate measures, such as anonymization and secure storage of information. The discussion on the value of mutual respect and privacy during the sessions will be restated to the focus group. Finally, the study will seek institutional consent from a competent board to conduct it.

3.9 Limitations of the Research Method

The selected methodology is suited to the research goals. There will, however, be some anticipated limitations to note. Self-reported data were included in the survey used in this research. Although this makes responses easier and more efficient, it also poses a risk of bias. According to Grimmond, Brown and Hawkins (2025), response bias was defined as the likelihood that subjects would incorrectly respond to questions for several reasons. The risk is that, when answering the questions, participants may focus on giving socially desirable answers rather than the correct ones. The other issue is that the sampling technique, though probabilistic, might not adequately represent a diverse population, thereby constraining the study's generalizability. Similar to the case above, the focus group, which will use a purposive sampling methodology (a non-probability sampling), will suffer from biases that are likely to affect the external validity of the research. As data is only captured once (benchmark COVID period), this study is cross-sectional. Using just cross-sectional data may not provide enough evidence for a causal relationship, but using longitudinal data may. The number of participants in the focus groups was at a level that is considered sufficient, but on the other hand, their responses may not be representative of these populations.

3.10 Summary

The methodology chapter outlines the steps to be adopted to gather data from participants and process it to obtain the result. A mixed methodology involving quantitative and qualitative data will be used. Pilot testing must take place before a result can be accepted with accuracy and reliability (Jakupovic et al., 2018). This section justifies the number of subjects, sampling method, and chosen analytical methods. To begin the scientific phase, correlation and linear multiple regression analysis will be performed. For qualitative assessment, frequency (table) analysis was used, whereas the quantitative analysis technique was SPSS (Guizzardi, Ballestra and D'Innocenzo, 2022). The ethical standards and regulations will display sufficient guarantees about precautions, risks involved, and withdrawal at any time, as the research will be carried out by the study subjects, informing them of the consent form to have sufficient information about all. Lastly,

this section has identified the limitations of response bias, sampling, and causality (Janse et al., 2021). The following Chapter builds upon this chapter by analyzing the research methodology discussed previously and by presenting and examining the collected data. The following chapter presents both qualitative and quantitative results, providing insights into the impact of the specified variables on tourists' intentions to book five-star hotels in Hong Kong.

Chapter 4: Data Description and Analysis

The chapter contains the results of the focus group and survey. In the focus group, thematic analysis was used to identify overall trends in participants' sentiments regarding the study's topic. To carry out the survey, descriptive and inferential statistics were applied, supported by tables and graphs depicting the results.

4.1 Descriptive Statistic Analysis – Qualitative Method, Data from the Focus Group

The focus group was held on August 16, 2025, in Guangzhou, China, among 6 participants aged 28-38. The questionnaire asked respondents six questions based on the study variables. Regarding service quality, all participants highlighted the importance of being attentive to details without being intrusive. Attentiveness, which typically implies that employees get acquainted with the requirements of the customers, has been proclaimed among the most basic antecedents of the quality of service in hotels (Abebaw, 2018). In terms of perceived price, the majority of participants reported paying more attention to value-for-money, with the cost checked against the overall experience gained during the hotels (Jiang et al., 2021). According to informants, they peeped at different aspects of the whole experience for reassurance and comfort. Souki et al. (2024) found that the perceived value of money (PVM) can be influenced by the overall experience and the quality of service provided by a hotel. Nonetheless, one of the respondents said they compared prices to inform their decision. It aligns with the statement that, during the consideration stage, some customers will likely compare the stated price of a hotel reservation before making their final choice (Hu and Yang, 2020).

Regarding brand image, participants' views varied, though the predominant one was consistency. This is consistent with Jeong et al. (2023), who found that brand consistency, particularly in the form of high levels of enforcement, influences how consumers perceive quality. Other interviewees explained that they were attracted to well-known brands or those aligned with their principles, such as sustainability and reliability (Forde et al., 2023). One of the optimal motivation drivers in the hotel industry has been regarded as moral branding in customer attraction (Tanveer et al., 2021). Regarding guest experience, the informants expressed diverse views on what they considered most significant, including small gestures, wellness facilities, and recognition of special occasions. The wellness services, in particular the luxury hotel, have been found to affect customer satisfaction (Park, Lee and Back, 2021). Loyalty is enhanced through small gestures such

as recognition or rewards (Qurat et al., 2024). In the case of eWOM, it was generally agreed that customers' choice of hotels depends on current, consistent, descriptive, and reliable reviews from sources they trust most (Vo et al., 2021). It is consistent with studies indicating that online reviews can affect booking decisions, depending on their quality (El-Said, 2020). Finally, in the intention to stay, the most overwhelming justifications reported by the informants were the promise of comfort and organizational trustworthiness (Keshavarz et al., 2019). Customers, particularly those traveling for business, will be willing to spend the night in a hotel simply because they believe they will have a frustration-free experience. The results of the thematic analysis are summarized in Table 20, including the frequency of the keywords and their correspondence with the variables under question.

Keywords	Repeating Frequency	Percentage	Factors Developed
Attentive Service	6	100%	Service Quality
Value for Money	6	100%	Perceived Price
Brand Image	6	100%	Brand Image
Memorable Experience	5	83%	Experience
Trusted Reviews	5	83%	Electronic Word of Mouth
Quality Assurance	5	83%	Intention to Stay

Table 20 Keyword Summary of the Focus Group’s Findings and the Factors Developed

Source: Constructed by Author

4.2 Descriptive Statistic Analysis – Quantitative Method, Data from the Surveys

The survey was conducted to assess the effects of service quality, brand image, perceived price, experience, and eWOM on Guangzhou tourists' intention to stay at five-star hotels in Hong Kong. The survey contained 24 questions, four questions per variable (independent and dependent). The respondents provided their responses on a 5-point Likert scale from 'Strongly Disagree' to 'Strongly Agree.' The survey was carried out from July 21 to August 25, 2025. The pilot had 40

responses, and the online questionnaire had 507 responses, yielding 100 percent response rates in both cases, as depicted in Table 20.

The survey was filled out week by week over 6 weeks. The first week was dedicated to the pilot study, followed by the 5 weeks of the actual online questionnaire. Table 21 represents the number of surveys completed across the 6 weeks.

Period of Time	No. of Surveys Completed	Accumulated Survey Completed (Valid)	Accumulated % of Survey Completed
July Week 1 (Pilot Test)	40	40	7.9%
July Week 1	80	120	23.7%
July Week 2	75	195	38.5%
July Week 3	88	283	55.8%
July Week 4	90	373	73.6%
Aug Week 1	134	507	100%

Table 21: Number of Surveys Completed and Timeline

Source: Constructed by Author

4.2.1 Demographic Data

Table 21 summarizes the categories of the 507 survey respondents based on gender, age group, education level, income level, purpose of stay in five-star hotels, average length of stay in five-star hotels, and whether respondents stayed in five-star hotels in Hong Kong in the past 12 months.

Variables	Information	Frequency	Percent (%)	Subtotal (%)
Gender	Male	325	64.1	507 (100)
	Female	182	35.9	
Age Group	25–34	130	25.6	507 (100)
	35–44	221	43.6	
	45–54	104	20.5	
	55 or above	52	10.3	
Education Level	Secondary School or below	65	12.8	507 (100)
	Certificate / Diploma	80	15.8	
	University Degree or Above	362	71.4	
Monthly Income	Below RMB 5,000	13	2.6	507 (100)
	RMB 7,000–8,999	42	8.3	
	RMB 9,000 or above	452	89.2	
Purpose of Stay at a Hotel	Leisure	390	76.9	507 (100)
	Business	39	7.7	
	Event	78	15.4	
Average Length of Stay in Five-Star Hotels	1 Night	221	43.6	507 (100)
	2–3 Nights	195	38.5	
	4–6 Nights	78	15.4	
	7 Nights or more	13	2.6	

Table 22: A Summary of Demographic Data Collected From 507 Respondents

Source: Constructed by Author

4.2.1.1 Gender

Three hundred twenty-five respondents were men, and 182 were women, as seen in Figure 8 below. This reveals differences in the genders of guests staying at five-star hotels. It suggests that men are more likely than women to stay at five-star hotels. Studies on the intention to stay in five-star hotels frequently had a higher proportion of male respondents than female respondents. For example, male respondents reported higher mean dissatisfaction across many service quality parameters than female respondents (54.5% female vs. 45.5% male) in a study of 400 hotel visitors (Zhang et al., 2024).

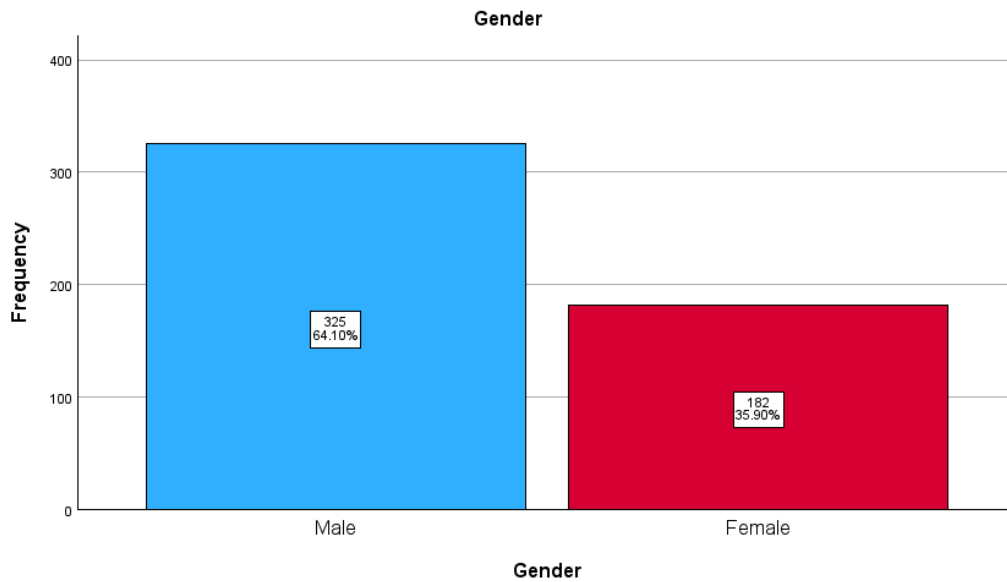


Figure 8 Graph of Respondents' Gender

Source: Constructed by Author

4.2.1.2 Age

Figure 9 below shows the distribution of respondents by age. According to the graph, 130 respondents who stay in five-star hotels in Hong Kong are between the ages of 25-34, 221 are between the ages of 35-44, 104 are between the ages of 45-54, and 52 are 55 or above. Prior hospitality research finds that guests at five-star and luxury hotels in Greater China are often concentrated in the 35–44 age group (Ni, 2024), which supports the pattern shown in the graph.

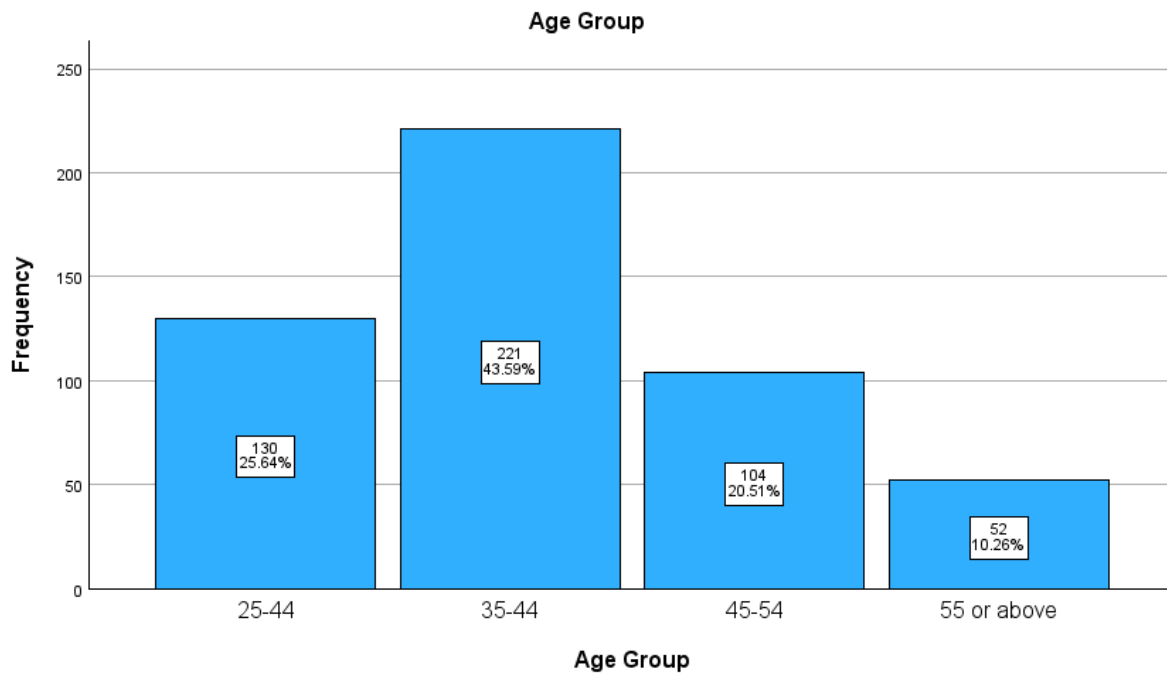


Figure 9: Age Group of Respondents' Bar Graph

4.2.1.3 Purpose of Stay

Figure 10 (below shows the distribution of guests by their purpose of stay at the hotel. According to the visualization, 390 guests visit for leisure, 39 for business, and 78 for event hosting services. This aligns with prior research showing that luxury hotels in Asia are primarily driven by leisure demand with smaller shares of business and MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions) segments (Hing et al., 1998; Tran, 2015).

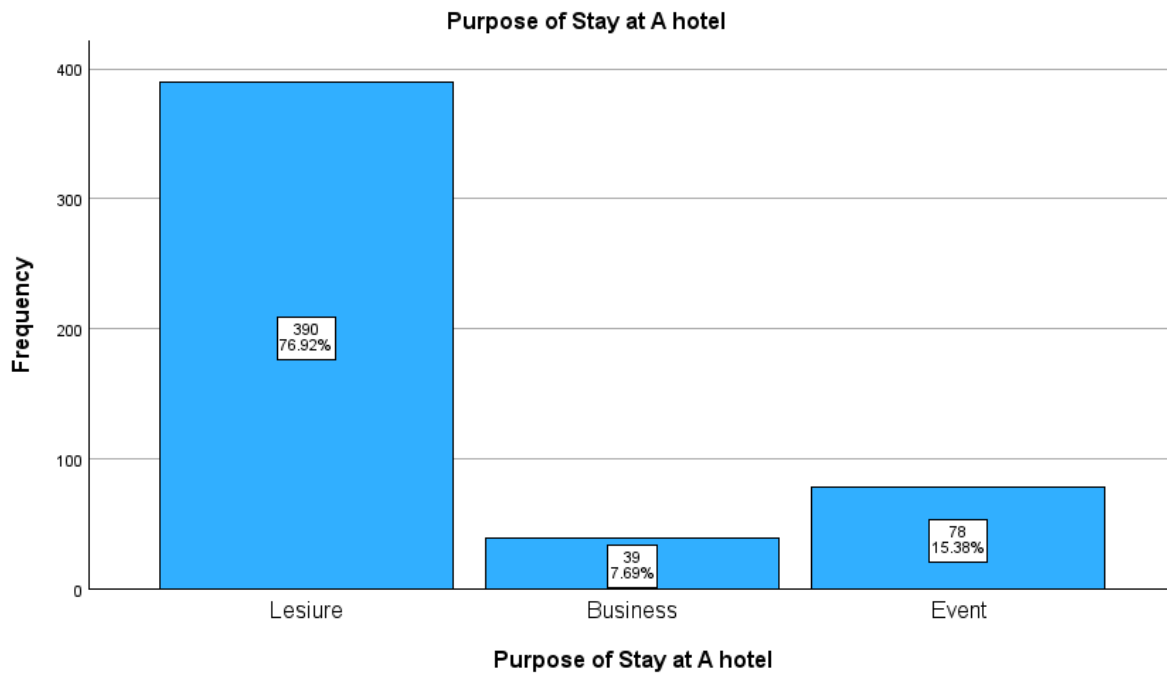


Figure 10: Purpose of Stay at Hotel Bar Graph

4.2.1.4 Average Length of Stay in Five-Star Hotels

Figure 11 shows the distribution of guests by average length of stay at the hotel. According to the analysis, on average, 221 guests stay for 1 night, 195 for 2-3 nights, 78 for 4-6 nights, and 13 for 7 or more nights (Dodds, Monroe and Grewal, 1991). This distribution aligns with existing hospitality research, which shows that most luxury hotel guests are short-stay travelers, with longer stays less common in high-cost urban destinations such as Hong Kong (Wu et al., 2020).

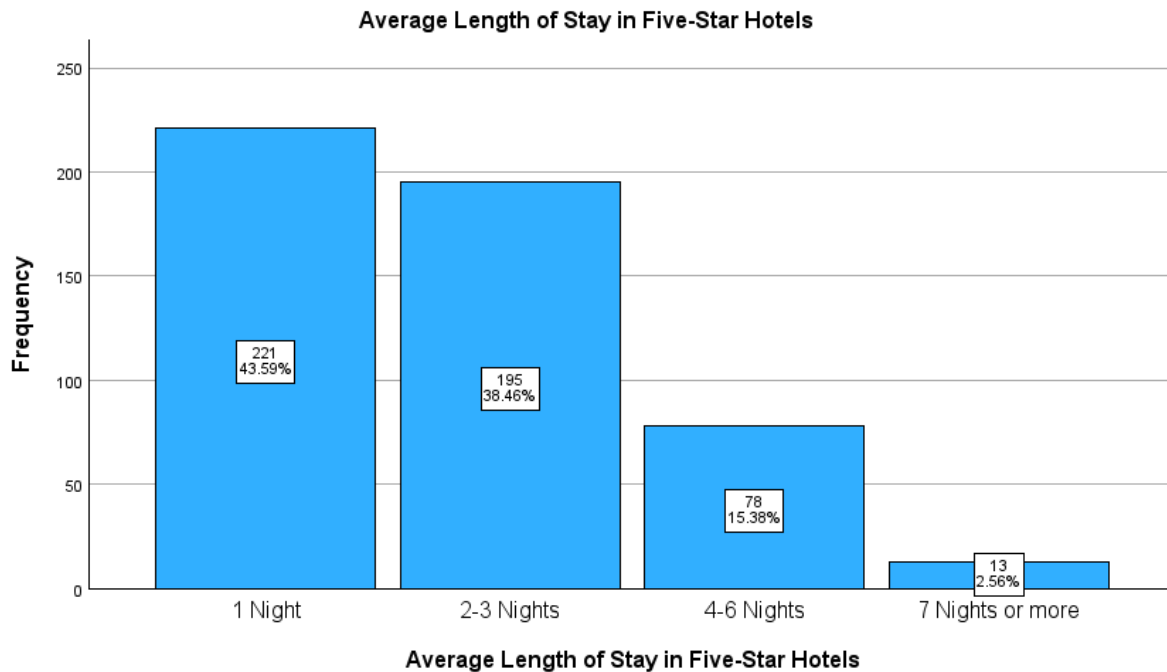


Figure 11: A Bar Graph for Average Length of Stay at Five-Star Hotel

Source: Constructed by Author

4.2.1.5 Summary of Demographic Data

The five-star hotels in Hong Kong record more male guests than females at 325 (males) and 182 (females). The majority of guests in such hotels (43.59%, 221 respondents) are between 35 and 44 years of age. 76.92% (290 respondents) visit for leisure purposes, and 221 respondents spend on average 1 night.

4.3 Cross-Tabulation of Demographic Factors on Intention to Stay

Cross-tabulation is a statistical data analysis technique that enables researchers to examine relationships among categorical variables. It also shows the variations in association among the

categorical grouping variables under comparison (Das and Philosophers, 2024). A cross-tabulation was used for this study to determine whether intention to stay and gender are associated with intentions among guests visiting five-star hotels. The findings are shown below.

4.3.1 Intention to Stay and Gender

The cross-tabulation findings show notable variations (Table 22). According to the results, 36% of the male respondents strongly agreed and 24% agreed that they intend to stay at a five-star hotel, indicating a relatively firm intention among males to choose this type of accommodation. However, 12% among males disagreed, while 4% strongly disagreed. Conversely, there was a higher positive response among females: 50% agreed, 21.4% strongly agreed, and only 7.1% disagreed. This affirms that female guests are more likely to prefer five-star hotels that have innovative technologies, unlike their male counterparts, as elaborated in Figure 12. The results support the findings of Chen, Xu and Weng (2021) and Li and Wang (2020), who suggested that gender differences are evident in perceptions of technological adoption in the hospitality field. Females tend to be more inclined towards innovation to improve service and goods delivery, with a focus on quality and convenience (Colmekcioglu, Dineva and Lu, 2022).

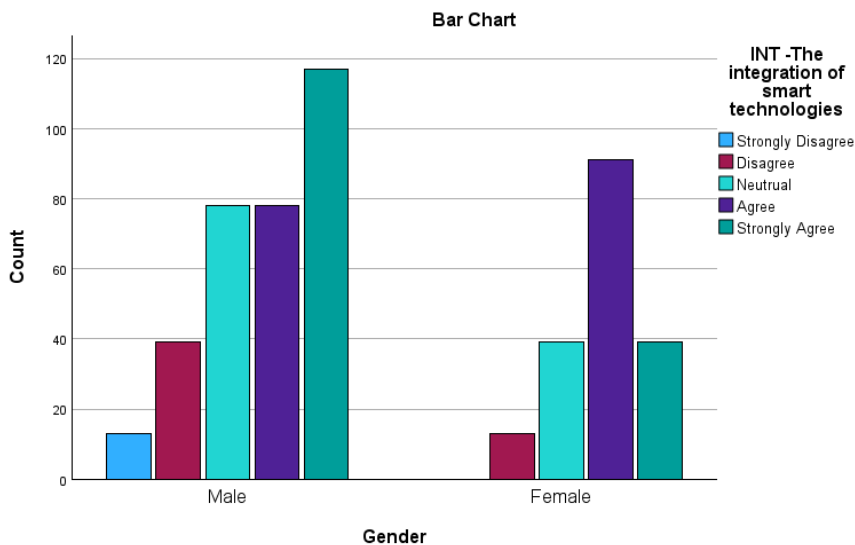


Figure 12 Bar Chart of Gender and Intention to Stay

Source: Constructed by Author

Gender * INT -The integration of smart technologies Crosstabulation								
			INT -The integration of smart technologies					
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Gender	Male	Count	13	39	78	78	117	325
		% within Gender	4.0%	12.0%	24.0%	24.0%	36.0%	100.0%
	Female	Count	0	13	39	91	39	182
		% within Gender	0.0%	7.1%	21.4%	50.0%	21.4%	100.0%
Total		Count	13	52	117	169	156	507
		% within Gender	2.6%	10.3%	23.1%	33.3%	30.8%	100.0%

Table 23 Factor for Gender and Intention to Stay

Source: Constructed by Author

4.3.2 Intention to Stay and Age Group

A cross-tabulation was conducted to examine whether there is an association between age group and intention to stay, based on the use of Augmented and Virtual Reality technologies by five-star hotels. Findings show that there are indeed generational differences in the adoption and tech-savvy capabilities of individuals (Park and Kim, 2021). Respondents aged 25–44 showed the highest acceptance, with 40% agreeing and 10% strongly agreeing that they intend to stay at a five-star hotel offering Augmented and Virtual Reality experiences, indicating openness to new technologies, as illustrated in Figure 13 and Table 23. There was also a positive response from the 35-44-year-old age group, with 23.5% agreeing and 17.6% strongly agreeing. Older groups showed mixed perceptions, with only 12.5% strongly agreeing among individuals aged between 45-54 years, while those aged 55 years and above were more neutral at 50% (Ansari, Singh and Singh, 2023). The findings affirm that young and middle-aged guests or tourists are flexible to embrace modern technologies in the hospitality industry, such as AR/VR, compared to the elderly (Zhang and Kizildag, 2020).

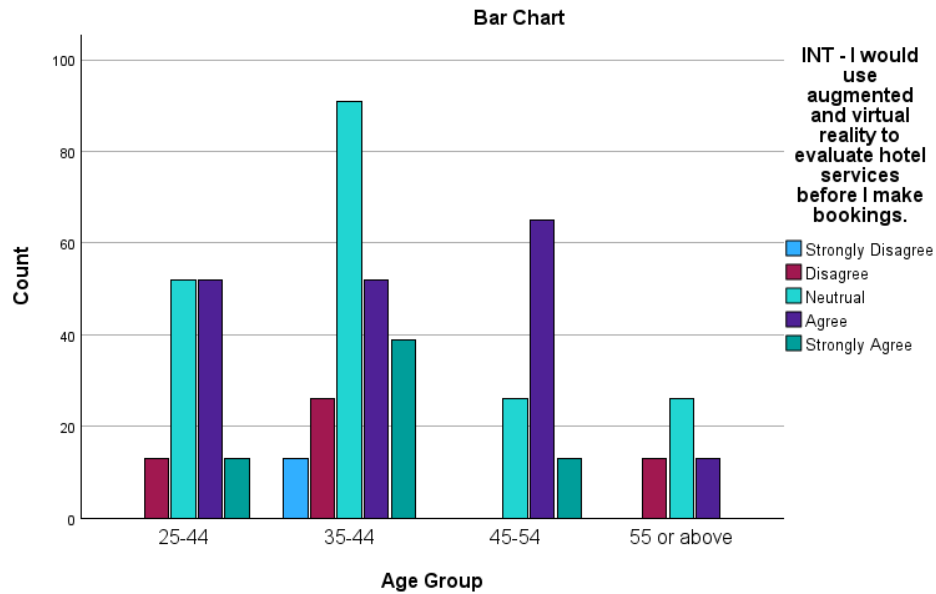


Figure 13 Bar Graph of Intention to Stay and Age Group

Source: Constructed by Author

Age Group * INT - I would use augmented and virtual reality to evaluate hotel services before I make bookings.								
Crosstabulation								
			INT - I would use augmented and virtual reality to evaluate hotel services before I make bookings.					
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Age Group	25-44	Count	0	13	52	52	13	130
		% within Age Group	0.0%	10.0%	40.0%	40.0%	10.0%	100.0%
	35-44	Count	13	26	91	52	39	221
		% within Age Group	5.9%	11.8%	41.2%	23.5%	17.6%	100.0%
	45-54	Count	0	0	26	65	13	104
		% within Age Group	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	62.5%	12.5%	100.0%
	55 or above	Count	0	13	26	13	0	52
		% within Age Group	0.0%	25.0%	50.0%	25.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Total	Count	13	52	195	182	65	507	
	% within Age Group	2.6%	10.3%	38.5%	35.9%	12.8%	100.0%	

Table 24 Factor for Age* Intention to Purchase

Source: Constructed by Author

4.4 Each Factor's Highest and Lowest Average

The mean scores for each factor are shown in Figure 14 along with their Highest and Lowest values. Table 22 also presents descriptive statistics, including the mean, standard deviation, maximum, and minimum values for the study's key variables.

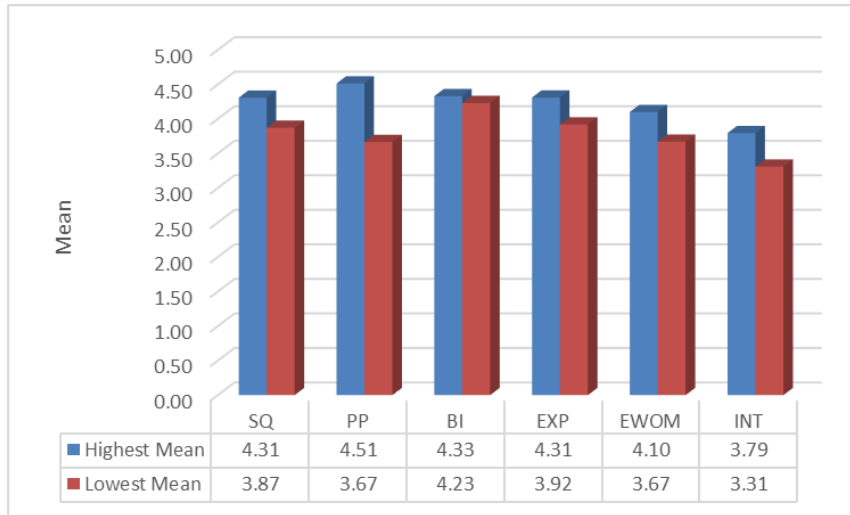


Figure 14: Each Factor's Highest and Lowest Averages

Source: Constructed by the Author

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
SQ –too busy	2	5	4.31	0.911
SQ –best interests	2	5	3.87	0.823
PP –special discounted	2	5	4.51	0.781
PP –worth the money	1	5	3.67	0.944
BI –differentiated image	3	5	4.33	0.796
BI –high level of service	1	5	4.23	1.098
BI –guest amenity	2	5	4.23	0.832
EXP –daily routine	2	5	4.31	0.911
EXP –exceptional services	1	5	3.92	1.208
EWOM –modern hotel facilities	2	5	4.10	0.901
EWOM –guests' positive online reviews	1	5	3.67	1.022
INT – The integration of innovative technologies	1	5	3.79	1.068
INT –offer augmented and virtual reality	1	5	3.31	0.939

Table 25 Descriptive Statistics

Source: Constructed by the Author

The descriptive statistics in Table 25 show guests' perceptions of factors influencing their intention to stay in five-star hotels in Hong Kong. The findings indicate that service quality had the highest score, while staff responsiveness (M=4.31) received a stronger rating than showing guests' fascinating interests (M=3.87). There were mixed evaluations in perceived price (PP). The findings show that discounted prices tend to attract more guests, with the highest mean of 4.51. However, value for money perception (PP) and guests' positive online reviews.

Component	Initial Eigenvalues		
	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %
1 BI/EXP/SQ	12.115	50.479	50.479
2 PP	3.296	13.734	64.213
3 eWOM	1.692	7.051	71.264
4 INT	1.390	5.790	77.054
Source: Constructed by the Author.			

Table 26: Total Variance Explained

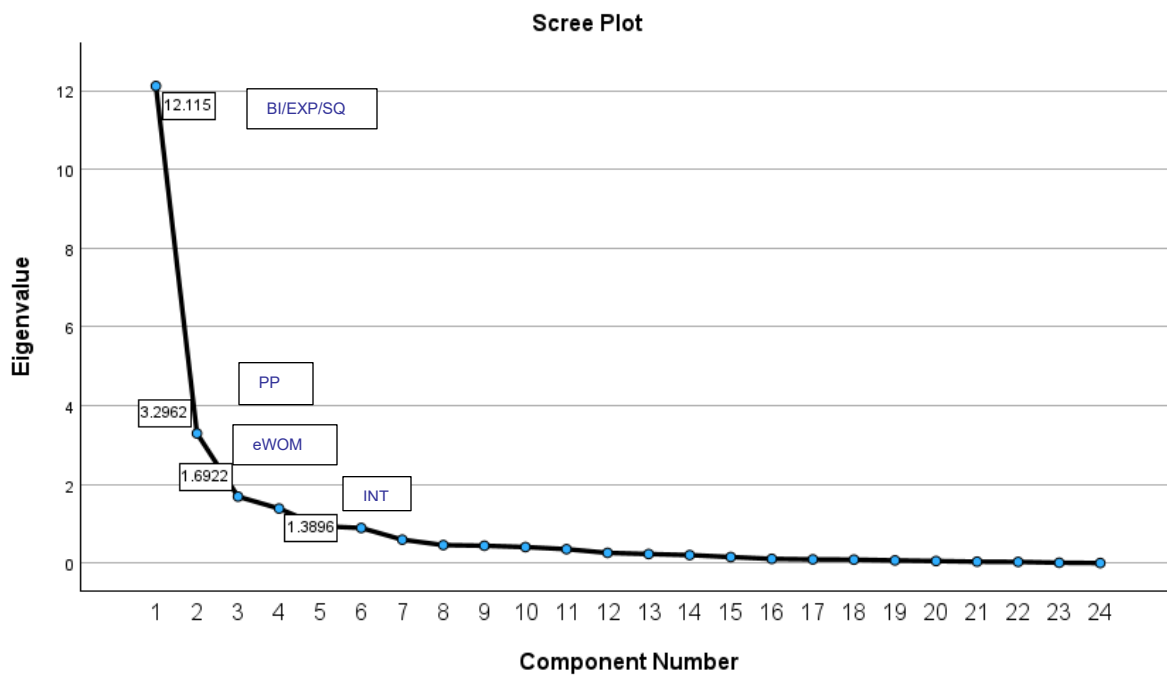


Figure 15: Figure Screen Plot for Eigen Values

Source: Constructed by the Author

Table 26 and Figure 16 show the extracted Eigenvalues greater than one. The scree plot displays a sharp decline in Eigenvalues, leveling off after the fourth component. For this reason, only four

factors were considered as the main dimensions impacting tourists' intentions. These four explain the most significant variance, while the remaining components in the flat portion of the plot contribute very little, confirming that these four underlying factors well represent the data.

Component Matrix	Factor	Items	Factor Loading (This Research)	Factor Loading (Other Research)	
1(BI/EXP/SQ)	Brand Image	BI1 – Differentiated image	0.81	0.83	(Kandampully & Hu, 2007)
		BI2 – High level of service	0.76	0.79	(Wu et al., 2018)
		BI3 – Special in ambiance	0.79	0.82	(Ladhari, 2019)
	EXPERIENCE	EXP1 – Escape daily routine	0.74	0.72	(Pine & Gilmore, 1999)
		EXP2 – Exceptional services	0.70	0.75	(Oh et al., 2007)
	SERVICE QUALITY	SQ1 – Staff responsive	0.72	0.70	(Wu & Ko, 2013)
		SQ2 – Staff care for guests	0.68	0.66	(Kim et al., 2008)
2 (PP)	PERCEIVED PRICE	PP1 – Discounted prices	0.82	0.84	(Chen & Xie, 2008)
		PP2 – Value for money	0.79	0.81	(Han & Hyun, 2015)
3 (eWOM)	Electronic Word-of-mouth	eWOM1 – Positive reviews	0.80	0.92	(Mao & Lyu, 2017)
		eWOM2 – Booking via reviews	0.76	0.90	(Jin et al., 2016)
4 (INT)	Intention	INT1 – Smart tech hotels	0.81	0.78	(Liang et al., 2018)
		INT2 – Recommend to others	0.78	0.82	(Zeithaml et al., 1996)

Table 27 Rotated Component Matrix^a

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

Source: Constructed by Author

According to the rotated components matrix summarized in Table 27, all items load strongly on their primary constructs. This shows this study's validity and consistency with findings from other scholars. Service quality and brand image items, for instance, had moderately high loadings of 0.68-0.72, which are in line with previous research that affirmed their contribution to customer satisfaction. Perceived price items had loadings of 0.79-0.82, supporting prior studies' findings that fairness and discounts in customer treatment boost booking choices among guests in five-star hotels. eWOM also had a substantial impact of 0.76-0.8, which aligns with Mao and Lyu's (2017) research, suggesting that online reviews positively affected customer perception and persuaded others to embrace the services of the particular five-star hotel.

4.5 Correlation Test

Correlation coefficients show the strength and direction of the relationship among bivariate variables in a study. The table compares the correlation analysis with other studies.

	This Research		Other Research		
	N	r ^{**}	N	r ^{**}	Researcher
H1 SQ → INT	507	0.593	420	0.562	Wu & Ko (2013)
H2 PP → INT	507	0.501	385	0.482	Han & Hyun (2015)
H3 BI → INT	507	0.567	400	0.540	Kandampully & Hu (2007)
H4 EXP → INT	507	0.644	398	0.621	Oh et al. (2007)
H5 EWOM → INT	507	0.538	412	0.539	Mao & Lyu (2017)

Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (**)

Table 28 Correlation Analysis of Factors in Comparison with Other Research Studies

Source: Constructed by the Author

The correlation analysis table 28 above shows that all four main factors have a significant impact on intention. Experience has the highest correlation coefficient ($r = 0.644$), indicating that it is the strongest factor influencing tourists' intention to stay in five-star hotels. Thus, service quality, brand image, price perception, and eWOM are important in influencing tourists' intention to stay in five-star hotels, consistent with a study by Mao and Lyu (2017).

4.6 Regression Model

A multiple linear regression was performed to examine the relationships among factors influencing tourists' intentions. The dependent variable was tourists' intentions, while the independent variables were eWOM, experience, perceived price, service quality, and brand image (Pearson, 1895). The findings are shown in the table below.

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate
14	.823 ^a	.677	.669	.540

Table 29 Model Summary for the Simple Linear Regression Model

n. Predictors: (Constant), EXP - Hotels can provide exceptional services to me. BI - The hotel is special in its guest amenities and ambiance., EXP - Staying in hotels allows me to escape from the daily routine., EXP - Hotels make me feel like a special guest. PP - Hotels offering special discounted prices attract me to make bookings. , SQ - Hotel staff are never too busy to respond to guests' requests, EWOM - Reading positive online reviews about modern hotel facilities and advanced in-room amenities increases my intention to stay at that hotel, EWOM - I keep relying on online reviews to decide booking, EWOM - Online review valence significantly affects hotel booking intention, PP - I tend to book hotels that offer

Source: Constructed by Author

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
14	Regression	301.930	12	25.161	86.274	<.001°
	Residual	144.070	494	.292		
	Total	446.000	506			

Table 30 ANOVA for the Simple Linear Regression Model

a. Dependent Variable: INT – recommend hotels that offer augmented and virtual reality experiences

. Predictors: (Constant), EXP -Experience, PP – Perceived price, SQ –Service quality, EWOM – Electronic word of mouth, and BI-brand image (Plumeyer et al., 2019).

Source: Constructed by the Author

Table 29 shows the validity of the model tests. The F-statistic (12, 494) =86.274<0.001. The model is therefore statistically significant. It confirms that the five elements have a major influence on travelers' intentions when taken together. Furthermore, it is confirmed that the variation explained by the model is not the result of random chance by the high F-value and the extremely low significance level (< 0.001).

4.6.1 Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) Analysis

The multicollinearity between the predictors was evaluated by looking at VIF values. When the VIF value is less than 5, independent variables typically do not show multicollinearity (Jeng, 2023). However, as levels between 5 and 10 are seen as acceptable, there is no widely recognized VIF threshold (Jeng, 2023). According to Table 30's coefficients, the majority of VIF values fell within an acceptable range of 2.11 to 5.56. This indicates that there is little correlation between the majority of the independent variables. Jeng (2023) shows that although Brand Image (9.809) and Service Quality (5.326) have somewhat higher values, they are still within the acceptable range. The reliability of the regression coefficients for interpretation is thus confirmed by the VIF results.

The following regression model was developed to explain the relationship between tourists' intention to recommend hotels offering augmented and virtual reality experiences (**INT**) and the five main predictor variables: Experience (**EXP**), Brand Image (**BI**), Perceived Price (**PP**), Service

Quality (SQ), and Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM). The regression equation derived from the analysis is expressed as follows:

$$\text{INT} = 4.544 + 0.404\text{EXP}(\text{ex}) - 0.670\text{BI}(\text{sp}) - 0.278\text{EXP}(\text{esp}) + 0.470\text{EXP}(\text{sp good}) - 0.470\text{PP}(\text{offer sp}) + 0.547\text{SQ}(\text{never too busy}) - 0.273\text{EWOM}(\text{read online review}) + 0.268\text{EWOM}(\text{keep relying}) - 0.245\text{EWOM}(\text{online review}) + 0.198\text{PP}(\text{tend to book}) - 0.343\text{BI}(\text{high level}) + 0.171\text{SQ}(\text{promise})$$

Model 1		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
14	(Constant)	4.544	.205		22.121	<.001		
	EXP - exceptional services	.404	.042	.519	9.573	<.001	.222	4.503
	BI - guest amenities	-.670	.052	-.593	-12.894	<.001	.309	3.236
	EXP - daily routine	-.278	.046	-.269	-6.042	<.001	.329	3.043
	EXP - special guest.	.470	.049	.581	9.634	<.001	.180	5.559
	PP - special discounted	-.470	.045	-.391	-10.528	<.001	.474	2.112
	SQ - never too busy	.547	.050	.531	11.017	<.001	.282	3.549
	EWOM - online reviews	-.273	.043	-.262	-6.325	<.001	.382	2.618
	EWOM - relying on online	.268	.038	.268	6.997	<.001	.444	2.251
	EWOM- affects hotel booking	-.245	.041	-.243	-5.952	<.001	.393	2.542
	PP - offer the best service	.198	.047	.221	4.217	<.001	.237	4.217
	BI - high level of service	-.343	.068	-.402	-5.016	<.001	.102	9.809
	SQ - services they promise	.171	.049	.208	3.520	<.001	.188	5.326

Table 31 Coefficients

Source: Constructed by the Author

Table 31 presents the coefficients of the independent variables predicting tourists' intention to stay in five-star hotels in Hong Kong. The statistically significant positive predictors were service

quality (SQ), experience (EXP), perceived price (PP), and reliance on online reviews (EWOM), all with $p < 0.001$.

The Service Quality construct “Hotels’ staff are never too busy to respond to guests' requests” had a strong positive effect ($B = 0.531$, $t = 11.017$), indicating that greater staff attentiveness and responsiveness substantially increase tourists’ booking intentions. Similar findings were reported by Al-Ababneh (2017), who observed that responsive service and prompt assistance strengthen satisfaction and behavioral intentions in the hotel industry.

In experience, the construct Hotels made me feel like a special guest, with a high positive coefficient ($B = 0.581$, $t = 9.634$), indicating that personalized treatment for visitors is a partner that boosts the intention to stay (Cantallos and Salvi, 2014). This is consistent with Oh, Fiore, and Jeoung (2007), Pine and Gilmore (1999), who concluded that an unforgettable emotional service experience would result in greater loyalty and positive word of mouth.

There was also a positive relationship with Perceived Price ($B = 0.221$, $t = 4.217$), indicating that, even in a high-income group, fairness between service quality and price is a significant determinant of hotel choice (Chi, Chi, and Ouyang, 2019). This is consistent with Han and Hyun (2015), who observed that customers tend to be more satisfied due to perceived price fairness and the value of money in luxury hospitality settings (Chung and Petrick, 2015).

Lastly, the Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM) embodied by online review reliability had a positive coefficient ($B = 0.268$, $t = 6.997$), indicating that trustworthy online reviews prompt tourists to select particular hotels. This confirms the previous findings by Mao and Lyu (2017), who highlighted the importance of authentic and consistent eWOM content in boosting consumer trust and purchase intention.

Collectively, these results show that quality service, memorable stays, perceived value, and reliable online feedback are important factors influencing the intention to stay at five-star hotels in Hong Kong (Bolton, Warlop and Alba, 2003).

4.6.2 Histogram of Perceived Risk

The variable intention of tourists showed a regular distribution pattern (Figure 16). The histogram bars generally show a bell-shaped pattern, indicating that the data follow a normal distribution and hence qualify for regression analysis, a parametric statistical test.

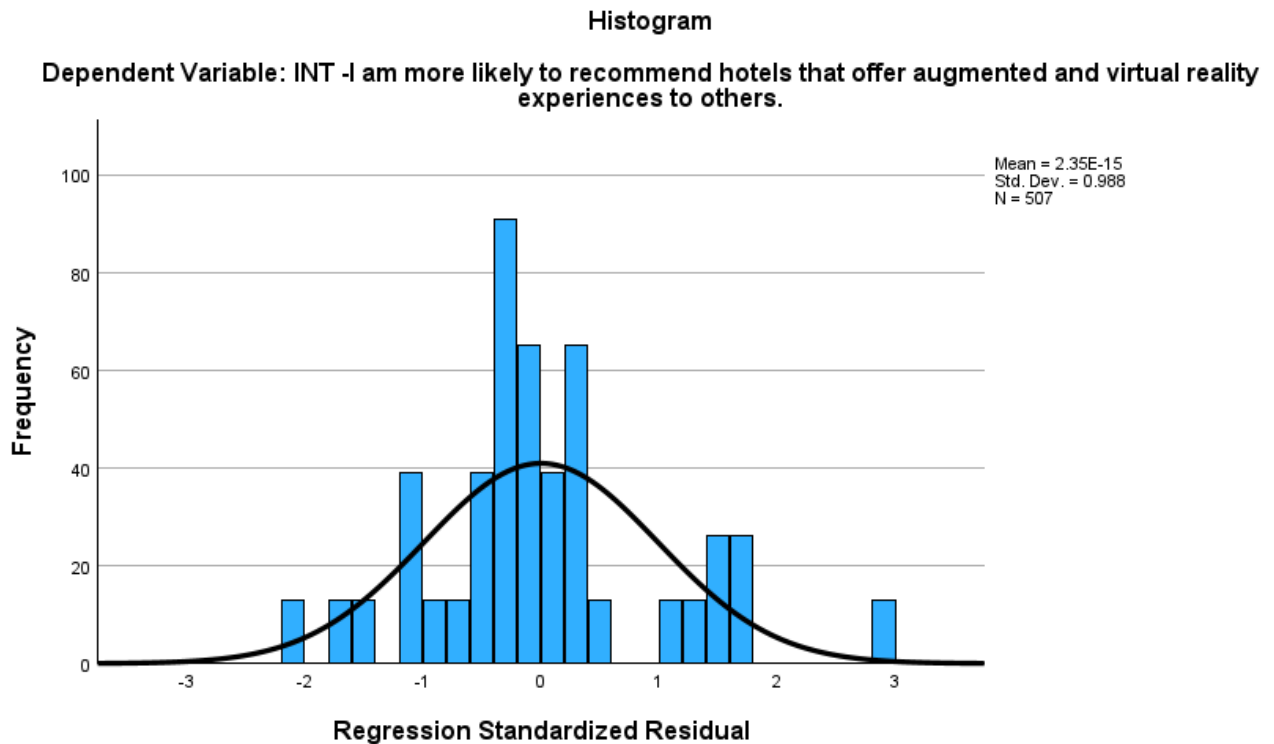


Figure 16 Histogram of Perceived Risk

Source: Constructed by the Author

The scatterplot in Figure 17 shows that the residuals of the regression model variable intention are scattered around zero in a random pattern. This confirms that there is no heteroscedasticity. Hence, the regression model is valid and fits the data well. It basically fulfills the linearity and homoscedasticity assumptions.

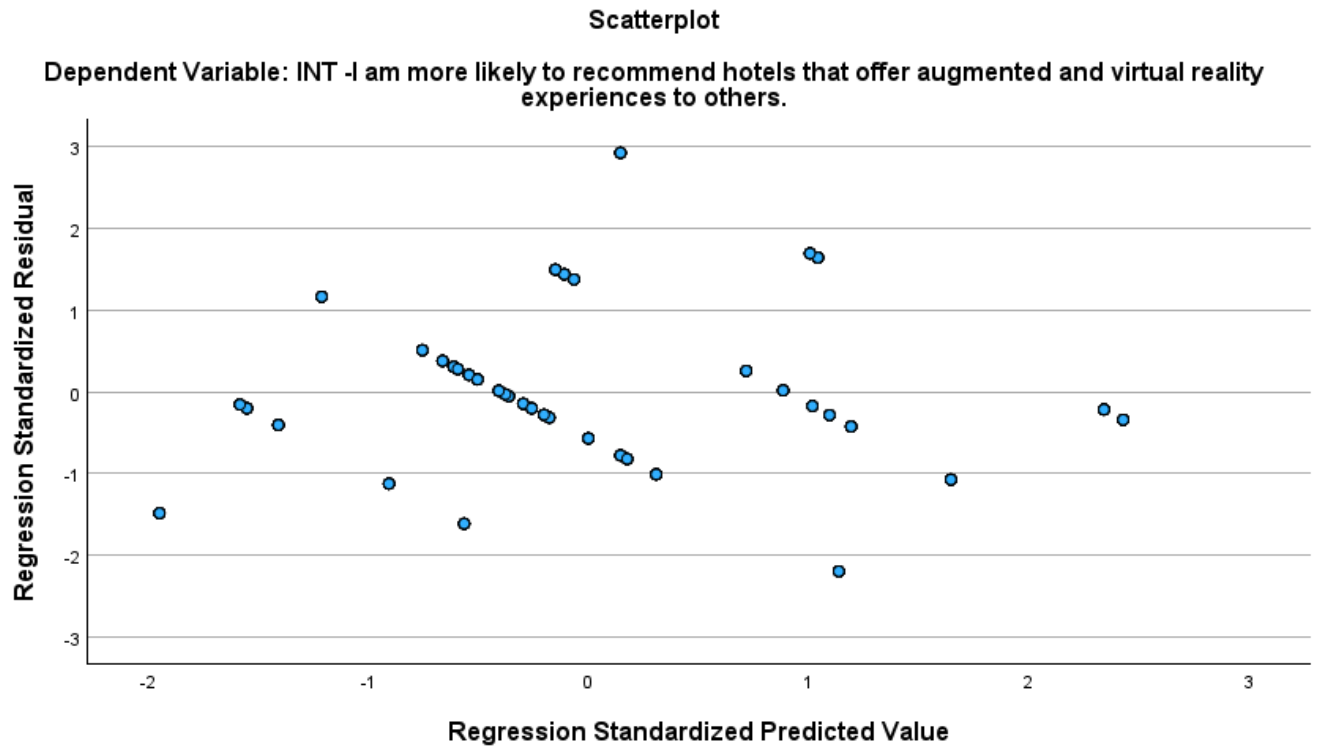


Figure 17 Intention of Tourist' Scatterplot

Source: Constructed by the Author

Figures 16 and 17 confirm that the model is valid and that the variables in the multiple linear regression analysis meet all parametric test assumptions for regression analysis. Hence, the findings are also reliable.

4.7 Summary of the Research Findings

The standardized regression coefficients (β), correlation coefficients (r), and coefficient of determination (R^2) are summarized in the diagram below (Figure 18).

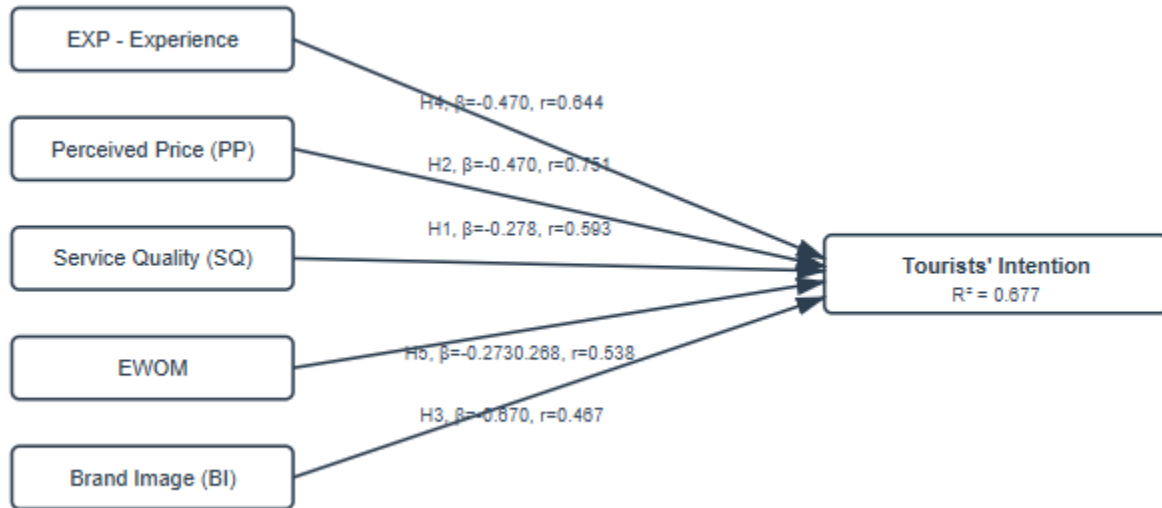


Figure 18: Summary of Research Findings

Source: Constructed by the Author

The standardized coefficients (β) indicate the strength and direction of each relationship, with Experience ($\beta = 0.470$) exerting a positive influence on tourists' intention, while Brand Image ($\beta = -0.670$) shows a strong negative effect. The correlation coefficients (r), ranging from 0.501 to 0.644, show the degree of association between each construct and the dependent variable. The model's $R^2 = 0.677$ demonstrates that these factors collectively explain 67.7% of the variance in tourists' intention.

Hypothesis	Hypothesis Developed	Betta	R**	Result
H1	Service quality has a significant positive effect on the intention of high-income tourists from Guangzhou to stay in five-star hotels in Hong Kong	-0.278	0.593	Support
H4	Perceived price has a significant positive effect on the intention of high-income tourists from Guangzhou to stay in five-star hotels in Hong Kong.	-0.470	0.501	Support
H3	Brand image has a significant positive effect on the intention of high-income tourists from Guangzhou to stay in five-star hotels in Hong Kong.	-0.670	0.567	Support
H4	Experience has a significant positive effect on the intention of high-income tourists from Guangzhou to stay in five-star hotels in Hong Kong.	0.470	0.644	support

Table 32: Summary Of Research Findings In Line With Research Hypothesis

Source: Constructed by the Author.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendation

This research was keen on understanding the factors that contribute to tourists' intention to stay in five-star hotels in Hong Kong. Five variables were tested, including service quality, brand image, eWOM, perceived price, and guest experience. The results establish industry implications and suggestions.

5.1 Conclusion

Qualitative and quantitative methodologies were used in a mixed-methods approach. The informant's attitudes and beliefs about the primary issues that motivate them to stay in five-star hotels were the main focus of the qualitative portion. Qualitative research can be used to examine opinions, perceptions, and beliefs (Matos-Castro et al., 2023). In order to achieve both descriptive and inferential objectives, quantitative analysis, on the other hand, entailed the empirical investigation of gathered numerical data (Kaliyadan and Kulkarni, 2019). The focus group's purpose was to explore further the effects of the quality of service, perceived price, brand image, experience, and eWOM on hotel and stay intention choice. The overall results showed that the brand image, service quality, experience, perceived price, and eWOM were strongly supported by the respondents; hence, it was possible to understand why they decided to stay at five-star hotels. The information revealed was found to be correlated with various hospitality literature. In particular, it turned out that the most important service quality factor customers pay attention to is attentiveness. In terms of price perceived, the answers revealed that the primary motivator for the informants was to enjoy value for their currency. Respondents also reported that when judging brand image, they consider brand consistency and trust. Memorable experiences are known to be the basic antecedents of satisfaction and customer loyalty. Finally, informants revealed that they tend to use trusted online reviews (eWOM) in order to make efficient choices.

During the quantitative stage, 507 respondents were included. The sample was predominantly male (325 men, 64.1%; 182 women, 35.9%) and comprised participants aged 25-44. The descriptive statistics indicated high mean scores of service quality ($M=4.31$), brand image ($M=4.23$), and guest experience ($M=4.31$). Perceived price was middle-range: the special discounts scored high ($M=4.51$) and value-for-money scored low ($M=3.67$). eWOM had positive influences ($M=4.10$), but intention measures were moderate (smart-tech integration $M=3.79$; AR/VR $M=3.31$). Scales to scales. Internal consistency was high (Cronbach 0.888; PP=0.782;

BI=0.922; Exp=0.925; EWOM=0.840; INT=0.831). Factor analysis identified four components, which explained 77.05 percent of the variability; Factor 1 (brand image + experience + service quality) accounted for 50.48 percent. Cross-tabs indicated that females and those aged 25-44 are more open to tech-enhanced offerings.

5.2 Recommendations

Five-star hotels can increase the number of overnight guests by offering exceptional service, maintaining a reputable image, and providing clients with unforgettable, client-centered experiences. However, this is not to mean that five-star hotels should ignore perceived price and eWOM. Hotels must maintain competitive pricing while paying close attention to eWOM, which can build trust and confidence in a brand and influence the intention to stay (Kim et al., 2021).

5.2.1 Theoretical Implications

The research findings contribute to academic literature in various ways. First of all, it advances the theory of planned behavior (TPB), a framework for connecting behaviors to internal motivations. As a framework to understand visitors' intentions to visit a facility, the theory has surfaced in the majority of hospitality studies (Yeh et al., 2021; Zhang, Wong and Wang, 2025). The research findings add to the model by emphasizing the influence of service quality, brand image, customer experience, perceived pricing, and eWOM on the intention to stay at a five-star hotel, since the theory pays significant attention to attitudes (Lee et al., 2016). For example, if someone is certain they will have exceptional or unforgettable experiences, they will stay at a five-star hotel. This reflects attitude, an important element of TPB, which refers to the overall feelings associated with performing a specific behavior (Zhang, Wong and Wang, 2025).

Previously, factors such as brand image and experience were merely perceived as antecedents of satisfaction in hospitality. Çelikkol (2020) asserted that brand image determines customer satisfaction and loyalty. For their part, Barusman, Rulian and Susanto (2019) identified guest experience as a factor that influences satisfaction. This research goes further than this to show that brand image and guest experience are more than just antecedents to customer satisfaction. Instead, the two factors have a substantial impact on determining behavioral intent. Quantitative research has shown that these two factors are direct predictors of behavioral intent regarding staying in five-star hotels.

Perceived price is among the most significant factors affecting consumer choice in the hotel industry (Bela, 2024). However, none of the existing studies have focused on five-star hotels, particularly the intention to stay overnight. This research shows that while perceived price is a significant consideration, it plays only a supporting role. Generally, it shows that in luxury or high-end consumption, consumers do not pay too much attention to monetary evaluation. Instead, emphasis is placed on the experiential value that guests are likely to draw from the facility (Singh, 2023).

The study further emphasizes the role of eWOM in trust-based decision-making within the hospitality sector. Data from online reviews can influence other customers' views and buying behavior. In this respect, the study contributes to the Stimulus-organism-Response (SOR) model (Bui et al., 2025). The theory offers a connection between environmental factors and behaviors (Bui et al., 2025). eWOM, whether in text- or video-based form and packaged well, can act as a stimulus that influences customer behavior (Bui et al., 2025). The quality and quantity of eWOM can be highly significant in building trust that guides tourists to choose five-star hotels. Based on this, the brand's reputation and perceptions of service quality can be translated into concrete behavioral intentions to increase the likelihood of tourists staying in a five-star hotel, with reviews or video packages of user experiences as a good metric (Kumari and Sangeetha, 2022).

5.2.2 Practical Implications

The research has provided important practical ramifications for stakeholders in the hotel industry in Hong Kong, especially those in the luxury five-star sector. These stakeholders include the hotel management, employees, marketers, and potential investors.

5.2.2.1 Service Quality

Research indicates that behavioral intention to remain at five-star hotels is a strong predictor of service quality. Service quality is an empirical variable and can be operationalized in different ways. For example, scholars such as Ali et al. (2021) focused on four dimensions —empathy, responsiveness, assurance, and tangibility. According to the research, managers of five-star hotels should invest in responsiveness, attentiveness, and personalization. Responsiveness could be achieved through effective communication between personnel and clients, as well as the introduction of non-contact services (e.g., mobile applications) that enhance response efficacy. A culture of proactivity can be strengthened through increased training, which equips customers to recognize or anticipate client needs (Aslam et al., 2020). Finally, the organization is supposed to

incorporate AI and data analytical tools to gather data in an ethical manner that can be used to personalize it (Liu, Jiang and Muhammad, 2024).

5.2.2.2 Brand Image

The brand image has been identified as an influential factor in whether guests will stay overnight at five-star hotels in Hong Kong. As such, the five-star facilities will need to enhance their brand image. To begin with, influencers must be employed, including celebrities with a good reputation as brand ambassadors (Benevento et al., 2025). Second, five-star hotels must focus on exclusivity and luxury in their branding and messaging (Xi et al., 2022). Finally, branding auditing must be conducted periodically to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (Shappell et al., 2018).

5.2.2.3 Perceived Price

Based on the results, several essential aspects have been identified. To begin with, rather than focusing on price, the marketing team can improve value messaging by highlighting the high quality of its products and the absence of S-related issues (Wang, Yang and He, 2022). Secondly, the company should add other services, such as profitable breakfast options or spas, that enhance value without increasing prices (Kunselman, 2024). This may strengthen perceived fairness, thereby reducing churn (Dominique-Ferreira and Antunes, 2020). Finally, the company must attempt to maintain prices at the industry average to avoid unnecessary comparisons (Gumussoy and Koseoglu, 2016).

5.2.2.4 Guest Experience

Managers and marketers (or other stakeholders) should be significantly concerned with personalization. To begin with, customer data can be ethically harvested to personalize services and address clients' needs. Wang (2025) stated that advanced technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI), could handle large amounts of information, providing an effective means to customize the guest shopping experience. Secondly, more personalized room environments and recommendations, along with customized amenities, are required to increase perceived value and satisfaction (Siboro and Harefa, 2023). Finally, hotels may invest in memorable experiences, services provided to guests with a culture-related twist (D'Acunto and Volo, 2021). One such example is arranging music that aligns with the customer's culture, creating a memorable experience.

5.2.2.5 eWOM

eWOM is highly influential on guests' perceptions and preferences. Contemporary travelers are eager to consider criteria such as online reviews, ratings, and social media recommendations, as Chevtaeva (2021) describes. This research has shown that eWOM influences tourists' decisions to stay in five-star hotels. For this reason, hotels must take charge of their online reputations, sending satisfied customers reminders through emails to leave online reviews (Kolesárová et al., 2024). Second, management should respond promptly to the negative review, acknowledge it, and address it, offering apologies and explanations (Huang and Xiao, 2024). Finally, to build positive reviews on all surfaces, hotels should show appreciation each time they receive attractive reviews that strengthen their image (Huang and Xiao, 2024).

5.2.2.6 Intention to Stay

The study found that younger respondents, especially those aged 35-44, were more likely to be attracted to five-star hotels that have implemented AR and VR technologies. Firstly, technological integration is essential to attract younger, customer-savvy, tech-savvy individuals with an innovative mindset. This aligns with the identical study by (Lim, Jasim and Das, 2024) who found that VR and AR not only improve tourist satisfaction but also shape their willingness to stay and visit. Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube must be included as marketing practices on the board. Liu, Jiang and Muhammad (2024) found that Gen Z and millennials might respond well to TikTok. Lastly, hotels will face the task of focusing on sustainability, such as offering plant-based menus or minimizing single-use plastics. It is consistent with the article by Seyfi, Vo-Thanh and Zaman (2024), revealing that Gen-Z consumers in the hospitality industry follow social and environmental values.

5.2.2.7 Demographic Factors

The intention to stay in five-star hotels was stronger among males than among females (36% vs. 24%). Regarding age, the younger age bracket (25-44) was more likely to stay in 5-star hotels, notably when they incorporated new technologies such as VR and AR. The young males, that is, those aged 25 to 44, should be the marketers' priority, as they are more likely to stay in five-star hotels, findings that are also consistent with Nasser's (2024) statistics.

5.3 Limitations

The variables were predetermined in this study, which gave the impression of rigidity. The closed research design implied that the possibility of other variables that might affect tourists' decision to stay at five-star hotels would be sidelined. Next, the issue of the gender imbalance deserves to be mentioned as well, owing to the disproportionate representation of both male and female subjects. This may easily distort the results of the studies.

Moreover, self-reported information was a significant limitation to the study, as it could lead to social desirability bias among participants. In addition, this study was cross-sectional. This means the researchers' views and perspectives were captured at a single point in time. Any changes in attitudes may not have been captured in the study. Also, this research neglects the impact of moderating and mediating variables in the relationship between independent and dependent variables. Some potential examples of mediators or moderators include trust, satisfaction, and cultural orientation (Llego, 2022). A factor analysis with a 77% factor loading, despite the use of non-probability sampling, was a significant shortcoming. Finally, a larger sample size in the focus group should have been used. While 6 participants are feasible, they significantly limit the study's external validity.

5.4 Suggestions for Future Research

There are several suggestions for prospective research on the same subject. Firstly, prospective inquiries should strive to balance the proportion of male and female participants to get a balanced view. This is because men and women have different experiential priorities and consumption patterns in the hospitality sector (Nasser, 2024).

Secondly, a longitudinal design is needed to capture participants' changing views and perspectives over time. Rather than a focus group that limits the number of participants, an interview can be used to collect qualitative data from a larger sample size. Further, there is a need to incorporate and test the implications of mediators and moderators, such as trust, satisfaction, and cultural orientation.

To improve the factor analysis percentage beyond the current cumulative variance of approximately 77%, some interventions to consider include expanding the number of participants. Rogers (2022) asserted that an expanded sample size can enhance the stability and reliability of the factor loadings. Likewise, factor analysis can be enhanced by including more variables, which

tend to capture greater variance (Rogers, 2022). Another option is to improve the measurement quality. For instance, future studies should pay greater attention to the accuracy and validity of the survey to ensure it effectively captures the constructs under investigation (Rogers, 2022). Another option is to use non-probability sampling techniques, such as snowball sampling or purposive sampling. Using non-probability sampling techniques can enable researchers to have more control over who they include in the study. For instance, they can unlock insights from underrepresented demographics and other diverse groups, thereby strengthening the study's generalizability (Ahmed, 2024).

5.5 Summary

In the post-pandemic era, five-star hotels in Hong Kong have yet to reach their pre-COVID-19 booking levels. This research investigates ways to influence tourists from Guangzhou to stay overnight in Hong Kong's five-star hotels. Based on qualitative and quantitative data, all factors, including service quality, brand image, eWOM, experience, and perceived price, influence behavioral intention to stay in hotels, albeit to varying degrees. Company leaders, ranging from the CEO to the marketers, must recognize the influence of these variables and implement the best practices discussed in the recommendations section.

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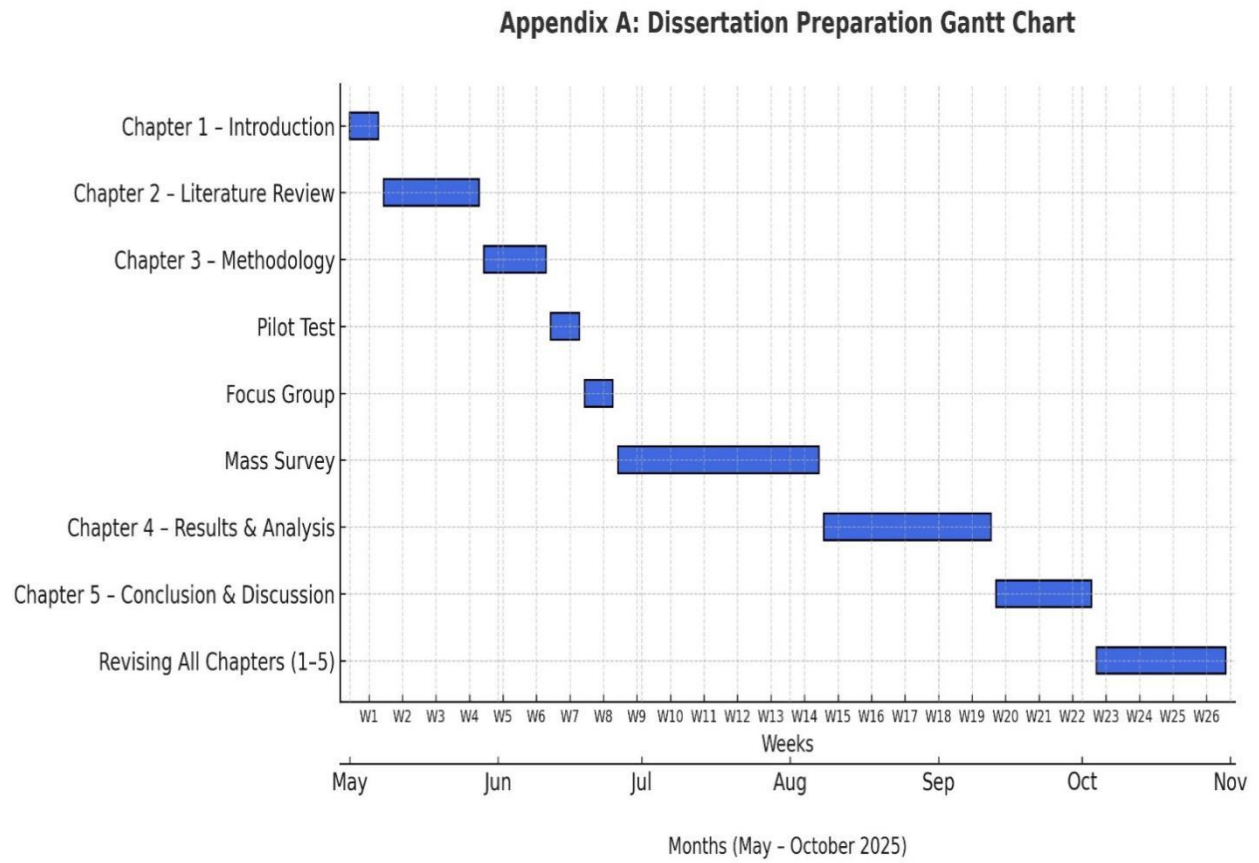
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Appendices

Appendix A: Dissertation Preparation Gantt Chart



Appendix B: Survey Question for Pilot Test

Service Quality						
1	Hotel staff have guests' best interests at heart.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Hotel staff provide services at the time they promise.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Hotel staff are dependable in handling service problems.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Hotel staff are never too busy to respond to guests' requests	1	2	3	4	5
Perceived Price						
5	The value of hotels makes it worth the money, time, and effort invested in the accommodation.	1	2	3	4	5
6	I look for hotels that offer the best possible price that meets my needs	1	2	3	4	5
7	I tend to book hotels that offer the best service for their price.	1	2	3	4	5
8	Hotels offering special discounted prices attract me to make bookings to stay.	1	2	3	4	5
Brand Image						
9	Hotels offer a high level of service.	1	2	3	4	5
10	Hotels are luxurious	1	2	3	4	5
11	The hotel is special in its guest amenities and ambiance	1	2	3	4	5
12	Hotels show a differentiated image.	1	2	3	4	5
Experience						
13	Hotels make me feel like a special guest.	1	2	3	4	5
14	Hotels make my stay memorable.	1	2	3	4	5

15	Hotels can provide exceptional services to me	1	2	3	4	5
16	Staying in hotels allows me to escape from the daily routine.	1	2	3	4	5
eWOM						
17	I keep relying on online reviews to decide on a booking	1	2	3	4	5
18	I decided to make a room booking with the hotel because of the guest's positive online reviews.	1	2	3	4	5
19	Online review valence significantly affects hotel booking intention	1	2	3	4	5
20	Reading positive online reviews about modern hotel facilities and advanced in-room amenities increases my intention to stay at that hotel	1	2	3	4	5
Intention to Stay						
21	I would use augmented and virtual reality to evaluate hotel services before I make bookings.	1	2	3	4	5
22	The integration of smart technologies (e.g., IoT-enabled climate control, AI-driven services) in hotels enhances my intention to stay due to improved convenience.	1	2	3	4	5
23	After experiencing a hotel's augmented and virtual reality features, I intend to book another future stay.	1	2	3	4	5
24	I am more likely to recommend hotels that offer augmented and virtual reality experiences to others.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix C: Revised Survey Questionnaires After Conducting Pilot Test

Service Quality						
1	Hotel staff have guests' best interests at heart.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Hotel staff provide services at the time they promise.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Hotel staff are dependable in handling service problems.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Hotel staff are never too busy to respond to guests' requests	1	2	3	4	5
Perceived Price						
5	The value of hotels makes it worth the money, time, and effort invested in the accommodation.	1	2	3	4	5
6	I look for hotels that offer the best possible price that meets my needs	1	2	3	4	5
7	I tend to book hotels that offer the best service for their price.	1	2	3	4	5
8	Hotels offering special discounted prices attract me to make bookings to stay.	1	2	3	4	5
Brand Image						
9	Hotels offer a high level of service.	1	2	3	4	5
10	Hotels are luxurious	1	2	3	4	5
11	The hotel is special in its guest amenities and ambiance	1	2	3	4	5
12	Hotels show a differentiated image.	1	2	3	4	5
Experience						
13	Hotels make me feel like a special guest.	1	2	3	4	5
14	Hotels make my stay memorable.	1	2	3	4	5

15	Hotels can provide exceptional services to me	1	2	3	4	5
16	Staying in hotels allows me to escape from the daily routine.	1	2	3	4	5
Ewom						
17	I keep relying on online reviews to decide on a booking	1	2	3	4	5
18	I decided to make a room booking with the hotel because of the guest's positive online reviews.	1	2	3	4	5
19	Online review valence significantly affects hotel booking intention	1	2	3	4	5
20	Reading positive online reviews about modern hotel facilities and advanced in-room amenities increases my intention to stay at that hotel	1	2	3	4	5
Intention to Stay						
21	I would use augmented and virtual reality to evaluate hotel services before I make bookings. <i>(For instance, I might use a virtual reality tour to explore a hotel's rooms, lobby, and amenities online before deciding to book, or use an augmented reality app to see how a room layout fits my preferences.)</i>	1	2	3	4	5
22	The integration of smart technologies (e.g., IoT-enabled climate control, AI-driven services) in hotels enhances my intention to stay due to improved convenience. <i>For example, if a hotel allows me to control lighting, curtains, and room service requests through a mobile app or voice assistant, I would find the experience more convenient and be more likely to choose that hotel again.</i>	1	2	3	4	5
23	After experiencing a hotel's augmented and virtual reality features, I intend to book another future stay.	1	2	3	4	5

	I am more likely to recommend hotels that offer augmented and virtual reality experiences to others.				
24	<i>(For example, if a hotel allows guests to preview rooms, facilities, or nearby attractions through virtual or augmented reality, I would be more inclined to tell my friends or family about it when they're planning a trip.)</i>	1	2	3	4 5

Appendix D: Sample Size Calculation

Required Sample size				
n =		$\frac{N \left(\frac{z}{e} \right)^2 pq}{N - 1 + \left(\frac{z}{e} \right)^2 pq}$		
=	18,978,000	$\frac{3.8416}{0.0025}$	0.6000	0.4000
		$\frac{18,978,368}{18,978,368}$		
=	1.0000	x	369	
=	369	at least sample size		

Appendix E: Respondents' Groups for Focus Group

Service Quality Can you recall a time when a hotel's brand image influenced your choice—positively or negatively? What aspects stood out?	John: I appreciate staff who are attentive and notice small details without being intrusive. Andrew: Attentiveness throughout the stay, especially during check-in and room interactions, makes a big difference. Fanny: I feel most satisfied when staff are genuinely attentive and remember my preferences. Kelvin: Attentive staff who are respectful and responsive help me feel comfortable, especially abroad. Andy: I expect staff to be consistently attentive, from arrival to departure. Albert: Attentive service that anticipates my needs without needing to ask is what I value most.
Perceived Price Who or what influences your perception of whether a five-star hotel offers good value for its price?	John: I look at what's included—if the experience matches the price, it feels worth it. Andrew: I base it on the overall experience and whether I feel I'm getting value for what I pay.

	Fanny: If the amenities and comfort justify the cost, I consider it good value. Kelvin: I compare what I get for the price with other hotels and decide based on that. Andy: Promotions and the overall package help me judge whether it's worth the price. Albert: I assess value by how well the hotel delivers on comfort, convenience, and experience.
Brand Image Which aspects of a five-star hotel brand influence your decision to book with them?	John: When I travel for work, I need to be sure the hotel maintains high standards. A strong brand image gives me confidence in the quality of service, cleanliness, and professionalism. I usually choose internationally recognized five-star hotels in Hong Kong because their reputation assures me of a smooth stay. Andrew: For my family, safety and comfort are top priorities. A hotel with a reputable brand image feels more trustworthy. I associate well-known brands with better security, child-friendly amenities, and reliable customer service, which makes me more likely to book with them. Fanny: I rely heavily on brand image when choosing a hotel. It reflects consistency and reliability. In Hong Kong, I prefer five-star

	hotels with a strong global presence because I know what to expect, and that makes me feel secure and valued as a guest. Kelvin: Brand image is everything to me. It signals prestige, exclusivity, and high standards. When I stay in Hong Kong, I choose five-star hotels that are known for their luxurious experiences and elite reputation. It is not just about staying—it is about status and comfort. Andy: I travel often, and I do not have time to gamble on unknown hotels. A strong brand image means the hotel has earned trust over time. In Hong Kong, I stick with five-star brands that have proven themselves globally. It is about peace of mind. Albert: When attending conferences or events in Hong Kong, I look for hotels that are not only close to the venue but also have a reputable brand image. It tells me they are professional, well-managed, and cater to international guests. That makes them my top choice.
Experience What makes you feel valued or satisfied with your stay?	John: Small gestures and thoughtful touches make the stay memorable.

	Andrew: A smooth, well-organized experience with standout moments makes me feel valued. Fanny: Wellness options and personalized attention help create a memorable stay. Kelvin: Unique cultural experiences and warm hospitality leave a lasting impression. Andy: Celebrating special occasions with thoughtful extras makes the experience unforgettable. Albert: A seamless and personalized experience is what makes a stay truly memorable.
eWOM (Electronic Word of Mouth) 1. What kind of information helps you decide whether a hotel meets your expectations?	John: I rely on detailed, recent information from trusted sources to make my decision. Andrew: I look for consistent insights from experienced travelers to guide my choice. Fanny: I trust information that highlights cleanliness, comfort, and overall guest satisfaction. Kelvin: I consider multiple sources and look for patterns that help me feel confident.

	Andy: I focus on current, reliable information that reflects the hotel's standards. Albert: I make decisions based on trusted insights and how well the hotel responds to concerns.
Intention to Stay What motivates you to choose a five-star hotel for your stay?	John: I choose five-star hotels when I want guaranteed comfort and a smooth experience. Andrew: For business or family trips, I want the assurance of high standards. Fanny: I stay at five-star hotels when I want peace of mind and reliable service. Kelvin: I book five-star hotels for the assurance of luxury and consistency. Andy: I'm motivated by the promise of a high-quality experience that meets my expectations. Albert: I choose five-star hotels when I want everything to run smoothly without compromise.