



THE HONG KONG
POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY

香港理工大學

Pao Yue-kong Library

包玉剛圖書館

Copyright Undertaking

This thesis is protected by copyright, with all rights reserved.

By reading and using the thesis, the reader understands and agrees to the following terms:

1. The reader will abide by the rules and legal ordinances governing copyright regarding the use of the thesis.
2. The reader will use the thesis for the purpose of research or private study only and not for distribution or further reproduction or any other purpose.
3. The reader agrees to indemnify and hold the University harmless from and against any loss, damage, cost, liability or expenses arising from copyright infringement or unauthorized usage.

IMPORTANT

If you have reasons to believe that any materials in this thesis are deemed not suitable to be distributed in this form, or a copyright owner having difficulty with the material being included in our database, please contact lbsys@polyu.edu.hk providing details. The Library will look into your claim and consider taking remedial action upon receipt of the written requests.

**THE INFLUENCE OF ETRUST ON INTENTION
TO PURCHASE FROM HOTEL WEBSITES IN CHINA**

LIANG WANG

Ph.D

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

2015

**The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
School of Hotel and Tourism Management**

**THE INFLUENCE OF ETRUST ON INTENTION TO
PURCHASE FROM HOTEL WEBSITES IN CHINA**

LIANG WANG

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

June 2014

CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINALITY

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it reproduces no material previously published or written, nor material that has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma, except where due knowledge has been made in the text.

LIANG WANG

ABSTRACT

Since the 1980s, the Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in general, the Internet in particular, have served as a competitive marketing and communication tool for hoteliers and consumers in facilitating information sharing and online transactions (Doolin, Burges, & Cooper, 2002; O'Connor & Frew, 2002). Given the relationship-based nature of service firms and the idea that “the Web is actually a very sticky space in both the business-to consumer and the business-to-business spheres” (Reichheld & Schefer, 2000. p.106), O'Connor and Frew (2004) suggested that hotel managers should develop closer and sustainable relationships with customers. In a bid to establish customer relationships, hotels need to generate consumer trust with which an increasing array of products and services could be purchased (Bart et al., 2005; Johnson & Grayson, 2005). The concept of consumer trust has attracted substantial attention from tourism and hospitality researchers (e.g. Kim et al., 2009; Kim et al., 2012; Lee & Turban, 2001. For a detailed review, please refer to Wang et al. (2014), while few research efforts have been devoted to online consumer trust (hereafter as eTrust), despite two exceptions (i.e. Fam et al., 2004; Sparks & Browing, 2011).

In considering the context-based nature of consumer trust (e.g. Fam et al., 2004; Hardy & Magrath, 1989; Lewicki & Bunker, 1995), it is essential to reconceptualise eTrust when it is introduced in a novel context. In addition, the majority of extant eTrust studies were conducted in the Western settings while little is known about it in the oriental hotel context, where business networks are relationship-based (Herbig & Martin, 1998; Pan, 2003). The present study attempts to fill in this research gap by examining

eTrust in terms of its formation mechanism like the underlying dimensions, antecedents, and consequent in the background of Chinese hotel industry. After consulting with the extant literature, scholars, and Chinese Internet consumers, this study selected hotel website attributes, hotel profiles in terms of hotel star rating and hotel ownership as antecedents of eTrust while online booking intentions as its consequence in China's hotel industry. Since the target samples in this study were Chinese Internet users, these variables were measured with importance scale. In other words, hotel website attributes was operationalized as perceived importance of website attributes and hotel profiles were operationalized as perceived performance across difference profile categories (i.e. private ownership, public ownership, high star rated and low star rated). The proposed measuring scales of variables of interest showed acceptable construct reliability and validity. Results proved the proposed positive impacts of hotel website attributes, perceived performance of high star rated hotels, perceived performance of privately and publicly owned hotels upon eTrust while the causal relationship between eTrust and the impacts of the perceived performance of low star rated hotels was not statistically supported. Furthermore, eTrust was proved to be a significant predictor of consumer online booking intentions. Based on the research findings, the academic and practical implications were offered. Limitations of the present study as well as future research work which could address these limitations were suggested at the end of this research.

Keywords: eTrust; hotel website attributes; hotel ownership in China; star rating system in China; online booking intentions

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis is a product of three years' effort and is also a starting point for a new journey of pursuing the beauty of doing research. Like most academic thesis, this effort would not have been possible without help and support from the following people.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to my chief supervisor, Prof. Rob Law, for his patience and selfless guidance. I am also deeply impressed by his enduring enthusiasm for academic research, which will influence me forever. I am also grateful for my two co-supervisors, Dr. Basak Denizci Guillet and Dr. Kam Hung, for their unflagging support and encouragement on my research. They are also the role models for me to emulate as a female researcher.

My sincere appreciation is extended to my supervisory committee members and the School Research Committee members who have offered me invaluable suggestions and insightful comments to improve this project. In this respect, my special thanks go to Dr. Wilco Chan, Dr. Honggen Xiao, and Dr. Deniz Kucukusta.

I want to thank The Hong Kong Polytechnic University for providing financial support and the School of Hotel and Tourism Management for the marvelous design of PhD program, including the courses and teaching training. In this point, I extend my thanks to Dr. Steve Pan and Dr. Bing Pan for their coaching and mentoring me to be a qualified tutor.

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my parents and my elder sister. Their unconditional love supported me to complete this thesis! I feel blessed to be a member in this warm and merry family! I love you all!

Finally, I would like to end this acknowledgement with a famous Chinese saying:
The way ahead is long; I see no ending, yet high and low I will search with my will
unbending (Qu Yuan)!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINALITY	ii
ABSTRACT.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vii
LIST OF FIGURES	xiii
LIST OF TABLES.....	xiv
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1 Chapter Introduction.....	1
1.2 Research Background.....	1
1.3 Scope of Study	9
1.4 Theoretical Framework.....	11
1.4.1 Reasoning of the Framework	11
1.4.2 Conceptual Models of the Theoretical Framework.....	12
1.5 Research Objectives.....	13
1.6 Definitions of Key Terms	13
1.7 Thesis Outline.....	14
1.8 Chapter Summary	17
Chapter 2: Literature Review	18
2.1 Chapter Introduction.....	18
2.1 Overview of the Research Context	19
2.1.1 Overview of China’s Hotel Industry	19

2.1.2 Introduction to Internet Applications in China’s Hospitality Industry.....	21
2.2 Theoretical Foundation of the Research	25
2.2.1 The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA).....	25
2.2.2 Technology Acceptance Model (TAM).....	27
2.2.3 Theoretical Approaches of Discussing Consumer Trust in the Tourism and Hospitality Industries	29
2.2.4 Influencing Factors of Trust Formation in the Tourism and Hospitality Industries.	31
2.3 Consumer Trust in Tourism and Hospitality	35
2.3.1 Definitions of Consumer Trust.....	38
2.3.2 Consumer Trust as a Multidimensional Concept.....	42
2.3.3 Research Methods	45
2.3.4 Measurement of Variables.....	46
2.3.5 Data Collection Methods and Sample Size.....	47
2. 4 eTrust	50
2.4.1 A Cross-Disciplinary Overview of Offline Trust.....	52
2.4.2 What Trust Means in eCommerce.....	59
2.4.3 Definitions of eTrust	61
2.4.4 Dimensions of eTrust.....	63
2.4.5 Antecedents of eTrust.....	65
2.4.6 Consequences of eTrust	69
2.5 Hotel Website Attributes	70
2.5.1 Overview of Hotel Website Attributes	70
2.5.2 Hotel Website Functionality.....	72

2.5.3 Hotel Website Usability	74
2.6 Hotel Profiles in China	76
2.6.1 Hotel Star Rating System in China	77
2.6.2 Hotel Ownership in China	83
2.7 Online Purchase Intentions	88
2.8 Hypotheses of Conjectural Associations among Constructs of Interest	91
2.9 Chapter Summary	101
Chapter 3: Research Methodology	103
3.1 Chapter Introduction.....	103
3.2 Overview of Research Methods	103
3.3 Research Nature	106
3.4 Questionnaire Development Process	107
3.4.1 Measurements Development Process of Main Constructs.....	109
3.4.2 Generation and Selection of Initial Measurement Items.....	110
3.5 Survey Design	112
3.5.1 Unit of Analysis	112
3.5.2 Sampling Size	113
3.5.3 Questionnaire Administration	114
3.6 Methods of Data Analysis.....	115
3.6.1 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)	117
3.6.2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA).....	119
3.6.3 Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)	120
3.7 Chapter Summary	123

Chapter 4: Data Analysis -- Preliminary Analysis	125
4.1 Chapter Introduction.....	125
4.2 Qualitative Methods.....	126
4.2.1 Semi-Structured Interviews	126
4.2.2 Focus Group Discussions.....	135
4.2.3 Summary of Qualitative Methods	140
4.3 Quantitative Method: Pilot Test to Purify the Items	140
4.3.1 Descriptive Statistics Results	140
4.3.2 Perceived Importance of Hotel Website Attributes	144
4.3.3 Hotel Profiles	146
4.3.4 eTrust	148
4.3.5 Online Booking Intentions	150
4.4 Chapter Summary	151
Chapter 5: Data Analysis -- Main Survey	152
5.1 Chapter Introduction.....	152
5.2 Data Examination	152
5.3 Demographic Profiles of Respondents	158
5.4 Assessment of Reliability and Validity of Measurement Scales	159
5.5 Testing of Measurement Models	166
5.5.1 Perceived Importance of Hotel Website Attributes	167
5.5.2 Hotel Star Rating.....	171
5.5.3 Perceived Importance across Hotel Ownership Types.....	172
5.5.4 eTrust	174

5.5.5 Online Booking Intentions.....	178
5.5.6 Overall Measurement Model Test.....	179
5.6 Structural Model Testing.....	183
5.7 Chapter Summary	189
Chapter 6: Conclusions and Implications.....	191
6.1 Chapter Introduction.....	191
6.2 Interpretations and Discussions of the Research Findings	191
6.2.1 Identify the underlying dimensions of eTrust in the context of China’s hotel industry.	191
6.2.2 Assess the Extent to which eTrust is Influenced by Perceived Importance of Hotel Website Attributes	195
6.2.3 Assess the extent to which eTrust is influenced by perceived performance of high and low star rated hotels, respectively.	196
6.2.4 Assess the extent to which eTrust is influenced by perceived performance of publicly owned and privately owned hotels respectively.	198
6.2.5 Assess the effects of perceived eTrust upon online booking intentions.....	200
6.3 Theoretical Implications.....	200
6.4 Practical Implications.....	204
6.5 Limitations.....	206
6.7 Future Research Directions.....	210
6.8 Chapter Summary	212
Appendix I Questionnaire (First Version in English)	214
Appendix II Questionnaire (First Version in Chinese).....	218

Appendix III Questionnaire (Second Version in Chinese)	221
Appendix IV Questionnaire (Second Version in English)	224
Appendix V Questionnaire (Third Version in English)	229
Appendix VI Questionnaire (Third Version in Chinese).....	234
References	237

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. 1 Reasoning of the Research Framework.....	11
Figure 1. 2 The Directional Effects of Website Quality and Hotel Profiles	12
Figure 2. 1 Theory of Reasoned Action	26
Figure 2. 2 Theory of Acceptance Model (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000)	28
Figure 2. 3 Proposed Conceptual Model.....	101
Figure 4. 1 Four Phrases of Preliminary Studies	125
Figure 5. 1 Measurement Model of Perceived Website Attributes (First order).....	168
Figure 5. 2 Measurement Model of Perceived Importance of Website Attributes (Second order)	170
Figure 5. 3 Measurement Model of Perceived Performance Star Rate-based Performance	171
Figure 5. 4 Measurement Model of Perceived Performance across Hotel Ownership 173	
Figure 5. 5 Measurement Model of eTrust (First order)	175
Figure 5. 6 Measurement Model of eTrust (Second order)	177
Figure 5. 7 Measuremnt Model of Online Booking Intentions	178
Figure 5. 8 Structural Model of Inter-relationships among Variables	184

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2. 1 Influencing factors of trust in tourism and hospitality research.....	33
Table 2. 2 Comparative Analysis of Star Rating System Chronologically	79
Table 2. 3 Statistics of China’s Hotel Ownership in 1989	85
Table 3. 1 Procedures for Measurement Development Process	109
Table 3. 2 Criteria for Cronbach’s Alpha and KMO	119
Table 3. 3 Forms of construct validity	119
Table 4. 1 Profile of Interviewees for Semi-interviews	127
Table 4. 2 Revisions based on Semi-structured Interviews	134
Table 4. 3 Steps in the Process of Focus Group Discussions.....	136
Table 4. 4 Revisions made in the Focus Group Discussion.....	137
Table 4. 5 Descriptive Statistics of Pilot Test (n=422)	143
Table 4. 6 EFA Results of Perceived Importance of Hotel Website Attributes (n=422)	145
Table 4. 7 EFA Results of Perceived Performance across Hotel Profiles (n=422) ...	147
Table 4. 8 EFA Results of eTrust in the Hotel Industry (n=422).....	149
Table 4. 9 EFA Results of Online Purchase Intentions (n=422)	150
Table 5. 1 Normality Test Results (n=842)	156
Table 5. 2 Demographic profiles of respondents (n=842)	159
Table 5. 3 Composite Reliability of the Major Constructs (n=842).....	161
Table 5. 4 Factor Loadings of Measurement Items (n=842).....	162
Table 5. 5 Inter-variable Correlations of Measurement Scales (n=842)	165

Table 5. 6 χ^2 of Alternative Models	166
Table 5. 7 Measurement Model of Hotel Website Quality (First order)	168
Table 5. 8 Measurement Model of Hotel Website Quality (Second order)	170
Table 5. 9 Measurement Model of Hotel Star Rating	172
Table 5. 10 Measurement Model of Hotel Ownership	173
Table 5. 11 Measurement Model of Hotel Website Quality (First order)	175
Table 5. 12 Measurement Model of eTrust (Second order)	177
Table 5. 13 Estimation of Fit Indices of the Measurement Model of Online Purchase Intentions	178
Table 5. 14 Overall Measurement Model Fit (n=842)	180
Table 5. 15 Proposed Structural Model.....	185

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Chapter Introduction

This study aims to construct an eTrust formation model in the context of China's hotel industry. More particularly, it examines how importance of hotel website attributes and perceived hotel characteristics-based performance (i.e. hotels ownership and star rating) influence online users' eTrust in the context of China's hotel industry. Chapter 1 presents the research background, defines the research scope, delineates the research objectives, defines key terms, and presents the structure of this research project.

1.2 Research Background

Since the 1980s, Internet commercial applications have dramatically revolutionized the tourism and hospitality industries (Au Yeung & Law, 2003; Buhalis & Law, 2008). Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in general and Internet in particular have been widely regarded as valuable tools for tourism practitioners as well as travelers (Law, Qi, & Buhalis, 2010). Tourism organizations, including businesses and destination management organizations, use ICTs to gain and maintain their competitiveness in the market. The success of several Online Travel Agents (OTAs) such as Expedia and Travelocity has suggested the significance of the Internet in hospitality and tourism. In addition to the impacts upon business operations, the advances of ICTs

greatly affect tourists' travelling decisions and behaviors. According to a report from the PhoCusWright (2012), a travel industry research authority, tourists from the US and Europe relied heavily on reviewing websites to make their travelling decisions.

Among the various sectors of tourism industry, hotels are "good fit for the internet" (Park, 2002, p. 16) as the nature of accommodation bookings seems ideally suited to the Internet. Reasons are as follows: (1) the information-intensive characteristics of lodging products result in the need for and symbiosis with ICTs which are full of information (Park, 2002); (2) lodging products are produced and consumed simultaneously; (3) hotel rooms are perishable and demand fluctuations are significant (McCole, 2002).

In response to the growing online market and increase their competitiveness in the market, most hotels have already adopted the Internet as an effective marketing tool to demonstrate, promote, and sell hotel products as well as services (O'Connor & Frew, 2002). Technology applications as a way to meet clients' needs have entered into hotel management philosophy and operating policy. For example, room reservations via the Internet have already become a common practice in hotels and have taken the traditional lodging distribution channels such as global distribution system (GDS) and offline travel agencies. TripAdvisor's latest Accommodation Owners Survey revealed that 63 percent

of accommodation owners cited online marketing as the top area in which they would prefer to increase investment (abouttourism, 2012). At the same time, most hotels have established their own presences, one of which is hotel-owned websites (Law & Hsu, 2006).

As long as a decade ago, Starkov (2002) suggested hotel-owned websites could be used as a good start point for a hotel's online distribution strategies. More importantly, increases of sales on its own websites could decrease the distribution cost, avoid brand erosion, and increase their control over price dispersion across divergent distribution channels (Morosan & Jeong, 2008). A recent report by L2, a think tank for digital innovation, revealed that hotels paid up to US\$2.5 billion to OTAs in 2010 alone (Revinat, 2012).

From travelers' perspective, hotel websites is one of the main channels to buy hotel products and services. Based on the results of 20 individual interviews among leisure and business travelers, HawkPartners (2012) found that among all online channels for travelers researching and booking rooms, hotel websites are the most often cited source. Accor, the world's leading hotel operator, had more than 100 million room nights generated from its centralized distribution channels in 2011, representing an increase of

6.5 percent from 2010. This contributed up to 45 percent of its total hotel room revenues (Hotel & Restaurant, 2012).

While the achievements are worthy of celebration, hotels are still a facing challenging situation as a substantial proportion of room bookings is accomplished through third-party websites (Law & Cheung, 2006). Considering the intangible and experiential nature of hotel products and services, tourists are more eager than ever to search for relevant information to lower their purchase risk. This also partially explains why consumers would doubt the reliability of online stores and are less likely to purchase online if they perceive a higher risk (Lim, 2003). Although currently no statistic reveals how many people involved in booking hotel rooms online, it is clear that not everyone purchases hotel rooms online. Online hotel bookings in Asia Pacific was expected to reach 22 percent by 2013 (Internet World States, 2011) while the Internet penetration in this area has already reached 44.6 percent (European Travel Commission, 2012). In 2012, the direct selling of hotel room reservations for overnight stays via official systems only contributed to eight percent of the overall room night sales in China (iResearch, 2014). The over-dependence on the intermediary distribution channels has also been identified as one of the critical issues facing the Chinese hotel industry.

In this context, efforts are called for to re-examine the utilization of hotel websites in influencing consumers' online booking intentions. A lack of eTrust has constantly been identified as one of the formidable barriers to eCommerce (Wang & Emurian, 2005; Shankar, Urban, & Sultan, 2002). A survey report produced by a market research company, revealed that up to 51 percent of surveyed firms would not do businesses with those they do not trust on the web (Forrester Report, 2009). In the same report, they indicated a large trust gap. Chen (2006) attributed customers' reluctance to purchase online to their concerns about: (1) the legitimacy and authenticity of a website; (2) quality of products; (3) system security and information privacy; and (4) back-up service. These doubts and uncertainties could be translated into customers' low perceived eTrust level towards the hotels. Thus, trust in the e-vendor should receive particular attention (McKnight, Choudhury, & Kacmar, 2002; Gefen, Karahanna, & Straub, 2003).

More importantly, the Web, which integrates technology applications and marketing principles, is a sticky space to conduct relationship marketing strategies. Schmidt, Cantalops, & dos Santos (2008) noted that the richness of a website is closely related to the experience a hotel has in utilizing the Internet as an electronic media. By experience, it refers to website phases which can be reflected through inclusions of different features on websites. Such statement implies the dynamic process of website

development, which goes along the continuum of customer relationships ranging from transactional to relational orientations (Gilbert & Powell-Perry, 2001). Gupta et al. (2004) echoed such argument and developed a framework, which consisted of three levels, namely information and design, e-commerce, and customer relationship management. Given the fact that consumer trust is a key concept of relationship marketing, understanding of it would offer into harnessing the potential of the Web.

Research attempts among tourism and hospitality scholars suggested that eTrust plays an essential role in influencing online accommodation booking relationships (Fam et al., 2004) and such a role could be affected by factors like eWord-of-mouth (Sparks & Browning, 2011). These studies assessed eTrust by obtaining consumers' perceptions of an online company (e.g. Kim et al., 2012; Sparks & Browning, 2011) and identifying eTrust criteria simultaneously from consumers and managers' perspectives. Sparks and Browning (2011) argued that consumers' view on the trustworthiness of hotels is the key determinant of their willingness to book online. However, the challenge is web users' perceived eTrust level toward hotel websites is not high. According to a report by HawkPartners (2012), information provided by hotel websites is of moderate trust rating, even though the information is of greatest breadth. Hence, research endeavors on the topic of eTrust would benefit hoteliers in better utilize their websites.

Literature review revealed that that eTrust is a context-based concept as its conceptualizations and formation may change due to antecedent and consequent variables across different angles, consumers, and accommodation service providers (Fam et al., 2004). Examination of previous studies revealed that eTrust studies mainly concentrate on the manufacturing industry (e.g. Zaheer, McEvily, & Perrone, 1998; Sako & Helper, 1998; Svensson, 2001) and in the Western context, little attention has been paid to the oriental hotel industry, where business networks are relationship-based (Herbig & Martin, 1998; Pan, 2003). Therefore, it is necessary to redefine and re-conceptualize this concept when it is introduced into a novel context, grounding in established research work from established disciplines.

This study aims to fill in this research gap by examining eTrust formation mechanism in China's hotel industry. China is the world's third largest tourist receptivity market and has a promising growth potential (Travel Blackboard, 2012). In Chinese context, researchers have generally identified trust as the core issue in the building of business network relationships (Wong, 1998; Pan, 2003; Wang, Siu, & Barnes, 2008; Chua, Morris, & Ingram, 2009). More importantly, scholars have identified the failure of Chinese e-marketing practitioners to build "transactional and institutional trust" with

customers as the major obstacle to eCommerce in China (Efendioglu & Yip, 2004; Gibbs, Kraemer, & Dedrick, 2006; Kshetri, 2007).

Fassnacht and Koese (2006) suggested more empirical research endeavors are needed to examine the impacts of online service quality on other constructs. At the same time, for effective person-website interactions, virtual communities, and their supporting ICTs must be taken into consideration to understand at least what happens among the users. This is certainly the case if we are to understand fully how hotels can develop a trusting relationship with customers in the virtual community, which will finally lead to increased sales on hotels' own websites.

Previous studies have established that eTrust is a function of consumers' assessment of the IT itself and features of the vendors behind the website. In the context of this research, formation of eTrust depends on not only consumers' perceptions of hotel websites as transaction platforms, but on consumers' perceptions of hotel themselves. This study was based on two important concepts, namely the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), details of which are presented in Chapter 2 of Literature Review. Particularly, Pavlou (2003) suggested that "there is theoretical and empirical support for integrating trust with TAM variables" (p. 110). Values of TRA and TAM in understanding consumer behaviors and technology-driven

contexts respectively have been constantly reported. Drawing upon these two models and related literature, this research aims to theoretically formulate and empirically verify a research model to understand eTrust formation mechanism in the context of China's hotel industry. It is noteworthy that this study did not simply integrate variables of interests into the existing model of TRA and TAM, given the context-specific nature of the concept of consumer trust.

1.3 Scope of Study

A literature review reveals that researchers have studied eTrust extensively in the Western context, but few have been done in the background of the hotel industry, especially in China. At the same time, Wang et al. (2008) found that trustworthy relationships exist in both China and Western relational practices, though its underlying mechanism varies accordingly. Given the context-specific feature of eTrust, there exists a question: How does eTrust in the background of Chinese hotel industry constitute?

To address this question, this study specifically investigates the eTrust formation mechanism by examining its underlying dimensions, antecedents, and consequences in the hotel industry in China. As to the determining factors, previous studies have extensively suggested that eTrust relates to consumers perceived website attributes like Pavlou (2003) in which eTrust was integrated into the TAM. Furthermore, many other

studies (e.g., Shankar et al., 2002; Uslaner, 2004; Lee, Kang, & McKnight, 2007) stated that trust can be transferred between the offline and online environments. The emergence of multiple touch points or multichannel marketing makes the connection between offline trust and eTrust more important (Shankar et al., 2002). Similarly, Kim and Tadisina (2005) suggested that consumers' perceived level of eTrust can be influenced by company profile and website quality. Thus, to better understand eTrust, researchers need to consider hotel features.

After reviewing the literature relating to China's hotel and relevant documents, this study selected star rating systems and hotel ownership as antecedents in China's hotel industry that can affect eTrust. This is because the star rating system is a traditionally and widely accepted way to evaluate a hotel's quality and has a strong influence on the level of consumer expectations (Israel, 2002; Ariffin & Maghzi, 2012). It should be noted that star rating and ownership system per se do no matter and what matters is the corresponding hotel performance. For this reason, these two variables were operationalized as star rating- and ownership-based perceived performance. Furthermore, based on previous studies, this study operationalized star rating and ownership system into high- and low- rating as well as privately- and publicly-owned hotels. More detailed

information relating to star rating and ownership categorization is presented in Chapter 2 of Literature Review.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

1.4.1 Reasoning of the Framework

First, it is necessary to specify where or at what level the construct under study is expected to manifest its effects. This research conceptualizes and investigates a theoretically grounded framework at the individual level. It aims to determine how hotel website attributes and hotel profiles increase or reduce web users' eTrust level. In considering TRA, TAM, and other relevant studies, the logical reasoning behind this study was presented in Figure 1.1.

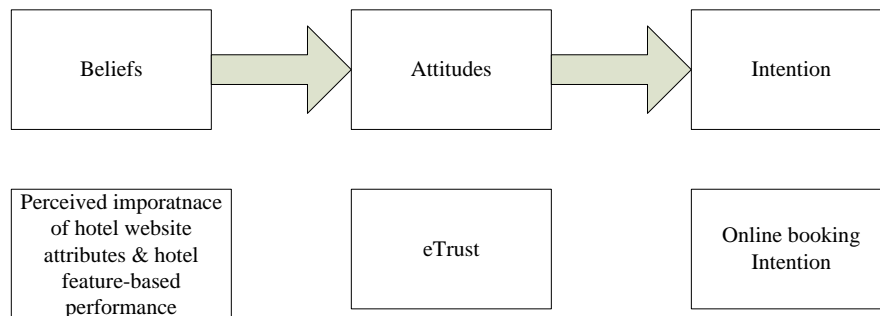


Figure 1. 1 Reasoning of the Research Framework

As Figure 1.1 implies, with a sound theoretical background the current study has two major assumptions. First, it maintains that perceived importance of website attributes and hotel performance across star rating and ownership types can serve as the indicators

for eTrust perceptions. Second, this study intends to test the perceived eTrust level of consumers on their online purchase intentions.

1.4.2 Conceptual Models of the Theoretical Framework

Figure 1.2 depicts a model of the antecedents and consequent variable of eTrust in hotel websites. A variety of factors may affect consumers' perceived level of eTrust. However, it is not the goal of this study to examine the influences of all the factors on trust in an online environment. Instead, by considering features of eTourism in China, this study mainly focuses on several significant antecedents and consequences of eTrust in China's hotel industry. Specifically, this study regards perceived importance of hotel website attributes and perceived hotel performance across hotel profiles as antecedents of eTrust while web users' purchase intention as the consequence of eTrust. Chapter 2 discusses justifications of the model construction.

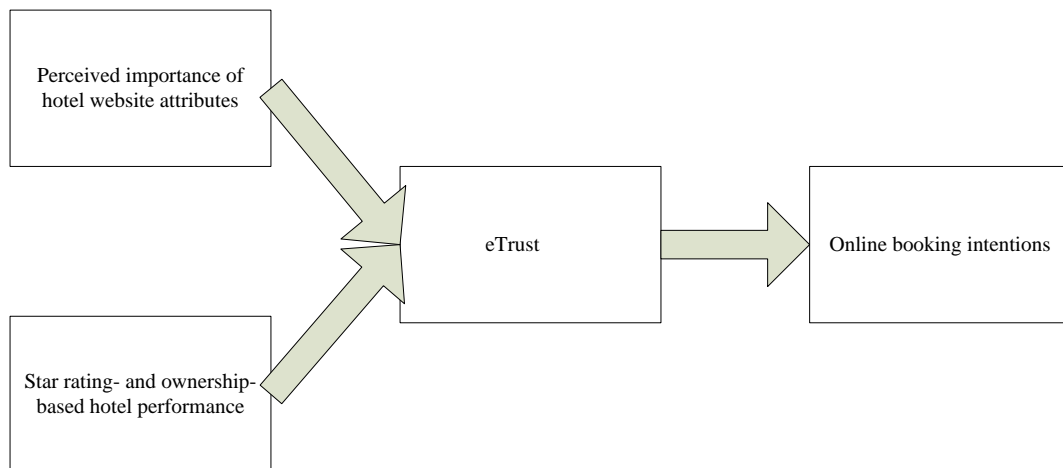


Figure 1. 2 The Directional Effects of Website Quality and Hotel Profiles

1.5 Research Objectives

This research addressed the following question: How do perceived importance of hotel website attributes and hotel profile-based performance affect users' perceived level of eTrust, which in turn influences consumers' online booking intentions?

To address the proposed research question, this study has five main objectives:

- i. Identify the underlying dimensions of eTrust in the context of China's hotel industry;
- ii. Assess the extent to which eTrust is influenced by perceived importance of hotel website attributes;
- iii. Assess the extent to which eTrust is influenced by perceived performance of high and low star rated hotels respectively;
- iv. Assess the extent to which eTrust is influenced by perceived performance of publicly owned and privately owned hotels respectively; and
- v. Assess the effects of perceived eTrust upon online booking intentions.

1.6 Definitions of Key Terms

eTrust refers to a person's psychological state comprising the intentions to accept vulnerability and positive expectations of hotels' intentions or behaviors.

Perceived Performance of Hotel Website Attributes refers to the degree to which a hotel website attributes are important in facilitating efficient and effective delivery of products and services.

Hotel star rating is the mechanism in which accommodation establishments of the same type (e.g., hotels, motels, and inns) have been conventionally broken down into classes, categories, or grades according to their common physical and service characteristics and established at government, industry or other private levels.

Hotel ownership refers to who has certain rights and duties over the hotel. Therefore, Perceived Performance of hotel star rating/hotel ownership is hotel performance across high and low star rating as well as privately and publicly owned hotels.

Online Booking Intentions refers to customers' likelihood of booking a hotel room from hotel owned websites.

1.7 Thesis Outline

The present thesis consists of six major chapters: (1) the introduction; (2) literature review; (3) research methodology; (4) data analysis -- preliminary analysis; (5) data analysis -- main survey; and (6) conclusions and implications.

Chapter 1 presents the contextual information of this research and connects it to relevant academic studies, according to which the research framework and objectives were outlined.

With the research questions in mind, Chapter 2 presents critical review of relevant literature, results of which supported the conceptual framework to obtain further understandings of constructs of interest. More specifically, it analyzes studies of consumer trust in the offline environment, using an interdisciplinary viewpoint. This forms the foundations for conceptualizing and operationalizing eTrust in the present study. Chapter 2 also examines the development of China's hotel industry and website utilization by hoteliers. This process revealed there was a scarcity of empirical examinations of eTrust from consumers' perspectives against the background of China's hotel industry in terms of its influencing factors as well as its consequent outcomes. Based on literature review, the present researcher identified hotel website attributes combined with profiles of China's hotel industry (i.e. hotel star rating and hotel ownership) to be the antecedent variables of eTrust and consumers' online booking intentions as its consequence.

As this is the first systematic research aggregating the above-mentioned variables, the researcher adopted a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods to develop scales

of variables under investigation. Chapter 3 articulates details of the methods adopted such as their suitability and implementation process. It uses a three-step research design made up of questionnaire formulation (measurement development), a pilot test, and a main survey.

To probe the underlying dimensions of eTrust and hotel website attributes as well as the constituting items of hotel performance according to star ranks and ownership types, the researcher conducted an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) using SPSS software with the data of the pilot survey. In a bid to validate the generated construct models, the researcher performed a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) with AMOS. After securing the validity and reliability of each individual measurement model, the proposed structural model integrated inter-relationships among variables. Chapters 4 and 5 describe the results of the pilot test and main survey, respectively.

Finally, Chapter 6 connects the statistical results to their corresponding research objectives by interpreting the extent to which each individual objective has been achieved. In addition, Chapter 6 concludes the theoretical and practical implications of this study, and demonstrates its soundness in contributing to the extant literature. This study ends with a discussion of its limitations and areas for further research.

1.8 Chapter Summary

In brief, the current chapter specifies the research context and describes how the study was carried out. Most importantly, it describes the overriding objectives of this study and its research model.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Chapter Introduction

This study seeks to identify how perceived importance of hotel website attributes, star rating- and ownership-based hotel performance can influence web users' perceived eTrust when booking a hotel room within the setting of China's hotel industry. The current chapter presents the research background. After that, it takes a cross-disciplinary approach to examine the nature of eTrust and its formation mechanisms in terms of its definitions, underlying dimensions, antecedents, and consequent variables. The chapter concludes that hotel website quality and China's hotel profile are antecedents of eTrust and travelers' online purchase intention is its consequence. The last section further illustrates relationships among these variables and formulates hypotheses accordingly. With this, the theoretical model is established. The conceptual framework was grounded on the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and serial trust formation models. Therefore, prior to details of individual variable, this Chapter presents theoretical foundation of this study.

2.1 Overview of the Research Context

2.1.1 Overview of China's Hotel Industry

Most extant studies indicated (e.g. Zhao, 1989; Yu, 1992; Pine, Zhang, & Qi, 2000) that China's dynamic hotel development could be generally divided into two stages, with the introduction of the Reform and Open Door Policy in the late 1970s as the watershed. Pine and Philips (2005) directly stated "China's hotel industry has only really existed since 1978" (p. 57). As such, the study follows the majority of extant studies in generally dividing China's hotel development into two stages: before and after 1978.

Prior to 1978, most activities were regulated by the central principle that hotels were to be diplomacy-oriented, rather than profit making (Hung, 2013). Under such regulations, hotels were government funded and state owned, used to accommodate international visitors. Influenced by the low competition in the market and the central government regulations, facilities and services offered by hotels were far below the international level, not to mention their Western counterparts (Zhao, 1989).

After the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), a series of economic reforms were initiated, among which was the introduction of the open-door policy in 1978. Since then, China has experienced spectacular economic growth and millions of Chinese enterprises turned to profit-oriented methods in their business activities. The shift from a diplomatic

to a commercial orientation emerged in the tourism and hospitality industries. The hotel industry expanded as a large influx of international tourists created a great demand for lodging facilities. However, the discrepancy between supply and demand enormously hampered hotel development in China and became an urgent issue in China's booming tourism industry (Yu, 1992).

To tackle the problem of shortage in hotel capacity in China, the Chinese government and the hotel industry expended great efforts (Zhao, 1989). As one of the important parts of the Chinese tourism system, hotel development received priority during the Sixth Five-year Plan guiding the nation's social and economic development from 1981 to 1985. China imported advanced hotel managerial talent and cultivated foreign investments (Hines, 1984) to establish the industry at international standards. Also, relevant laws and regulations were proposed and legislated in 1979 that exempted foreign-invested hotels from tax for five years, with full exemption in the first three years and 50 percent in the last two. Such strategies had successfully attracted foreign investment and in 1982 Beijing's first-joint hotel, Jianguo Hotel, imported the management of the Hong Kong Peninsula group (Pine et al., 2000). This was a milestone in China's hotel development history. Since then, China's hotel industry has entered an era of rapid growth.

China's tourism industry, domestic and international, is booming. In 2013, China's inbound tourists numbered 129 million and generated an income of US\$ 51.664 billion. At the same time, with a population of over 1.3 billion, China also has an incomparable domestic tourism market. It contributes to the country GDP at over 4 percent growth rate (Travel China Guide, 2013). As early as 1999, the World Tourism Organization had predicted that by 2020 China would be the world's largest tourism destination in terms of tourist arrivals (WTO, 1999. Cited from Pine & Philips, 2005). A more recent forecast from UNWTO suggested that over the next 20 years China will expect an annual growth rate of 43 million international tourists, contributing to a total of about 1.8 billion inbound tourists expected to visit China by 2030 (Travel China Guide, 2013). As tourism and the hotel industry go hand in hand, China's hotel industry has a bright future.

2.1.2 Introduction to Internet Applications in China's Hotel Industry

At present, the Internet as a marketing platform has changed the market practices in the hotel industry and Internet use is growing at an unprecedented pace in the industry (Bai, Law, & Wen, 2008; Tse, 2013). As early as in 2006, PhoCuWright predicted that in 2007 online travel bookings would be more than half of all travel transactions (Hotel News Resource, 2006) with a ratio of online booking to offline at 57 percent in 2013

(Statistic Brain, 2013). To garner this ever-increasing online business, hoteliers all over the world have been dedicating great efforts to formulating best online business strategies by establishing their own websites (Gan et al., 2006). China, the world's third most popular tourism destination, is no exception in this Internet gold rush (gbtimes, 2013).

Because of the characteristics of a centralized control in state-owned enterprises, it was not until the 1990s that state-owned hotels in China began to realize the benefits of ICTs and recognized the urgent need to implement them into their daily management and financial activities (Zhi, Wang, & Turban, 1997). With about two decades' development, online travel booking in China has increasingly developed and has become a highlight of the tourism market.

In China, there has been a significant growth in Internet penetration. The number of Internet users increased from 59.1 million in 2002 by 47.29 percent per annum and reached 618 million at the end of 2013 (CNNIC, 2014). Among them, 181 million Internet users rely on the Internet for travel information searches and purchase of tourism products (CNNIC, 2014). In 2013, China's gross merchandise value (GMV) reached 220.46 billion Yuan (US\$1 = RMB 6.8) and is projected to hit 465 by 2017 (iResearch, 2014). Thirty percent of Internet users are involved in the online travel market, indicating high potential for business opportunity.

In response to this e-business opportunity, hoteliers in China are keenly aware of importance of formulating reliable Internet strategies to optimize their distribution channels with lower costs. Wong and Law (2005) suggested encouraging direct bookings from hotel-owned websites could be one of the best ways to address this challenge. The benefits of establishing hotel websites include lowered distribution costs, no physical and geographical barriers, and mitigated dependence on third-party travel websites (Wong & Law, 2005).

The use of hotel owned websites as a marketing platform in China's hotel industry has come a long way. A decade ago, Huang and Law (2003) concluded that websites of mainland hotels were used as electronic brochures while their counterparts in Hong Kong employed them as marketing tools. Not surprisingly, back then in Beijing sales generated from online channels on average only contributed around 4 percent of total sales (Ma et al., 2003). In the same period, Hsu, Zhu, and Agrusa (2004) observed similar results: Chinese hotel websites only provided basic information about the hotel and offered no value-added links or services that could turn website visitors into customers. Later, Law and Liang (2005) conducted a study to compare the performance of China hotel websites to that of US-based hotel websites, findings of which revealed the latter outperformed the former. They attributed the big gap to an absence of knowledge on customers' needs and

website management on the part of hotel managers. Similarly, Kim, Kim, and Ma (2006) pointed out that Chinese hotel customers are more willing to rely on online information channels. The researchers recommended Chinese hoteliers could improve hotel websites by adding features of interactivity, sophisticated online reservations, and secure transactions.

It is well recognized that the Internet allows greater degree of interactivity and enables companies to communicate directly with their customers (Gilbert & Powell-Perry, 2002). As such, the Web has long been identified as a realm to implement relationship marketing activities to gain competitive advantages (Tzokas & Saren, 2004). In this manner, the Internet could be used as an effective tool in establishing sustainable relationships with customers, which helps cultivate customer loyalty (Bai, Hu, & Jang, 2006).

Yet, research efforts in examining hotel websites as a relationship marketing platform are rare, largely limited to those mentioned above. Their research results invariably revealed that hotels in either the US or Singapore had yet to fully exploit hotel websites for relational purposes. In China, a recent study conducted by Ting, Kuo, and Li (2012) found that Chinese hotel websites do have features of interactivity and marketing while little attention was paid to transaction security features. Ting et al. (2012)

concluded that features of Chinese hotel websites met low levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

2.2 Theoretical Foundation of the Research

2.2.1 The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)

As mentioned above, the proposed conceptual framework is based on the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), which evolved from the field of social psychology in general, Expectancy Value Model in particular (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). With the assumption that human beings are rational and use systematically the available information, their actions and behaviors are reasoned. In this manner, a person will follow his or her intention and the behavior is predictive.

According to Ajzen and Fishbein (1980), a person's behavior could be predicted by intention, which is a function of his/her attitudes towards the intended behavior and social norms. As to the former determinant, it is personal in nature as it reflects an individual's evaluation of the behavior, which could be either negative or positive. The latter is about the social influences upon a person if he or she performs the behavior. The interrelationship among the above mentioned four variables is presented in Figure 2.1. At operational level, they specifically emphasized that relative weights need to be assigned to the two factors of intention, in order to increase the explanation power of this theory.

Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) further explained that attitudes are a function of beliefs, some toward the behavior being termed as behavioral belief while others about social norms as normative beliefs.

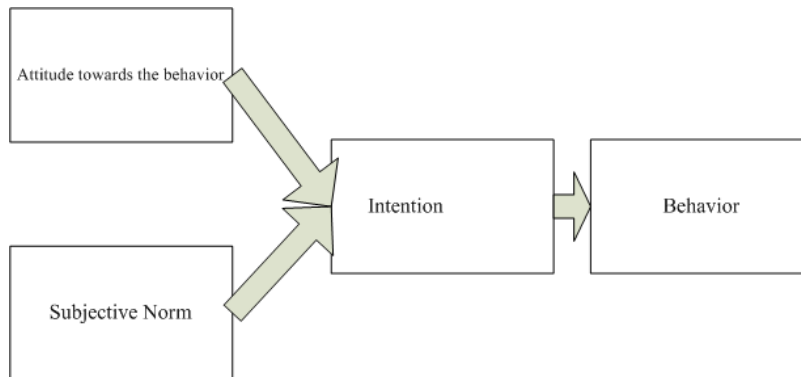


Figure 2. 1 Theory of Reasoned Action

A comprehensive analysis of this theory could be found in the work of Sheppard, Hartwick, and Warshaw (1998), which concluded this model has strong predictive utility and is useful in formulating business strategies to accommodate changing behaviors. Therefore, it is not surprising that this theory has been widely and successfully applied to a large number of varying situations (Chang, 1998). Such attempts could also be spotted in the tourism and hospitality industry. Among these research efforts are those modifying TRA to investigate tourists' intention to experience local cuisine in a destination (Ryu & Jang, 2006), food tourists' behavior (Kim, Kim, & Goh, 2010), the determinants of entertainment vacationers' intention to revisit (Petrick, Morai, & Norman, 2001), as well as residents' support for hunting as a tourism product (MacKay & Campell, 2004).

2.2.2 Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

Since the emergence and implementation of ICTs, scholars have been devoting to identifying factors that would influence ICT use. These serial efforts produced a long list of models that facilitate the analysis of ICT implementations. Among these attempts, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) that was proposed by Fred Davis in 1985 is one of the predominant models (Davis & Venkatesh, 1996). It is worth noting that this model was criticized for not including those significant factors, which could be overcome by integrating variables related to human and social change processes (Legris, Ingham, & Collette, 2003).

On the basis that internal beliefs and intentions could also be influenced by external variables, Davis (1985) extended TRA by integrating perceived ease of use (PEOU) and perceived usefulness (PU) into the original model, new version of which is TAM (see Figure 2.2). Similar to TRA, TAM supports the idea that intention is predictive of behavior. However, Davis (1989) argued that subjective norms may influence behavioral intentions through attitudes and it is hard to detach such indirect effect from its direct impact upon intentions. Therefore, he decided not to consider the variable of subjective norms in the TAM.

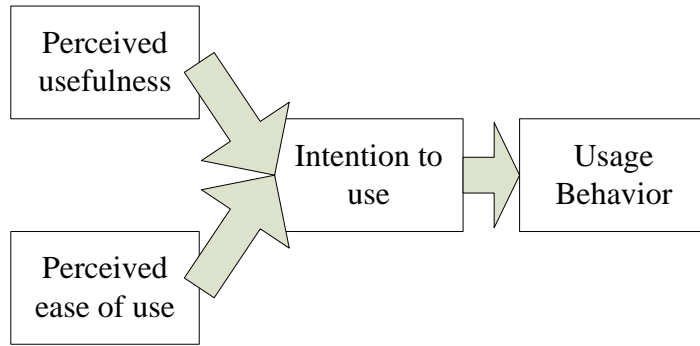


Figure 2. 2 Theory of Acceptance Model (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000)

In consistent with previous studies, Davis (1989) suggested that whether people accept or reject a technology is based on their perceptions of its value in terms of how useful and easy it is. These two aspects could be translated into two concepts, namely perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. As to perceived usefulness, it refers to “the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance” while perceived ease of use means “the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free of effort” (Davis, 1989. p.320). Both aspects are supplementary to each other as users tend to not use an application if they believe it is useful but difficult to use and vice versa.

Introduction and application of the TAM was not a recent phenomenon and a bunch of studies could be identified in adopting TAM to investigate employees’ acceptance of IT systems like hotel information systems (Huh, Kim, & Law, 2009), hotel front office system (Lam, Ho, & Qu, 2007), restaurant computing systems (Ham, Kim, &

Forsythe, 2008). Slightly different from the above mentioned studies, Woeber and Gretzel (2000) shifted the focus to tourism management by investigating tourism managers' adoption of marketing decision support systems.

At the same time, the TAM could also be applied to examine consumers' perceptions and behaviors. Morosan (2012) introduced a consumer-oriented construct of perceived innovativeness into TAM to study guests' perceptions of biometric systems in hotels. Lee, Xiong, and Hu (2012) adapted the TAM to explore the mechanism by which social media marketing activities would influence Facebook users' attitudes towards event pages. Their results showed that users' emotions were significant in predicting perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and perceived enjoyment, among which only perceived enjoyment would significantly influence users' attitudes and intentions.

2.2.3 Theoretical Approaches of Discussing Consumer Trust in the Tourism and Hospitality Industries

In 1950s, psychologists initiated the study of trust and treated it as a psychological state (Corritore et al., 2001). Since then, trust research operates with the assumption that uncertainty or risk exists, making trust an influential element in social and commercial relationships (Mayer et al., 1995; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Researchers have made refinements in the theoretical bases continuously as they progress in their work and gain

many useful insights. Bigley and Pearce (1998) summarized two viewpoints from psychologists and sociologists: psychologists focus on the individual attributes of the trustor and trustee involved while sociologists tend to study trust in a societal settings with relationships and interactions among people and organizations. With various research efforts from researchers of divergent disciplinary backgrounds, it is not surprising that many approaches have been adopted. Despite these disciplinary variations, there are two main theoretical approaches: the institutional and the economic (Lovell, 2009).

Since trust has long been a core concept in social domains, social approaches in tourism and hospitality studies generally serve as the theoretical bases. The most common theoretical foundations are from disciplines of sociology and psychology (e.g., social exchange theory). Focusing on social mechanisms, researchers sometimes distinguish cognitive trust from affective trust (Hon & Lu, 2010) or benevolent trust from competence trust (Oh, 2002).

Although economics has not traditionally regarded trust as an influential concept, tourism and hospitality scholars sometimes draw on economic theories, such as transaction cost economics and agency theory. While overlooking social and ethical norms, economic approaches have concentrated on the functions of benefits (outcomes)

and the governance structures that promote it. The economic approach to trust is calculative and highlights the function of consumer trust in decreasing risk and increasing predictability of other parties' future behavior. This is why some researchers connected trust to either customer loyalty (Bowen & Shoemaker, 1998; Sui & Baloglu, 2003) or behavioral intentions (Ok et al., 2005). Oh (2002) differentiated relationship intentions from repurchase intentions, with the former leading to long-term relationships while the latter creates transaction-based, discrete, and transient relationships.

However, few tourism and hospitality scholars defined trust exclusively from economic perspectives. Instead, they combined economic and social approaches to develop their theoretical framework. For example, Oh (2002) adopted the concepts of benevolence trust and competence trust. Benevolence trust is a cognitive type of trust based on the functional competence of a firm or person. It is also affect-oriented and concerns the non-profit-motivated actions that reflect a firm or person's interest in customers.

2.2.4 Influencing Factors of Trust Formation in the Tourism and Hospitality

Industries

As suggested by Payne et al. (2005), a "relationship is a state of being connected" (p. 856). Morgan and Hunt (1994) suggested that there are four types of partnerships

relating to a focal company, namely, supplier partnerships, lateral partnerships, internal partnerships, and buyer partnerships. This typology is in line with the stakeholder dyads which were suggested by Sautter and Leisen (1999) in tourism development, including the “government-resident dyad, the government-tourism business dyad, the resident-tourist dyad, the tourist-business dyad, and the business-resident dyad” (p. 318). For management to be effective, continuous attention should be paid to the genuine interests of all appropriate stakeholders (Donaldson and Preston 1995). Therefore, this section sorts out the discrete trust-related literature in the tourism and hospitality industries with reference to the stakeholder theory. More specifically, to make such evaluation more comparable and systematic, this study explores the formation mechanism of trust from perspectives of its influencing factors across different stakeholders.

In order to identify the influencing factors of trust formation in the tourism and hospitality industries, the author retrieved relevant articles from EBSCOHost (<http://search.ebscohost.com>) and Science Direct (<http://www.sciencedirect.com/>), two major academic databases that together comprise the most comprehensive databases for tourism and hospitality research journals (Hung & Law, 2011). In addition, Google Scholar (<http://scholar.google.com.hk>) was used for journal searching as it covers multidisciplinary fields (Law & van der Veen 2008; Waters 2007).

A content analysis was then conducted to examine these articles individually to synthesize its influencing factors. Despite the varied referents, trust always connects to specific characteristics of a referent. Summarizing the above mentioned influencing factors, 18 were generated (see Table 2.1). These 18 factors were further distilled into four second-order trust formation mechanisms by comparing one type of factor to another. For research rigor, this distillation was initiated by the researcher and confirmed through consultation with five Ph.D. students majoring in tourism and hospitality management. The researcher worked together with the graduate students to compare and discuss the results when any disagreements occurred.

Table 2. 1 Influencing factors of trust in tourism and hospitality research

Influencing factors	Trust formation mechanism
1. competence/ability	Characteristics-based factors
2. reputation	
3. integrity	
4. benevolence	
5. personality	
6. power	
7. justice	
8. satisfaction	Process-based factors
9. previous history	
10. communication	
11. perceived value	
12. repeated interactions	
13. familiarity	
14. commitment	
15. contact frequency	
16. dependability	
17. social mechanisms	Institution-based factors
18. legislative and regulatory institutions	

Categories were finalized when agreement was reached. Three such types of trust antecedent were similar to those suggested by Zucker (1986), in which characteristic-

based factors are referent-specific and cross-situational as they reflect the specific features of a referent (a party or a person). In addition, characteristic-based factors only pertain to individual persons or organizations. Process-based factors refer to those elements that occurred during the interaction process. The third one is the institution-based factor, meaning that the trust production depends on institutional structures such as third-party certification and relevant laws and regulations in an impersonal environment.

Examination of topics of these studies showed that the majority articles reviewed investigated trust from consumers' perspective. This is not surprising considering the functions of trust in customer relationship management. A comprehensive examination of the literature reveals that trust is an oft-cited word but not a very stable term, as there exists numerous labels and definitions of trust based on a variety of characteristics. Such labels include trust, perceived trust, and brand trust, although they were used explicitly or implicitly to denote similar but subtly distinct concepts. This results in a complex and confusing picture, especially when researchers do not specify the essence of the term used in their individual research.

Definitions of trust reviewed suggest that from the customers' perspective, customer trust result from antecedents like information quality communicated between consumers and a nature-based tourism provider (Zillifro and Morais 2004), reputation of

sellers (e.g. Loureiro and González 2008; Macintosh 2002; Oh 2002), perceived value (e.g. Bowen and Shoemaker 1998; Forgas et al. 2010; Macintosh 2002; Oh 2002), and customer satisfaction (e.g. Kim et al. 2009; Mancitosh 2002; Ok et al. 2005). When these factors connect to above mentioned three categorizes, it could be concluded that most of them fall into the category of characteristic-based factors. Furthermore, these influencing factors imply a dynamic viewpoint of trust development, as influencing factors evolve from more contextualized factors like the personal experiences with a restaurant or a hotel. Such formation mechanism is consistent with how tourism and hospitality scholars conceptualize consumer trust, details of which are presented in the following parts in terms of definitions, dimensionality, research and sampling methods.

2.3 Consumer Trust in Tourism and Hospitality

This section delineates the related studies concerning consumer trust in the tourism and hospitality industries in a general manner. All articles under discussion were published between 1998 and 2010, with a steady increase in the past two decades. This indicates that tourism and hospitality scholars have given this topic increasing attention over the years.

As to industry sectors concerned, studies have largely examined consumer trust in hospitality sectors, especially in hotels (Bowen & Shoemaker, 1998; Kim, Shin, & Lee,

2009; Loureiro & González, 2008; Lovell, 2009; Sui & Baloglu, 2003) and restaurants (Oh, 2002; Ok, Back, & Shanklin, 2005). These hospitality studies limit themselves to upscale hotels and luxury restaurants. Two studies targeted hotel casinos, with one measuring high-roller guests' loyalty (Bowen & Shoemaker, 1998) while another analyzing the less-valued local mass market (Sui & Baloglu, 2003). Other studies have examined consumer trust in settings like tourism suppliers and travel (Álvarez, Casielles, & Martin, 2009; Macintosh, 2002), nature-based tourism providers (Zillifro & Morais, 2004), conferences (Lee & Back, 2008), and airlines (Forgas et al., 2010).

In terms of cultural contexts, North America was the most investigated region, with half of the surveys in the United States and Canada. Studies from Spain, Portugal, and Korea also contributed to the research body. Some studies had an international focus. For instance, Loureiro and González (2008) surveyed customers of two main rural lodgings in two border regions in Spain and Portugal respectively. In today's global and networked economy, which depends on foreign expansion as well as global cooperation, the present researcher believes that more studies need to test cultural differences in trust.

In addition, all studies examined consumer trust empirically except the one conducted by Lovell (2009) in which trust was conceptually analyzed. Lovell proposed a Service Encounter Trust Vortex to help build trust during the service-encounter process.

Moreover, Lovell (2009) developed a service trust chain, which consists of actions and reactions by the employees and the customers in the physical hotel environment.

The rest empirical studies were from angles of conceptualization and operationalization. The conceptualization could be further divided into three perspectives, namely theoretical approaches, definitions, and dimensions. These three components closely connect to each other and cannot be fully understood in isolation. Considering the quantitative-research oriented nature of these studies, the operationalization of consumer trust was further divided into three viewpoints, namely research methods, measurement of variables, as well as data collection and sample size.

As a reflection of the theoretical structure in which a construct is embedded, construct definitions closely connect to concept operationalization (Mahon, 2002; Wartick, 2002). From what has been mentioned above, researchers have conceptualized consumer trust as either a positive expectation or a behavior. However, during the operationalization process, they have intentionally or unintentionally neglected the behavioral component.

Few researchers in the tourism and hotel industries devote themselves to developing theoretical framework. Rather, they borrowed findings from other disciplines like organization management, marketing, psychology, or sociology to guide their

empirical studies. As such, with one exception, articles retrieved have developed models that integrated consumer trust as either an antecedent or a consequent variable, and empirically tested its roles in a causal model. The exception was a study conducted by Lovell (2009) in which the author suggested consumer trust as a human capacity, which could be suitably applied to service encounters between front line hotel employees and customers. Building on Bigley and Pearce's (1998) study, Lovell (2009) argued that consumer trust should be examined case by case. In the context of service industries, consumer trust is a human value and its presence enables front-line employees to be kind, generous, and compassionate to customers—"hospitableness" as Lovell (2009) put it. Lovell (2009) incorporated consumer trust as a component of the service process that supports the transaction during the whole process.

2.3.1 Definitions of Consumer Trust

This section discusses definitions of consumer trust adopted by tourism and hospitality researchers. Regardless of the generally agreed importance, scholars have not come up with a universally acceptable definition. This may hinder the research progress as lack of a common definition could limit the comparability of findings. This also applies to research status in tourism and hospitality. Disagreement in definitions could partially credit to different labels used to denote essentially identical concepts like trust

(Bowen & Shoemaker, 1998; Lovell, 2009; Sui & Baloglu, 2003), brand trust (Lee & Back, 2008), customer trust (Zillifro & Morais, 2004), competence trust, and benevolence trust (Oh, 2002).

In the tourism and hospitality research domain, few researchers have attempted to define consumer trust by integrating the intrinsic nature of this field; instead, they borrow definitions from disciplines like psychology and sociology. The most frequently quoted definition is proposed by Moorman, Deshpande, & Zaltman (1993), in which trust is “the willingness to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence” (p.315). This definition plays a central role in marketing and management literature as it embraces two general streams of thought. On one hand, consumer trust is a positive expectation that an exchange partner is trustworthy because of qualities like reliability and competence (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Rotter, 1967). Notable marketing theorists view trust in this way (e.g. Anderson & Weitz, 1990; Schurr & Ozanne, 1985). On the other hand, consumer trust also incorporates behavioral intentions or actual behaviors. This perspective argues that consumer trust is not genuine if a person believes the trustworthiness of an exchange partner but is reluctant to rely on that partner (e.g. Moorman et al., 1993; Moorman et al., 1992). Some tourism and hospitality researchers have adopted this all-inclusive definition,

often without any modifications (e.g. Álvarez et al., 2009; Chang, 2012; Macintosh, 2002; Zillifro & Morais, 2004).

Opposite to this view that consumer trust has dual facets of belief and behavior, Morgan and Hunt (1994) argued that trust definition should exclude behavioral intention. They conceptualized trust as the situation when “one party has confidence in an exchange partner’s reliability and integrity” (p. 23). In a similar vein, Doney and Cannon (1997) defined consumer trust as “perceived credibility and benevolence of a target of trust” (p. 36). These scholars believed that a partner’s attributes implicitly incorporate the behavioral component and accordingly there is no need to explicitly include descriptions of behaviors in a definition. Such contention also has supporters from tourism and hospitality as they directly used the definition proposed by Morgan and Hunt (1994) in their research (e.g Álvarez et al., 2009; Loureiro & González, 2008).

Instead of attributes of another party in the business transaction, some researchers focused on the perceived outcomes of trust like the positively expected actions taken by an exchange partner. For example, Anderson and Narus (1990) defined trust as “the firm’s belief that another company will perform actions that will result in positive outcomes for the firm, as well as not take unexpected actions that would result in negative outcomes for the firm” (p. 45). Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) defined brand

trust as “the willingness of the average consumer to rely on the ability of the brand to perform its stated function” (p. 82). Lee and Back (2008) viewed brand trust in the context of conference branding as “the confidence of average attendees in the reliability and integrity of the brand with a firm’s expectation that the brand performs its stated function” (p. 336).

Likewise, Leeman and Reynolds (2012) defined buyer’s trust toward outsourcing providers as “an assessment of the probability that a given individual will perform as expected” (p. 602). Similarly, Kim, Han, and Lee (2001) referred trust as “confidence that sellers can be relied on to behave so that customers’ long-term interests will be served” (p. 276). Although focusing anticipated outcomes, these definitions still belong to the first type of the above mentioned thought streams as they implicitly or explicitly regarded consumer trust as belief or confidence.

At the same time, some authors did not explicitly define consumer trust while their statements reflected their stance. For example, Oh (2002) wrote, “customers are likely to attribute their repurchase to the confidence or trust” (p. 281). In another research work conducted by Medina-Muñoz, García-Falcón, and Medina-Muñoz (2002), trust is measured by whether “the relationship is marked by great harmony” and “the travel agent has high integrity” (p. 48).

As stated above, discussion of definitions cannot be completely separated from that of construct dimension. This study found dimensions are not usually evident in consumer trust definitions. For example, Macintosh (2002) identified sincerity, expertise, and dependability but did not include these three dimensions in his definition. In other cases, researchers described dimensions but did not provide a definition. However, there are still cases showing coherence between definitions and dimensions. For example, Álvarez and colleagues (2009) described the dimensions of integrity and reliability in line with how they defined consumer trust.

2.3.2 Consumer Trust as a Multidimensional Concept

Just as there are divergent views on trust definitions, analytical interpretations of dimensions also vary. Extant literature uncovered two streams of viewpoints (Chen & Dhillon, 2003). On the one hand, some scholars stressed the unidimensional nature of consumer trust in that uni-dimensionality has the advantages of brevity, simplicity, and generalizability (Kumar, Stern, & Achrol, 1992; Nicholson, Compeau, & Sethi, 2001). For example, in a research study of examining familiarity and trust, Gefen (2000) conceptualized Internet users' trust as a single dimension construct. Larzelere and Huston (1980) empirically tested this uni-dimensionality by conducting factor analysis. Some marketing researchers also viewed consumer trust as unidimensional in the belief that

trust and distrust are bipolar opposites (e.g. Jones & George, 1998; Lewicki, McAllister, & Bies, 1998; Mayer et al., 1995).

On the other hand, some scholars criticized the unidimensional argument for it fails to differentiate trust from other distinct constructs like cooperation and familiarity. They argued that trust should be a multi-dimensional construct (Mishra, 1996). Many researchers take the multi-dimensional stance even though they may disagree with specific dimensions composing consumer trust. Several studies treated trust as a two-dimensional construct (Ganesan, 1994; Singh & Sirdeshmukh, 2000) while others regarded it as having three dimensions (Cunnings & Bromiley, 1996; Gefen, 2002; McKnight et al., 2002). Even in these studies, there are divergences. For example, Ganesan (1994) adopted credibility and benevolence as trust dimensions while Singh and Sirdeshmukh (2000) used competence and benevolence.

Research in the tourism and hotel industries also display a lack of clarity in consumer trust dimensions. Studies examined by the present researcher study differed in either dimension numbers or the content. Nevertheless, the literature generally suggested that trust does not work as a single dimension variable, except for the study of Sui and Baloglu (2003), which treated consumer trust as a unidimensional construct.

Others suggested consumer trust as a multi-layered concept, with the scale encompassing “micro level psychological processes and group dynamics to macro level organizational measures” (e.g. Rousseau et al., 1998. p. 394). More specifically, tourism and hotel scholars tended to view trust as a two-dimensional construct. This may be attributed to the observation that related studies mainly based their discussions on Morgan and Hunt (1994), which conceptualized consumer trust as when “one party has confidence in an exchange partner’s reliability and integrity” (p. 23). Therefore, consumer trust generally reflects expectations held by an individual that the other party (service/products provider) is dependable and has high integrity. These are associated with expectancy that the other party can be relied on to place consumers’ wellbeing ahead of their own interests and deliver the promises (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Sirdeshmukh, Singh, & Sabol, 2002).

As to specific dimension adopted, these studies referred to reliability, working for the interests of the partner, competence trust, benevolence trust, confidence, reliability, and integrity, among which the most frequently cited being integrity, competence, and reliability. However, there seems to be no consensus on the semantic meaning of these three dimensions. For example, some authors have used expertise or competence, instead of ability, although these terms more or less signify that a company or person is capable

of keeping its performance-related promises. At the same time, some have suggested the technical competence of a company as a dimension of consumer trust (e.g. Flavián et al., 2006; Forgas et al., 2010; Oh, 2002). These studies use dependability in a similar way as goodwill and benevolence and intertwine sincerity with integrity.

2.3.3 Research Methods

As suggested by Decrop (1999), the paradigm of positivism still dominates many areas of tourism research. Some scholars have criticized qualitative research in tourism because it fails to justify its methodological rigor and therefore its potential remains relatively misunderstood (Decrop, 1999; Myers, 2000). Aiming to minimize possible confusions, Decrop (1999) proposed triangulation, which was refined by Jick (1979) as a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods. Some studies of consumer trust in tourism and hotel contexts have adopted this mixed method. Particularly, qualitative research methods have preceded quantitative research to explain specific correlations or causal relationships. For example, Álvarez et al. (2009) began their study with a qualitative method (two focus groups) to clarify the roles of the variables of interest. Subsequently, they collected data from 690 individuals to explore relationships among these clearly clarified constructs. Similarly, Ok et al. (2005) used experimental scenarios, an approach they suggested as being extensively used in service recovery

studies because the situational factors could be easily manipulated by providing different levels of stimuli.

2.3.4 Measurement of Variables

A major question concerning variable operationalization in empirical research is how to measure it. Seppänen, Blomqvist, & Sundqvist (2007) identified a gap between levels of conceptualization and operationalization of inter-organizational trust in a review research. In other words, scholars developed the conceptual framework at the organizational level while measuring it at individual level. They treated such gap as a problem and criticized it as lacking comparability among relevant studies. However, in the research of consumer trust, no such problem exists as the analysis unit is a group of customers. Subsequently, consumer trust is measured at the individual level, even though the objects of trust could be either organizations or individual salespeople.

Consumer trust in the tourism and hotel industries operates at a micro level and Lovell (2009) even contended that consumer trust can only be operated through individual actions. Trust comes from an individual's perception of characteristics of organizations or people, and individuals hold the keys to understanding factors that influence consumer trust in a mutual relationship. As such, consumer trust in the literature is called "reported" or "perceived" trust, since it is measured by asking

respondents to report the presence or absence of trust toward a certain object. The development of customer trust varies according to the trusting targets, organizations, or human beings.

While being examined at individual level, the numbers of measurement items vary from study to study. For example, Oh (2002) used two items to measure competence and benevolence trust. Álvarez et al. (2009) employed ten items to represent credibility and benevolence trust. Oh (2002) used two items to measure the dimension of benevolence whereas Álvarez et al. (2009) used seven items to measure the same dimension. However, both studies similarly treated benevolence as the quality organizations exercise when considering customers' interests and working towards mutually beneficial situations.

2.3.5 Data Collection Methods and Sample Size

As suggested by Lovell (2009), consumer trust plays a central role in underpinning all human relationships. Although other studies are not as explicit as Lovell's (2009) work, their research still revealed that individual humans are the analysis unit. This is consistent with the above-mentioned operationalization of consumer trust at individual level. Therefore, it is not surprising that researchers normally rely on self-reported information to assess consumer trust. As to the data collection technique,

compared to surveys via questionnaires it is more difficult to obtain information from customers by interviews or observations. More importantly, questionnaires can access large samples in a short time with comparatively lower costs (Lajunen & Summala, 2003). Additionally, questionnaires allow researchers to code responses easily (Sekaran, 2009). Therefore, it is foreseeable that questionnaires are the main tool to collect data for analyzing consumer trust.

As for means of collecting questionnaires, most studies used the traditional technique of onsite surveys. For example, Oh (2002) developed a trust-based relationship framework to evaluate customers' post-purchase decision processes. Oh (2002) targeted customers of two restaurants with an onsite survey, with hosting managers from these two restaurants as investigators after receiving instructions on delivering and collecting questionnaires.

However, in-person or onsite surveys can be prohibitively costly and may cause problems of oversampling frequent consumers (Loomis, 2003; Pitcher, 2002). Alternatively, mail surveys can provide a high response rate and easier access to sensitive data without social bias (Rosenfeld, Booth-Kewley, & Edwards, 1993). Some researchers have adopted them as an alternative to onsite surveys. For instance, Bowen and Shoemaker (1998) integrated customer trust into a model of guest loyalty and tested it by

mailing questionnaires to 5,000 American Express card holders, who stayed at least three times in a luxury hotel in New York.

Besides the traditional techniques, the emergence and development of information technologies has changed the way researchers conduct surveys. Email surveys in the 1980s and web surveys in the 1990s have become new trends and marked the inception of an online research era (Hung & Law, 2012). Lee and Back (2008) electronically sent their questionnaires to academic conference participants to examine their trust level towards the conference brand. In another example, as a part of a mixed method approach, Loureiro and González (2008) developed a complementary online questionnaire for hotel customers who did not want to answer hardcopy questionnaires.

Further analysis found that the adoption of a specific survey technique relates to the geographical locations of researchers. Researchers from Asia mainly used onsite surveys while their Western counterparts (especially the US researchers) tend to mail questionnaires to the targeted respondents. Additionally, the selection of survey techniques could also reflect targeted samples. Studies targeted at current customers chose onsite surveys while those aiming at post-consumption customers adopted mail or Internet surveys. Given there are few restrictions of qualifying respondents, the most

common type of sampling is convenience sampling, with one exception of Zillifro and Morais (2004) adopting stratified proportional random sampling.

All studies, except Lovell (2009), empirically examined consumer trust by integrating it into causal models and running statistical methods aiming to identify antecedent and consequent variables. Special attention should be paid to sample size adopted in these studies as Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was frequently adopted for identifying the correlational and causality relationships. Such an analysis technique requires a relatively larger sample. This present study found that sample sizes in the retrieved studies ranged from 194 respondents to 1,710 respondents, with most being over 500. Considering the number of variables and measurement items in each questionnaire, the sample sizes in these studies were statistically adequate.

2. 4 eTrust

This study intends to provide a better understanding of eTrust from consumers' perspectives in a novel context of China's hotel industry. While acknowledging that there are numerous factors that can be examined, it is only through developing a program of research that researchers can start to isolate and test selected factors. Furthermore, one main purpose of the current study was to offer suggestions for Chinese hotel practitioners in establishing a trusting relationship with their customers over their own websites. As

such, a deeper understanding of eTrust drivers would help them better allocate their marketing resources. The current study focuses specifically on the characteristics of hotel websites as well as hotels' profiles in terms of the ownership type and star rating as eTrust drivers.

Long before the wide usage of computers and high penetration of the Internet, trust had been studied in various fields. The emergence and establishment of the Internet offered trust researchers the opportunity to examine it in an online context. The specific nature of the Internet technologies makes it challenging to assess the trustworthiness of an e-vendor, because it eliminates many otherwise prominent social cues (e.g., body language) that a customer might use to decide whether to trust a potential business partner.

While acknowledging the differences existed between eTrust and offline trust, findings of offline trust are helpful in offering insights into a better and thorough understanding of eTrust. More importantly, the relationships between eTrust and offline trust have been widely recognized by previous studies. Thus, it is important for companies as well as scholars to identify the commonalities of trust elements between offline trust and eTrust as well as how eTrust is different from offline trust. This study aims to develop a broad conceptual framework of eTrust, including its driving forces and consequences in the context of hotel industry. While the importance of eTrust in the

eCommerce of the hotel industry is generally accepted, limited studies have been conducted on online users' eTrust toward hotel websites. To achieve that goal, it is essential to define eTrust firstly. Though this may seem to be a relatively straightforward task, it is inherently difficult (Husted, 1998). The defining process starts with a cross-disciplinary overview of consumer trust in the offline environment, based on which interpretations of consumer trust in the online community were detailed. Sections afterwards present the analysis of eTrust conceptualization in terms of the definition, dimension, drivers, and consequent variables.

2.4.1 A Cross-Disciplinary Overview of Offline Trust

Since 1950s, scholars from different disciplines have examined trust and trust relationships in the offline world. The online Oxford Dictionary defines trust as “firm belief in the reliability, truth, or ability of someone or something” (Oxford Dictionary Pro, 2012. online). While this definition seems straightforward, scholars have not come to an agreement on a common understanding of the concept of trust. Such disagreements are partially rooted in disciplinary differences. Yet, a lack of agreement could also be spotted among scholars within the same field (Lewicki & Bunker, 1995).

The fragmented studies of trust are also manifested in the use of term “trust,” which has been problematic (Sitkin & Roth, 1993). In the earlier trust studies, Deutsch

(1962) used the term of “trust” to mean cooperation within groups, which may result from a host of reasons unrelated to trust. This has led to a blurring in understandings related to the treatment of trust and the construct of trust itself. Notwithstanding some degree of commonality of trust elements across disciplines, it is necessary to recognize the divergent meanings researchers bring to trust research and to acknowledge the differences in research focuses and research methodologies. To advance the understanding of trust, this section adopts a multidisciplinary view of trust in an attempt to synthesize and give insights into the critical features of trust in management and marketing literature, particularly as it relates to eTrust and its commercial implications for hoteliers.

In the broadest sense, generated from psychology, trust has been considered a complicated and difficult-to-define construct. Undoubtedly, trust is positive and vital to humanity since it is part of love and friendship, and meaningful relationships depend upon it. But, as previously mentioned, it has not received the attention of researchers until 1950s. In 1980s, trust became one of the main topics in the social sciences, including psychology (Deutsch, 1960; Rotter, 1967), sociology (Lewis & Weigert, 1985; Zucker, 1986), and marketing (Anderson & Weitz, 1989; Moorman et al., 1992). Trust is such a vague construct that researchers have not come to an agreement on the nature of what

exactly trust is, even on the basic definition (McKnight & Chervany, 2002). It is also because of disciplinary perspectives and “a disciplinary lens colors researchers’ views of what trust is” (McKnight & Chervany, 2002, p. 297). To better understand and define eTrust, it is necessary to examine trust comprehensively in social science disciplines because these disciplines study trust the deepest.

Pioneered by Deutsch (1958), Rotter (1967) and Wrightsman (1991), trust in the psychological field focused on interpersonal trust. Deutsch (1958) suggested that “an individual may be said to have trust in the occurrence of an event if he expects its occurrence and his expectation leads to behavior which he perceives to have greater negative motivational consequences if the expectation is not confirmed than positive motivational consequences if it is confirmed” (p. 266). Deutsch (1958) stressed the vulnerability aspects of trust and perceived it as a risk-taking behavior. This definition was simplified by Hosmer (1995) “trust is the reliance by one person, group, or firm upon a voluntarily accepted duty on the part of another person, group, or firm to recognize and protect the rights and interests of all others engaged in a joint endeavor or economic exchange” (p. 393). Rotter (1967) viewed trust as “an expectancy held by individuals or groups that the word, promise, verbal or written statement of another can be relied on” (p. 651).

These definitions initiated by psychologists can be generally divided into two views. One was represented by Deutsch who regarded trust as “non-rational behavior” while the others were represented by Rotter (1967) who treated trust as personality characteristics that individuals developed in their early lives and human relationships. These two views played a central role in guiding the successive trust studies in various disciplines.

Since 1970s, sociologists have been treating trust as a sociological topic (Luhmann, 1979; Barber, 1983; Lewis & Weigert, 1985; Zucker, 1986). With two short but powerful books — Trust and Power (Luhmann, 1979) and The Logic and Limits of Trust (Barber, 1983) — trust had been placed in the center of sociological theorizing about contemporary society and treated as an irreducible social reality (Lewis & Weigert, 1985). Luhmann (1979) integrated the micro- and macro-levels of perspectives on trust and his work became the starting point for trust research in sociology. He differentiated micro-level trust (interpersonal trust) from macro-level trust (system trust). Barber (1983) shifted the focus of trust from personal expectation to interpersonal expectation. Further, Barber (1983) defined trust by proposing three specific expectations: (1) expectations of the persistence and fulfillment of the natural (and existing) social order in which the individual found himself or herself; (2) expectations of technically competent role

performances from those involved with the individual; and (3) expectations of morally correct role performance from those associated with the individual.

Based on the work of the previous scholars, Lewis and Weigert (1985) argued that a person can be motivated by rational reasons or strong positive affect to develop two types of trust: cognitive trust and emotional trust. They further illustrated that the emotional content of trust relationship was more typical in primary group relations while the cognitive-rational base of trust was more common in secondary groups. Consistent with this point of view, Zucker (1986) treated trust as an expectation and suggested three modes of trust formation mechanism: process-based, characteristic-based, and institutional-based. Particularly, process-based trust emerged from the history of fair transactions, characteristic-based trust rested on the individual personalities, while institution-based trust related to certain social elements like title or membership. Overall, seen from the sociological perspective, trust was more like “collective attribute” (Lewis & Weigert, 1985, p. 968) and “mutual faithfulness” (Simmel, 1978, p.379) among people.

The extensive research conducted by psychologists and sociologists constituted the foundation for comprehending trust in marketing. For marketers, trust refers to the perceived reliability on a certain brand, products, or services of a seller at individual level (Flavian, Guinaliu, & Gurrea, 2006). Based on Rotter’s (1967) work, Schurr and Ozanne

(1985) defined trust as “the belief that a party’s word or promise is reliable and a party will fulfill his/her obligations in an exchange relationship” (p. 940). This brought trust into the focus of buyer-seller interaction research. Moorman et al. (1992) defined trust as “a willingness to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence” (p. 315).

These definitions generally covered three schools of thoughts in trust nature. First, trust can be a psychological state that refers to belief, confidence, attitude, or positive expectation. This view played a central role in defining trust (Fung & Lee, 1999; Pavlou & Gefen, 2004). Second, trust can refer to behavioral intentions or behaviors that reflect a reliance on a partner. Third, some others integrated the above two views and treated trust as a concept having psychological and behavioral elements. In line with the integrated point of view, Rousseau et al. (1998) asserted that trust should include cognitive elements, conative aspects (behavioral intent), and action (purchase behavior). Therefore, they defined trust as “a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another” (p. 395). Similarly, Mcknight, Cummings and Chervany (1998) described trust as the process by which “one believed in, and is willing to depend on, another party” (p. 474).

In the literature, few researchers tried to reconcile the variety of trust types into a coherent group of elements adequately incorporating different meanings. It is common

for researchers to narrow down the scope to fit their type of study. Some researchers adopted the multidimensional view to address the complications and comprehensiveness of the trust construct (Zhou & Tian, 2010).

While its conceptualizations are diverse across disciplines and studies, a trusting relationship should be reciprocal, involving a trusting party (trustor) and a party to be trusted (trustee). In an offline situation, the two parties could be individuals, private organizations (Morgan & Hunt, 1994), or public institutions (Lewis & Weigert, 1985). The relationship between them may involve uncertainty and fear of opportunism (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995; Hoffman, Novak, & Peralta, 1999; Gefen, 2002; McKnight & Chervany, 2002; Gefen et al., 2003).

Risk is another element in trust conceptualizations (Coleman, 1990; Rotter, 1967). In offline circumstances, risk is the perceived probability of loss as interpreted by a decision maker (Chiles & McMackin, 1996; MacCrimmon & Wehrung, 1990). The path-dependent connection between trust and risk arises from a reciprocal relationship: risk creates an opportunity for trust, which leads to risk taking. Furthermore, risk taking buttresses a sense of trust when the expected behavior materializes (Coleman, 1990). Trust would be unnecessary if actions could be predicted with complete certainty and no

risk (Lewis & Weigert, 1985). The source of risk is the uncertainty regarding the intention of sellers and whether they will act appropriately.

2.4.2 What Trust Means in eCommerce

There are two types of trust: (1) offline trust, which involves the business transactions of a company in an offline environment, like direct sales and its relationships with customers; and (2) eTrust, which involves a firm's online activities, especially the website of a company.

As mentioned above, in the offline environment, most people generally accepted that trust cannot only start a transaction but may also generate a long-term relationship (Deutsch, 1958; Mayer et al., 1995). As an important element in social cooperative behavior, trust can enable people to live in risky and changeable situations (Deutsch, 1962; Mayer et al., 1995). Trust can also reduce the options available for a person to consider in a certain situation, which then decreases complexity (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 1995). At the same time, Putnam (1995) and Mizruchi (1996) found that trust can be a kind of social capital that may help to realize the coordination and cooperation between people. In the business world, trust is crucial to successful transactions and the realization of long-lasting relationships (Koehn, 1996). According to the commitment-trust theory developed by Morgan and Hunt (1994), trust is one of the crucial factors in building and

maintaining successful relationships. Mukherjee and Nath (2007) have re-examined this theory and reconfirmed trust as the key factor in online retailing.

Compared to the offline environment, trust is more critical because of the higher perceived risk and uncertainty resulting from the lean nature of the online medium in electronic commerce (Lee, 1998). Without actual contact with sales persons or real products, consumers tend to be concerned about sellers' opportunistic behavior (Williamson, 1985; Mayer et al., 1995) and are less likely to buy if they perceive a higher risk (Lim, 2003). Furthermore, the virtual world precludes full assessment of the product quality and the Internet seller during the transaction, which makes cheating much easier compared to transactions in brick-and-mortar shops (Ba & Pavlou, 2002). As such, trust that can decrease consumers' risk and insecurity concerns is essential to the success of eBusiness (McKnight et al., 2002). Without trust, consumers are reluctant to give personal information, including credit card information, because of increasing concerns about their privacy and security information in today's market (Hoffman et al., 1999). Because consumer trust influences consumers' purchasing behavior (Shurr & Ozanne, 1985) and has a key role in buyer-seller long-term relationships (Ganesan, 1994), it has become crucial for online merchants to build consumers' trust.

2.4.3 Definitions of eTrust

Before the construction of conceptual model, it is necessary to define eTrust. An examination of existing literature reveals that scholars' disagreement of eTrust definitions still centers around its generic feature: whether it is a person's expectation, behavior intentions, or actual behavior. Such disagreement also applies to its referent, the object to trust. To clarify an object to trust, the discussion of online marketplaces cannot be avoided. In an online marketplace, there are two types of merchants: intermediaries and the community of sellers. Trust in intermediary concerns the intermediary as a mediator while seller trust relates to consumers' perceived trust in the counterpart of a transaction (Verhagen, Meents, & Tan, 2006). Clarification of the marketplace involved is crucial in defining eTrust, because different marketplaces will result in different eTrust conceptualizations as well as its consequent influencing factors.

There are dozens of definitions of trust in the eCommerce research domain, with some defining eTrust as "a willingness to believe" an online seller (Fung, & Lee, 1999, p. 518) or as beliefs concerning various features of the trustee (Menon, Konana, & Browne, 1999; Stewart, 1999), such as capability, kindness, and honesty. Some researchers do not specify its definitions (Benassi, 1999; Bensaou, 1999).

This study focuses on eTrust towards hotel websites, which are more informational and transactional than other commercial websites. Therefore, it restricts the eTrust definition to one form of relationship: the trust that occurs for an individual person towards hotel websites. The term of hotel website can refer to the fundamental Internet technology, the web users' experience with the website, and the hotel behind the website. Features of hotel websites are similar to those of both a salesperson and a storefront in the offline world. Customers' interaction with a hotel website is similar to interaction with a store. Based on their interactions with the Web, consumers' perceptions of trust will be developed. Thus, this study deems eTrust perception of hotel websites as well as a perception of hotel attributes.

Since the understanding of eTrust builds on offline trust definitions, this study provides an approach to eTrust akin to relevant literature in the offline environment. Thus, it adapts the well-accepted definition of offline trust by Rosseau et al. (1998), with a description of its generic characteristics and components. The perceived eTrust towards hotel websites is a person's psychological state comprising the intentions to accept vulnerability and positive expectations of hotels' intentions or behaviors. Implicit in the understanding of eTrust, this definition emphasizes the risky situation that calls for eTrust.

2.4.4 Dimensions of eTrust

Regardless of the large volume of literature on trust in the context of eCommerce, inconsistency and discord concerning its sub-dimensions have continued. The focus of academic controversy lies in the question of whether eTrust is a one-dimensional or multidimensional construct. Mayer et al. (1995) proposed that in an offline environment, ability, benevolence, and integrity are the three dimensions of trust. Ability refers to attributes of product and service, like quality product and satisfied customer service. Benevolence is the extent to which one partner is believed to genuinely care for the other party's welfare, aside from economic profit motives. Integrity concerns the trustor's perception that the trustee adheres to a set of acceptable principles.

These three dimensions of trust constitute the concept of consumer trust (Lee & Turban, 2001). Following this, McKnight and Chervany (2002) suggested that trust in an e-vendor has psychological as well as behavioral meaning. According to their study, eTrust concerns both trusting beliefs and trusting intentions, with trusting beliefs being the predictors of trusting intentions. If a consumer's expectation of a web vendor's integrity, competence, and benevolence can be fulfilled, the intention to trust the vendor will be greater, which then leads to a purchase. Such intention concerns the tendency to

depend on the product or service providers and to be vulnerable to their behaviors (McKnight et al., 2002).

Some other studies discussed the dimensions of eTrust from the perspective of referent attributes. Ang, Dubelaar, and Lee (2001) proposed that perceived trust in the Internet environment has three dimensions: 1) online merchants' ability to provide a product or service as promised; 2) online merchants' willingness to rectify the situation if customers are not satisfied with the purchase; and 3) the presence of privacy policy statements. According to Gefen (2002), overall trust is the specific beliefs of integrity, ability, and benevolence. Ability refers to the perceived skills and competence of the online merchants concerning the service and products they provide. Benevolence means the websites are perceived to do good to web users beyond the profit motive. Integrity is about consumers' perception that the websites will be honest with claims on the website.

In line with the results of literature review of consumer trust studies in the tourism and hotel industries, the current study proposed that eTrust in the hotel industry is a triple-dimensional construct, which comprises ability, benevolence, and integrity. Furthermore, the aspect relating to technical competences is cognition-based, and is distinguished from the affect-based aspects which cover benevolence and integrity (Chang & Chen, 2008; McAllister, 1995). More specifically, ability is the degree to

which hotels' own websites are perceived to possess the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to execute the job responsibilities properly and to satisfy customer needs. Integrity refers to consumer perceptions that hotel websites will fulfill their claims. These two facets are based on cognitive assessment like the evaluation of information on contracts and structural assurances, which is associated with economic rationale. Benevolence refers to the genuine concern of hotel websites, which is based on consumer emotional assessment of the goodwill that is associated with caring intentions (Dimoka, 2010). These three aspects are distinctive yet closely related to each other. For example, consumer confidence will be developed once the information presented on the websites is perceived reliable and conveys that customers' needs and interests are placed ahead of hotels' motives.

2.4.5 Antecedents of eTrust

A significant body of research from multidisciplinary work discussed the influencing factors of consumer trust that shed light on the formation mechanisms of eTrust. Trust is a broad concept and can be influenced by many different factors. According to Chen (2006), five factors can result in eTrust: consumer characteristics, website characteristics, calculations, institutions, and knowledge. Consumer characteristics are an individual's qualities that are mainly shaped by childhood

experiences and remain more or less constant over time. Some psychologists and sociologists regard an individual's characteristics as major sources of trust (McKnight & Chervany, 2002). Scholars believe that people always have a general propensity or tendency to trust others formed by their early experience.

Website characteristics are another source of eTrust. The major difference between eCommerce and traditional business lies in the involvement of people. In eCommerce, salespersons are replaced by online media like websites and sellers thus become faceless. Websites play the role of salespeople to mediate consumers' relationship with the firms. It generally accepted that information on websites should convey a firm's trustworthiness to consumers.

Lewicki and Bunker (1995) suggested that the calculation of benefits and costs can also lead to determination of trust. Rousseau et al. (1998) found the existence of utilitarian considerations about costly sanctions for the violation of trust and potential benefits from opportunistic behavior influenced the level of trust consumers may have. This kind of calculation rests on the credit information about another party. For instance, reputation always serves as the indicator of trust in established firms. The consequence of any breach of trust may lead to a tarnished reputation.

Institution-based trust comes from impersonal structures, especially the situational normality and structural assurances of the web. Structural assurances are structures like contracts, agreements, and regulations that can lead to the perception of protection. Situational normality contributes to the perception that the situation is normal, favorable, or conducive to situational success. In eCommerce, a website with a “professional” look can convey a sense of normality to its customers.

Knowledge-based trust is formed by relevant information that can be used to predict the trustworthiness of the other. This kind of information comes from the individual’s early interaction with the service or product provider. Thus, this kind of trust can also be called process-based trust (Zucker, 1986) or relational-based trust (Rouseual et al, 1986).

Researchers’ acceptance level of these five antecedents varies and differences of opinion regarding their efficacy mainly concerns two aspects. First, these five types of antecedents are not discriminant from each other. For example, calculation-based trust comes from the computation of gains and losses based on the accessible knowledge. The “knowledge” of “accessible knowledge” is different from that of “knowledge-based trust” in that the former is other people’s experience while the latter refers to the customer’s own experience. Nevertheless, both are forms of “knowledge”. In addition, the situational

normality aspect of institution-based trust partly comes from a set of tangible cues in a website, which can also be categorized as “website characteristics.” The structural assurance of institution-based trust can be determined by information on a website as well as by other factors such as consumer characteristics.

The second disagreement revolves around whether the factor of “consumers’ characteristic” should be included as one antecedent of eTrust. On the one hand, decisions to trust made by individuals are rational choices (Hardin, 1992; Kramer, 1999). In addition, Barber (1983) suggested two main sources for the emergence of trust: bureaucratic sanctions and safeguards (the legal system) as well as credible information about the other party with whom people deal. On the other hand, consumer characteristics may be volatile and context dependent. In the context of tourism and htoel, the tourist is “seen as another grim incarnation of individualized, Rational Economic Man, forever maximizing his solid mal gains” (Franklin & Crang, 2001, p. 6). Thus, the current study does not consider consumer characteristics and focuses on website characteristics and the profile of sellers behind the website. More specifically, this study regards hotel website quality and hotel profile as antecedents of web users’ perceived level of eTrust.

2.4.6 Consequences of eTrust

Scholars from different disciplines extensively discussed the impacts of eTrust in a relationship. In an offline environment, trust has been recognized conceptually and empirically as an essential factor in building long-lasting relationships. From a marketing perspective there are four major consequences of trust: (1) customer loyalty and commitment (Morgan & Hunt, 1994); (2) cooperation and agreement (Schurr & Ozanne, 1985); (3) reduction of perceived risk and uncertainty (Hawes, Mast, & Swan, 1989); and (4) a decrease of transaction costs (Williamson, 1985; Hill, 1990).

To some extent, eCommerce and traditional business are different, but both concern vendors selling products or services to consumers. This similarity makes both academics and industry practitioners agree that the critical role played by trust “in traditional business settings can be directly applied to the ecommerce settings” (Chen, 2006, p. 200).

Trust is important in mitigating uncertain feelings to enable real purchases as it is a vital driving force of consumer online purchase intention. Therefore, scholars generally suggest trust is also a significant predictor of consumers’ participation in commerce activities in general and in online setting in particular. This is because the inherited nature of the online transactions would engender the opportunistic behaviors from the vendors.

Golmohammadi et al. (2012) recommended establishment of trusting relationships as an effective marketing strategy in boosting online sales. This suggestion has been empirically supported by many other scholars empirically. For example, Gefen et al. (2003) and Gefen (2000) found that trust could directly and significantly increase consumers' purchase intentions. In a similar stance, Chen (2006) suggested that eTrust was an effective predictor of not only behavioral intentions but also behaviors. Specifically, consumers who trust in eCommerce will make purchases from a website, revisit and repurchase from the website in the future, follow the instructions by the website, and recommend the website to other people.

2.5 Hotel Website Attributes

2.5.1 Overview of Hotel Website Attributes

Since the late 1990s, the revolutionary development of ICTs in general, and the Internet in particular, have introduced a wide range of operational and marketing tools into the hotel industry. For the maximized capability, hotels of all sizes have established a variety of distribution sources (Buhalis, 2003). These include telephone sales through free-toll numbers towards GDSs, travel agents, strategic alliances, and computer reservation systems. Among the various distribution and reservation mechanisms, the Internet has served as the prime and most suitable medium for reaching individuals

directly and transacting businesses for convenience and economic considerations (Connolly, Olsen, & Moore, 1998; Buhalis, 2003).

The introduction of ICTs has not only dramatically changed operations in the tourism and hotel industries, it also changed people's travel-related information searching behaviors. At present, people commonly use websites to search for information. Thus, websites are essential for eCommerce success. Due to the importance of websites, much effort has been devoted website construction. Accordingly, scholars paid great attention to website-related studies.

According to Jeong et al. (2003), a website could be assessed by its "overall excellence or effectiveness of a [website] in delivering intended messages to its audience and viewers" (p. 162). However, this definition overlooks the important roles of customer needs which are crucial for the success of hotel and tourism websites (Law & Leung, 2000). More recently, Chang and Chen (2008) gave a more comprehensive interpretation by stating that the assessment of a website is "users' evaluation of whether a web site's features meet users' needs and reflect the overall excellence of the web site" (p.821). Such definition suggests the importance of consumers in assessing website performance (Bai et al., 2008).

Extending Jarvenpaa et al.'s (2000) metaphor, a website could be regarded as a company's online store and defines the atmosphere of online shopping. Similar to the offline environment where consumers need traditional cues like brand and reputation for decision making, Internet users rely on website attributes to judge the potential gains and losses. Effective website design means free of barriers to online transactions like anonymity, lack of personal communication, and electronic payment (Chang & Chen, 2008).

The effectiveness of hotel websites could be reflected from perspectives of right content and easy to use (Au Yeung & Law, 2004), which can be translated into functionality and usability. Many hotel websites provide information about products and services. The website building process allows for well-organized information, providing a range of information and differently designed interfaces on the Internet. The following two sections delineate more details of these two aspects.

2.5.2 Hotel Website Functionality

Website functionality is the most important dimension of website usefulness (Jayawardhena, 2004). It refers to the content of a website, especially information relating products and services. Chung and Law (2003) found that a well-designed hotel website can not only increase sales but also benefit the reputation of a hotel.

Website functionality directly affects visitor perceptions of the product or services on offer (Zafiropoulos & Vrana, 2006). It also acts as a platform between tourism-related firms and their customers. Although there are a wide range of approaches for analyzing website functionality in tourism and hotel industries, two instruments have proved particularly popular with academia.

The first is the conceptual framework of information richness of hotel websites proposed by Chung and Law's (2003). According to their findings, an effective hotel website should include information on facilities, customer contact, surrounding areas, and management. Their study also spotted a vast discrepancy existed among the performances in all dimensions for luxury, mid-price, and budget hotel websites.

The second is the Balance Score Card (BSC) approach, which Kaplan and Norton (1996) proposed as a business performance instrument designed. It was originally designed to tackle the dominant use of one-dimensional performance indicators. Morrison et al. (1999) adopted this approach to analyze website design and maintenance of small hotels in Scotland. Four evaluation perspectives were measures of technical, marketing, internal, and customer perspectives.

2.5.3 Hotel Website Usability

Performing well does not necessarily mean that hotel websites are useful to users. Although the term of website usability is often loosely defined, it is about the degree to which users can easily use hotel websites to complete their designed task (Nielsen, 1999, 2000). Nielsen (2000) proposed that website usability consists of five factors, namely, be easy to learn, be efficient to use, be easy to remember, contain few errors, and be pleasant to use.

Purdue (2001) suggested that a poorly designed website is generally unattractive to customers. The principal goal of usability is to make the web users' experience more efficient and enjoyable. According to Cunliffe (2000), up to half potential customers could be lost because of the poor designed websites. Parets (2002) suggested that well-designed websites are those with easy navigation, particularly those that serve as marketing platforms for independent or small hotels, potentially increasing their competitive edges in the market.

In the tourism and hotel literature, a group of studies have discussed website design and identified many different design features. Discussions of hotel website usability could be traced back to Au Yeung and Law (2003), who introduced the term website usability to the hotel industry. Au Yeung and Law (2003) modified the heuristic

evaluation technique initiated by Nielsen and afterwards used it to investigate the usability of hotel websites in Hong Kong.

In Au Yeung and Law's (2003) study, the checklist of usability criteria fell into five dimensions: (1) language, (2) layout and graphics, (3) information architecture, (4) user interface, and (5) general. Particularly, language is about selection of words to present information on the Internet. Layout and graphics refer to how to organize elements visually on the web page. Information architecture pertains to the arrangement of a website's content and features. User interface can determine how easy it is to navigated through the content. The general category refers to the general practice of design and maintenance of the web site.

In a follow-up study, Au Yeung and Law (2004) further extended the heuristic technique of usability evaluation to examine how chains and independent hotel websites perform. Their results revealed that the performance of chain hotels surpasses that of independent hotels in terms of website usability. Au Yeung and Law (2006) further modified this approach to examine the website usability of luxury, mid-priced, and economy hotels.

All the above-mentioned studies suggested website design is an essential predictor of tourists' online purchase intentions. Researchers have suggested different ways to

benchmark how a website performs with respect to design and there is no universal agreement about which method outperforms others (Law & Bai, 2008). Wen (2009) conceptually proposed three dimensions for website design evaluation: information quality, system quality, and service quality. Wen (2012) tested this conceptual model, results of which verified the validity of the three measurements for the evaluation of travel-oriented website designs.

2.6 Hotel Profiles in China

eTrust has generally been accepted as a key factor in the success of eBusiness. Company profile is one of its antecedents. This present study discusses hotel profiles in China from two perspectives: hotel ownership and the hotel star rating system as these two factors emerged in the literature review as salient features of hotel profiles. While numerous articles have treated hotels in China as a research target, few have analyzed these hotels comprehensively. Most often, these studies focused on one or two aspects of the hotel industry such as human resources (e.g. Zhang & Wu, 2004) or hotel general manager profiles (e.g. Li, Tse, & Xie, 2007). Relatively, studies conducted by Yu (1992) as well as Pine and Philips (2005) discussed development of hotel industry holistically. Yu (1992) analyzed the development of hotel industry in terms of hotel ownership. Pine and Philips (2005) compared hotel performance over hotel ownership, hotel size, and

hotel star rating. Hotel size is one criterion included in hotel star rating system. Thus, this study argues that hotel profile in China has two sub-dimensions: hotel ownership and hotel star rating, details of which are presented in the following sections.

2.6.1 Hotel Star Rating System in China

Hotel star rating is a particular approach to classify hotel stocks in a given country or area, based on a certain criteria concerning facilities and services (Callan, 1995). Implementation of such classification mechanism initially aimed at notifying travelers what tangible facilities they could expect from an accommodation. Over the years, this system has evolved into grading and rating that focuses on the holistic hotel experience (Hensens, Struwig, & Dayan, 2010). The hotel literature generally employs classification to mean hotel types while rating and grading represent the quality and class of a hotel (Hensens, Struwig, & Dayan, 2010; Israeli, 2002). The China National Tourism Administration (CNTA) used hotel star rating to launch the hotel rating program based on five-star criteria.

According to a joint study coproduced by World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the International Hotel and Restaurant Association (IH & RA), a hotel rating system refers to “a system, duly published, in which accommodation establishments of the same type (e.g., hotels, motels, inns, etc.) have been conventionally broke down into classes,

categories or grades according to their common physical and service characteristics and established at government, industry or other private levels” (UNWTO, 2004. p. 14). Given its benefits to sectors like travel agencies, tour operators, hotels, governments, and consumers, it is not surprising that in the past decade more than one-hundred hotel rating systems emerged around the world (Narangajavana & Hu, 2008). China was one of the first countries to implement a star rating system for categorizing and monitoring hotels (Pine & Philips, 2005; Yu, 1992).

Yu (1992) pointed out that hotel grading guidelines reflect local cultural elements and may vary across different countries and regions, while acknowledging similarities at some point. Su and Sun (2007) compared hotel rating systems adopted in the United Kingdom, U. S., China, and Taiwan in terms of service quality. In China, the hotel rating system could be traced back to 1988 when the official grading criteria was introduced by CNTA (Leung, Lee, & Law, 2011; Pine & Philips, 2005), with its goal of “enhancing the hotel-management and service standards of tourist hotels in China and protecting the interest of hoteliers, travel companies, and consumers” (Yu, 1992. p.24). In the late 1980s, China’s hotel industry revealed several problems. These problems included wide variation of hotel facilities and services, the lack of unified hotel operation standards, an inexperienced workforce (Tisdell & Wen, 1991), deficient and unreliable information of

marketing and promotion (Liu & Liu, 1993), and a lack of coordination among hotel administrations because of complex bureaucratic and financial structures (Zhao, 1989).

Table 2. 2 Comparative Analysis of Star Rating System Chronologically

		One-star	Two-star	Three-star	Four-star	Five-star
Architecture and facilities	1993	80	120	220	300	330
	1997	80	120	220	300	330
	2003	70	120	220	330	420
	2010	Changed to entry requirements	Changed to entry requirements	Changed to entry requirements	Changed to entry requirements	Changed to entry requirements
Maintenance and sanitation and hygiene (percentage, %)	1993	90	90	92	95	95
	1997	90	90	92	95	95
	2003	90	90	92	95	95
	2010 (point)	No requirement	No requirement	220	320	420
Service quality (percentage, %)	1993	90	90	92	95	95
	1997	90	90	92	95	95
	2003	90	90	92	95	95
	2010	No requirement	No requirement	70	80	85

Note: adapted from Yu, 1992; Wu & Yang, 2012

While the past two decades have witnessed four revisions of China's hotel rating system in 1993, 1997, 2003, and 2010, its criteria always focused on two areas: physical features and service quality (Leung et al., 2011; Wu & Yang, 2012). In its early stage, these two areas were assessed in six subareas: (1) architecture and level of service, (2) facilities, (3) maintenance, (4) sanitation and hygiene, (5) service quality, (6) and guest satisfaction. After five years' of experience in evaluating star-rated hotels, the hotel rating system was introduced nationwide (Su & Sun, 2007). Its most recent revision was introduced in 2010, with deletion or addition of single items from the checklist of each subgroup mentioned above. With a detailed scoring system, hotels that qualify for the

minimum requirements for a certain star rating are rated by the CNTA. Such rating process would position each hotel into different star category (i.e. one to five star) based on the scores they earned. Table 2.2 presents the details of the scoring system. In general, a minimum score must be obtained for hotels to be ranked at a certain star level and is valid for three years.

In the area of architecture and facilities, to earn a certain star level hotels need to obtain a fixed point, from 80 (one-star) to 330 (five-star) in the 1993 and 1997 versions. However, in 2003 the gap between low and high star-rated hotels expanded by lowering the required scores for one-star to 70 and increasing those for five-star to 420. The most recent version in 2010 was more stringent as it converted items listed in Architecture and Facilities into the entry requirements.

Unlike the point-based scoring system of architecture and facilities, the rating of maintenance, sanitation, hygiene, and service quality follows a percentage-based system. In other words, the ratio in percentage between the actual scores earned by a hotel and a preset point is calculated, which then is compared to a standard. The present researcher noted few changes in ratios in the rating procedures for maintenance, sanitation, hygiene, and service quality in these four versions. With an exception in the 2010 version, the percentage-based scoring standard was converted into point-based one. As well, the

discrepancy existed between low- and high-star hotels as no requirements existed for one- and two-star hotels in these areas while standards for other star-rated hotels were raised.

As suggested by Yu (1992), the introduction and implementation of the star rating system is “a big step for the Chinese hotel industry” (p. 25), signaling the internationalization and rapid expansion of hotels in China. When the star grading system was firstly introduced, there were only 110 star-class hotels, out of which only three were rated as five-star hotels (Yu, 1992). However, the volume of star-rated hotels in China rocketed to 11, 676 in 2011, among which 615 were five-star hotels (CNTA, 2012). In today’s market, China’s hotel industry has entered into a new era of development and it is anticipated that China will be ranked the first in Asia in terms of hotel numbers (Zhang, 2003).

As mentioned above, one purpose of implementing hotel star rating was to offer a unified standard in assessing the quality of services and facilities offered by hotels (Leung et al., 2011; Israeli, 2002). From a consumer’s perspective, this mechanism could be treated as an effective indicator of hotel quality (Leung et al., 2011; Narangajavana & Hu, 2008), a proxy for business strategy (Sun, Aryee, & Law, 2007), and service quality metric (Öğüt & Onur Tas, 2012). Generally speaking, a higher star rating indicates a better performance and vice versa (Jiang, Gretzel, & Law, 2014; Sun et al., 2007),

although scholars have not come to an agreement on the extent to which the value of a star being weighted in the star rating system. However, in discussing the impacts of hotel star rating upon hotel performances like sales and premium prices, researchers explicitly or implicitly treated four- and five-star hotels as higher star rated.

For example, Sun et al. (2007) analyzed the interrelationship among high-performance human resource practices, citizenship behavior, and organizational performance in the context of China's hotel industry. Their study used hotel star rating as an indicator of business strategy, with one to three stars being operationalized as low star rating while four and five star as high star rating. Nebel, Braunlich, and Zhang (1994) were more straightforward in this respect as they clearly operationalized four- or five-star hotels as luxurious. They justified their conclusions by the observation that four- and five-star hotels were capable of fully completing food & beverage services. In China, there has been quite a long standing and large disparity between performances of four / five star hotels and that of hotels with lower star rating hotels in terms of total revenues. In 1997, high star hotels contributed about 31.22 percent of the total revenues and this number grew to 65.64 percent in 2011 (CNTA, 1998; CNTA, 2012). As such, in operationalizing hotel star rating this study treated hotels of four and above stars as higher star rating with the others as low star rating.

2.6.2 Hotel Ownership in China

Aside from the star rating system, another attribute that differentiates one hotel from another is its ownership type. As an important topic in management and marketing areas, equity ownership has widely been identified as an enabler in aligning interests of diverse shareholders and management parties (Short & Keasey, 1999). To the extent that a firm's performance depends on the distribution of share ownerships, equity ownership has great impacts upon corporate values (Wruck, 1989). Given the significance of corporate ownership structure, it is not surprising that this topic has attracted enormous attention from researchers all over the world. In China, almost all areas of society have undergone substantial reforms aimed at liberalizing the market and privatizing enterprises (Goetzmann & Köll, 2005). As one of the first industries benefiting from the Open-door policy, the hotel industry is no exception in China's transitional economy.

In 1989, the CNTA identified a mixture of seven ownership types: state-owned, collectively owned, joint-owned, foreign investment, joint venture, contractual agreement, and privately owned. Among these, state ownership is still the dominant mode and attracts the most attention from researchers. At a macro level, state ownership means a certain property is owned by all the people in the country, based on the assumption that the wealth is created by the whole society. At the micro level, the narrow interpretation of

state ownership means that people in a given region own the property (Tang et al., 2006). This may explain why, when mentioning state ownership, researchers tend to specify such ownership could be interpreted at national, provincial, regional, or municipal levels, respectively (e.g. Pine, 2002).

The ownership of the collective is similar to state ownership in many ways except the modes of tax payment and employee benefits (Yu, 1992) and that collective enterprises are owned by a certain group of workers, rather than the people from the whole state (Lam & Han, 2005). That is why employees from collectively owned hotels receive their benefits from the enterprise, rather than the state. Moreover, collectively owned hotels are geographically located in more economically advanced areas like the southern coastal regions.

Sometimes, a state-owned enterprise form partnerships with a collective enterprise, which then results in joint ownership. These mainly exist in major tourism destinations and explains why the earliest jointly owned hotels were in Beijing and Shanghai.

As a relatively capital intensive sector in the tourism and hotel industries, the construction and development of hotels require heavy investment and management expertise (Endo, 2006). Developing countries like China are often short of capitals and

management expertise that foreign investment could offset. As suggested by Endo (2006), the participation of a foreign corporation has five different forms: (1) equity investment (majority or 100 percent ownership); (2) minority equity (like joint venture); (3) management contract; (4) leasing agreement; and (5) marketing agreement similar to franchise agreement.

Table 2. 3 Statistics of China's Hotel Ownership in 1989

Ownership	Hotels	Rooms	Number of Beds	Occupancy Rate (%)
State-owned	1,328	189,206	426,091	59.9
Alliance	12	2,124	4,368	45.9
Foreign invested	1	775	1,085	48.4
Joint venture	138	30,311	55,576	46.5
Sino-foreign cooperative	161	29,965	58,233	52.8
Collective	145	15,063	35,416	55.0
Private	3	61	144	48.4
Total	1788	267,913	580,913	57.2

(Adapted¹ from Yu, 1992)

In the early stage of China's hotel development, the first three forms of participation resulted in three ownership types: foreign invested, joint venture, and Sino-foreign cooperative. As suggested by Yu (1992), existence of these hotels reflects the central government's determination and effort in developing China's hotel industry.

The central government also expended great effort to diversify investment sources, turning to private capital sources such as self-employed Chinese enterprises (Dai, 2003).

¹ In Yu (1992), seven ownership types were state-owners, join-owner, foreign investment, join venture, contractual agreement, collectively owned, and privately owned. However, in the following yearbook series, translations in a different way were spotted which were followed until today. As such, for consistence concern, this study adapted Yu (1992) and presented statistics of Chinese hotels by ownership in 1989 in a different but related manner.

This move resulted in private hotel ownership. Table 2.2 presents the statistics of hotel ownership in 1989 in terms of hotels, rooms, beds number, and occupancy rate.

In 1989, state-owned hotels dominated China's hotel sector, as the state fully or partly owned up to 83 percent of total hotel stock (i.e. state owned, alliance, and collective). Consequently, hotels having the state participation contributed the most rooms and beds. During the process of diversifying capitals, foreign investment has expanded and more foreign hotel groups and management companies entered China, which accelerated hotel development (Liu & Liu, 1993). However, going back to the late 1980s, there was only one wholly foreign-owned hotel, the Shanghai Hilton.

After years of development during which international investments increased significantly, China's hotel ownership evolved into a more complicated and diversified structure. In 1999, there were seven different hotel ownership types: (1) state-owned; (2) collective; (3) private; (4) alliance; (5) stock; (6) foreign-invested; and (7) Hong Kong-, Macau-, and Taiwan-invested (CNTA, 2000). In 2000, stock ownership was removed and four more categories were added: (1) share-holding cooperative, (2) limited liability, (3) limited liability shares, and (4) others (CNTA, 2001).

Together, these 10 hotel ownership types were designated and are still in use today: (1) state owned, (2) collective, (3) shareholding cooperative, (4) alliance, (5)

limited liability, (6) limited liability shares, (7) private, (8) other, (9) foreign invested, and (10) Hong Kong-, Macau-, and Taiwan-invested (hereafter as HMT invested) (China National Tourism Administration, 2009). Table 2.3 depicts the statistics of hotels across the ten ownerships. Although the reformation of China's hotels is still in progress and the government encourages diversified investment sources, state-owned hotels still dominate the whole hotel industry (Tang et al., 2006), which is evident in Table 2.3.

China's hotel ownership structure is so special that it has attracted extensive attention from researchers (e.g. Tang et al., 2006; Ryan & Gu, 2007). Yet, these studies mainly focused on issues relating to the state owned hotels while paying little attention to properties of other ownership types. This may be due to the dominance of state ownership and the complicated structure of other types.

To make the operationalization of hotel ownership practicable, this study further groups the existing 10 hotel ownership types. As suggested by Yu and Egri (2005), there are three main types of equity ownership in China: state-owned, collectively-owned, and privately-owned (including private companies, joint ventures, and foreign businesses). As mentioned above, collective and state ownership are different but related in that both belong to the state sectors, with the former owned by all the people and the latter by the workers (Pyke, Robb, & Farley, 2000). Therefore, Jefferson and Singh (1999) suggested

that state and collective ownership types can be merged into the single category of publicly owned. Following this suggestion, the present study operationalized the system of China's 10 hotel ownership types into two: publicly owned (state, collective, and alliance businesses) and privately owned (others except the aforementioned three). Other studies have adopted this simplification. For example, Sun et al. (2007) grouped hotel ownership into public versus not public.

2.7 Online Purchase Intentions

As noted above, TRA It is important to discuss consumer purchase intentions in marketing research and practice as it is reportedly predictive of consumers' actual purchase behaviors (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) and functions as a dimension of behavioral intention (Zeithaml Berry, & Parasuraman, 1996). Out of numerous variables, Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) claimed a person's intention to perform a behavior is "the best single predictor of an individual's behavior" (p. 369). However, in actual variable operationalization of understanding consumers' minds, measurements of intentions are superior to the behavioral measures in that purchase behaviors could be generated by promotion offers like discounted deals and coupons, rather than true preferences (Day, 1969). In addition, data of consumer purchase intentions are relatively easier to collect than those measuring behaviors (Chandon, Morwitz, & Reinartz, 2005). As such,

consumer purchase intentions have been widely examined in a variety of studies having divergent purposes, which Kalwani and Silk (1982) described as a “routine application in consumer research investigations” (p. 243).

In the tourism and hotel domains, the variable of purchase intention has also received widespread attentions covering disparate sectors. For example, in the context of wine tourism, Barber, Taylor, and Deale (2010) found that wine tourists are willing to pay premium prices for environmentally friendly wines and have stronger visit intentions to wine region destinations. Their results also suggested that such willingness and intentions vary across gender, as females are more motivated in these two aspects. In another research, Kim and Littrell (1999) developed a model of souvenir purchase intentions and tested it among U.S. female travelers to Mexico, with the theory of attitude-intention being the fundamental framework. Their research identified two distinctive traveler types with different motivations that influenced their purchase intentions in disparate manners.

The emergence and development of the Internet has immensely changed consumers' buying behaviors and has had a profound influence upon their decision-making (Brown, Pope, & Voges, 2003). This gives marketing researchers a new perspective to study purchase intentions. Largely, frameworks of offline or traditional purchasing behaviors are applicable to the discussions of online buying intentions. As a

reflection of consumers' future purchase behaviors over the Internet, online purchase intention refers to customers' willingness and intentions to participate in an online deal, which includes the evaluation processes of website quality and product information (Pavlou, 2003; Hausman & Siekpe, 2009; Poddar, Donthu, & Wei, 2009).

More specifically, in the hotel industry domain, many studies have investigated factors influencing consumers' purchase intentions from either hotels' own websites or OTAs. With a large survey among 1,743 respondents, Jeong, Oh, and Gregoire (2003) found consumers' satisfaction with information is critical in influencing their online purchase intentions. Aiming to identify the perceived importance of hotel website dimensions and attributes, Law and Hsu (2006) found website quality positively correlated with consumer purchase intentions.

Online purchase intention requires a higher degree of trust than offline purchase does (Van der Heijden, Verhagen, & Creemers, 2003). This is because shopping in the virtual environment involves risks and uncertainties when much information of the merchant on the other side of the wire is unknown to the customer (Tan & Thoen, 2001). Trust is important in mitigating such uncertain feelings to enable a real purchase. Golmohammadi, Jahandideh, and Gorman (2012) suggested that trust is a vital driving

force of consumer online purchase intention and recommended online booking websites build trust with their customers to achieve success.

2.8 Hypotheses of Conjectural Associations among Constructs of Interest

The TAM is widely adopted and adapted in studies relating to ICTs applications. At the same time, researchers generally realized the need to extent this mode to accommodate requirements of divergent research contexts. In the discussions of consumer trust in the virtual community, several such attempts could be spotted. For example, Gefen, Karahanna, and Straub (2003) integrated concepts of trust and its antecedent variables (i.e. calculative-based, institution-based structural assurances, institution based situational normality, and knowledge-based familiarity) into TAM. Their research revealed that consumer trust is as important as the widely accepted TAM use-antecedents (i.e. perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use), all of which together could increase the exploratory power of TAM. Different from the study conducted by Gefen et al. (2003) in which consumer trust was at the same level as TAM use-antecedents, Pavlou (2003) treated consumer trust as the determinant factor of perceived usefulness.

As mentioned in Chapter One, this study does not simply integrated consumer trust into existing models of TRA or TAM. Yet, it well recognizes the nature of online

relationship marketing as the primary interface of which is the information technology or the website. Furthermore, previous studies have established that online purchase intention is a function of consumers' trust towards the online seller (e.g. Ha & Stoel, 2009), which then is a product of website attributes and features of the e-vendor (details are presented in Section 2.4.5: Antecedents of eTrust). Therefore, based on TAM, this study incorporates the perceived attributes of hotel websites and hotel profiles as explanatory variables in understanding eTrust, which then predicts consumers' online booking intentions. Such causal relationships could be translated into six hypothesis, reasoning processes being presented as below.

Based on previous research, it can be argued that website content can be used to evaluate its trustworthiness. Providing proper and helpful information to the target customers is a strong cue of trustworthiness (Shelat & Egger, 2002). However, the mix of advertisement and content negatively related to trustworthiness (Fogg et al., 2001; Jenkins, Corritore, & Wiedenbeck, 2003).

Previous studies also suggested that website usability may influence consumers' perceptions towards the website and thus of the perceived level of eTrust. As suggested by Egger (2003), the ease of learning and the capacity of a computer system are good indicators of its ease of use and therefore can be used to infer the future actions of the

system. Muir and Moray (1996) found that greater website usability can help users better comprehend the contents and tasks which are necessary for the achievement of objectives (e.g. make an order). Bearden, Hardesty, and Rose (2001) discussed the relationship between website usability and web users' self-confidence. They suggested that usability enables consumers to know where they are at any time and what can be done. Self-confidence is the feeling of security and ability about their decisions and behaviors. According to the research results, better website usability offers more security to web users, which can increase online users' self-confidence. In addition, it has been proposed that self-confidence fosters greater trust in technology (Kantowitz, Hankowski, & Kantowitz, 1997).

According to the conventional TAM, perceived usefulness and ease of use are predictors of Therefore, it could be deduced how consumers perceive website attributes covering website functionality and usability could further influence consumers' perceived eTrust level. Thus, based on the existing literature, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Perceived importance of hotel-owned website attributes positively affect perceived eTrust level

Israeli (2002) suggested that the star rating can be treated as a hotel quality measure as it is the main reason for the variation of room prices across high season,

regular season, and low season. In addition, compared to other hotel attributes like brand affiliation, star rating is more consistent in influencing hotel room prices over different seasons (Israeli, 2002). As such, the star rating system in practice has historically been included in the governmental hotel-evaluation schema to monitor and regulate services and facilities offered by hotels (Leung et al., 2011). From a consumer's perspective, star rating is an explicit service promise as well as an effective mechanism for consumers to evaluate a hotel (Jiang et al., 2014; Zeithaml, Bitner, & Gremler, 2006). Ariffin and Maghzi (2012) suggested that customers' expectations of hospitality may be influenced by hotel profile inherent in the star rating. It functions as an effective predictor in the hotel industry when consumers cannot access the services and products prior to the actual purchase. Therefore, consumers need to rely on signals like hotel star rating status that communicate the standards of service quality when making their purchase decisions.

As to how star rating influences consumers' perceptions, relevant researchers generally agreed that there exists a positive relationship between star rating and consumers' expectations (Pine & Philips, 2005). Ryan and Gu (2007) found that the star rating system significantly influences customers' ratings of hotel attributes. According to China's hotel star rating regulations, hotels of higher star status have all the facilities and amenities. If low-rated hotels provide services perceived by consumers to be associated

with higher-ranked hotels, these low rated hotels will generate more satisfied consumers. Such finding indicates the importance of maintaining quality service and facilities to meet or exceed star status.

Therefore, star rating is a major source for hotels' competence and high star rating is a proxy for an asset for which a premium price could be requested (Israeli, 2002). Results of Lollar's (1990) study found that properties of higher star rating (i.e. four- and five- star) could charge any price within reason. While in today's buyers' market, whether such argument is true or not, hotel star rating is vital to hotel marketing. Thus, it is not surprising to find that hotel operators value their hotel grades and treat them as effective promotional tools (Narangajavana & Hu, 2008).

To the author's best knowledge, few studies have examined the impacts of hotels' star ranks upon eTrust. However, it has long been accepted that merchant attributes could serve as cues to convince consumers that the online merchant they are dealing with is trustworthy. For instance, Hussin, Macaulay, & Keeling (2007) proposed that in the process of the consumer interaction, merchant-related attributes can generate trust at very early stages. With a large-scale survey, Hussin et al. (2007) proved that consumers ranked company telephone number, company e-mail address, and company address as the first, second, and fourth most important attribute in fostering trust toward a website. This

rationale should also hold true for the hotel industry, such that hotels' attributes like star ranks will influence consumers' eTrust levels. Scholars have invariably validated the role of hotel star rating as a signal of hotel performance. Ryan and Gu (2007) verified that hotels' star ratings are a strong predictor of guests' satisfaction. Additionally, Sun et al. (2007) empirically asserted the positive relationship between hotel star rating and hotel productivity. In other words, the higher the star rating, the higher the productivity. Israeli (2002) identified a positive correlation between hotel star rating and brand affiliation; higher star rated hotels tended to be a part of a branded hotel chain.

In the online environment, hotel star category functions as the mediating variable in differences between adopting ICTs such as email use (Wei et al., 2001) and response behavior to email inquiries and information depth (Pechalaner et al., 2002). Given the established online presence of internationally renowned hotel brands, it is reasonable to argue that such an identity in the online market would lead to higher eTrust level. As mentioned in Chapter One, star rating and ownership type per se do not influence consumers' feeling and the corresponding hotel performance matters. Thus, based on this reasoning, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H2: Perceived performance of low star rated hotels negatively affect consumers' perceived eTrust level

H3: Perceived performance of high star rated hotel positively affect consumers' perceived eTrust level

Analysts have long discussed and frequently debated how company performances vary across different ownership types, among which the public ownership enterprises have been criticized the most. For example, Steinfeld (1998) noted that public owned enterprises had many problems like overstaffing, low profitability, and inefficiency. Public owned hotels have also been criticized for their failure to separate general management and asset management (Pine, 2002; Tisdell, 1990; Xiao, O'Neill, & Wang, 2008). An often cited study conducted by Pine and Philips (2005) concluded that state owned hotels suffered from small operational size and subsequent low hotel revenue compared to other ownership categories, especially HMT invested and foreign funded hotel units. Furthermore, national statistics also revealed the inefficiency of state-owned hotels as they recorded the least RevPAR (CNTA, 2010).

Mak (2008) pointed out that problems of state owned hotels mainly comes from six aspects: (1) bureaucratic structure and control, (2) lack of corporate government, (3) non-commercial operations, (4) less competent managerial professionals, (5) lack of management strategies, and (6) exploitation of facilities. Most recently, Chen, Wu, and Wu (2013) empirically tested significant influences of state ownership combined with

other firm characteristics on the financial performances of hotels. Their results showed that hotels in China with high state ownership are small in size, high in debt leverage, and low in liquidity. Moreover, they have limited influence on financial performance measures like return on assets (ROA) and stock return. Consequently, Chen, Wu, & Chen (2013) suggested that China should decrease the state ownership of hotels. Considering that state-owned hotels have a high capacity of hotel rooms but lesser financial performance, some scholars contended that state owned enterprises are responsible for a significant portion of the low performance of China's hotel industry (e.g. Cai et al., 2000).

The present researcher found little research on the connection between hotel ownership and eTrust. Nevertheless, it has been widely accepted that a causal relationship exists between company features and consumer trust. In the context of China's hotel industry, ownership structure is a critical factor which cannot be ignored and it has been considered as one of China's distinct hotel industry features (Pine, 2002). The current study reveals that consumers' perceived eTrust levels differ according to whether the hotel is privately or publicly owned. In addition, privately owned hotels perform much better than their publicly owned counterparts in various aspects. Similar to star rating, this study proposed relationships between privately- and publicly-owned hotels as below:

H4: Perceived performance of privately owned hotels positively affect consumers' perceived eTrust level

H5: Perceived performance of publicly owned hotels negatively affect consumers' perceived eTrust level

The impacts of consumer trust have been extensively discussed in divergent research domains and researchers have widely agreed that consumer trust could predict purchase intentions and subsequent purchase behavior (e.g. Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Consistent with research findings in the offline environment, a number of studies have supported the notion that trust in the virtual world is important in influencing consumers' intentions to transact with a website (e.g. Chiu, Huang, & Yen, 2010; Gefen et al., 2003; Gefen & Straub, 2004; McKnight et al., 2002; Schlosser, White, & Lloyd, 2006). More specifically, Jarvenpaa, Tractinsky, and Saarinen (1999) found a link between consumers' trust in an Internet store and their attitudes, which in turn influences their buying intentions. Gefen (2000) found trust in an Internet store combined with familiarity with the shop positively associated with consumers' willingness to purchase. In a subsequent research, Gefen (2002) affirmed that the overall trust in the vendor combined with vendor integrity can affect consumers' purchase intentions. Unlike the aforementioned studies, which adopted quantitative research methods such as surveys, Yoon (2002) adopted the

method of controlled simulation and his research findings also confirmed the significant causal impacts of website trust on consumers' purchase intentions.

Such causal relationship could be interpreted with the theory of reasoned action (TRA) that suggests a significant relationship between attitude about behavior and the behavioral intention (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). More specifically, there are three preconditions for consumer trust to encourage the intention to purchase from a merchant (Wiedenfels, 2009). First, actual purchase implies some extent of risk taking; second, making a purchase may lead to a relationship between the seller and the buyer; and third, purchase intention is a strong predictor of actual purchase behavior. eTrust related studies support these preconditions.

Similar research efforts exist in the context of tourism and hotel contexts. Oh (2002) empirically showed that there was a significantly positive effect of restaurant customers' trust on relationship intentions and repurchase intention. Although there has been no previous study examining exactly how eTrust in China's hotel industry will affect consumers' online purchase intentions, in light of the aforementioned evidence, it is still legitimate to propose:

H6: Consumers' perceived eTrust level positively affects their online booking intentions.

The above presented hypotheses constituted the fundamental basis for the overall conceptual framework, which Figure 2.1 schematically depicts. These six propositions echoed the research questions delineated in Chapter 1. Specifically, six pairs of inter-variable correlations were examined: (1) perceived importance of hotel website attributes → eTrust, (2) perceived performance of high star rated hotels → eTrust, (3) perceived performance of low star rated hotels → eTrust, (4) perceived performance of privately owned hotels → eTrust, (5) perceived performance of publicly owned hotels → eTrust, and (6) eTrust → online booking intentions.

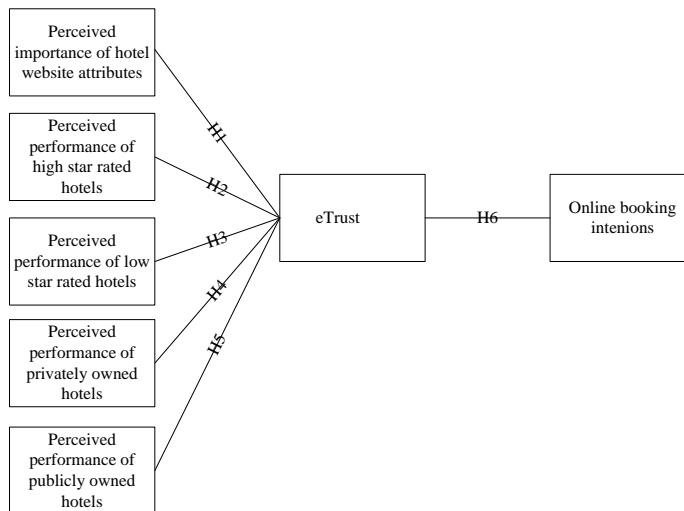


Figure 2. 3 Proposed Conceptual Model

2.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter has reviewed the theoretical foundation, research context and the constructs of hotel website attributes, hotel star rating, hotel ownership, eTrust, and online booking

intentions, which together constitute the conceptual model of inter-construct relationships. This critical review process provided a solid theoretical foundation for the whole research. With the aggregated information, promising research findings would be expected as the constructs of interest have been widely studied as either outcomes or antecedents. At the same time, the present research effort is promising to make new contributions to the field of research: no similar research has been conducted and for the first time these critically important variables were integrated in a single model, which would advance our understanding of these constructs and their linkages to each other.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter discusses the overall research design and essential research procedures in a detailed manner, including data collection and analysis to address the research objectives. To begin, this chapter introduces research methodology and procedures. It details each procedure involved in the process of research design, presenting the units of analysis, measurements development, sampling, and data collection. Chapter 3 ends with an overall summary.

3.2 Overview of Research Methods

Every research work consists of several phases that begins with a determination of the research topic and ends with a discussion about the generalizability of its discoveries. This study is no exception. It aims to test the validity and reliability of the proposed conceptual model integrating hotel website quality, perceptions of hotel star rating, perceptions of hotel ownership, perceived eTrust, and online purchase intentions in the context of China's hotel industry.

Besides filling in the research gaps emerging during literature review process, this study also attempts to offer some suggestions for hotel marketing practitioners to increase direct sales from their own websites. In considering the research objectives and the initial

efforts in discussing eTrust in the Chinese hotel context, a rigorous research design is required.

Research methodology is a topic of interest within the increasing number of tourism and hotel publications. Tourism scholars have discussed the relative pros and cons of quantitative and qualitative techniques, respectively. Quantitative approaches affirm the belief that universal laws lead to one truth whereas qualitative approaches operated on the assumption of a diversity of realities (Davies, 2003). Many criticisms could be made of both approaches. One may challenge the foundational notion of universal laws in quantitative methods and question the methodological soundness and lack of justification in qualitative research (Decrop, 1999; Davis, 2003). Decrop (1999) suggested that anthropologists and sociologists have long been involved in using qualitative approaches. Few researchers from disciplines like geography and marketing have adopted qualitative techniques in their research and tend to “rely on structure ways and quantification” (Riley, 1996, p. 22).

Triangulation can bridge qualitative and quantitative methods. This concept was introduced by Webb et al. (1966), which proposed viewpoints that complement rather than oppose one another. To put it simply, triangulation examines the same phenomenon from multiple angles and different sources to decrease potential personal and

methodological biases, enhancing the credibility and dependability of findings (Decrop, 1999).

In the academic investigations of consumer trust, empirical studies have dominated in the context of tourism. Researchers develop different models and then empirically test roles of consumer trust as either an antecedent or consequent variable. These studies generally based on findings from other established disciplines like marketing, psychology, and sociology. Still, several studies combined research methods.

Considering all factors, the present researcher adopted a mixed method approach to explore and clarify the inter-variable correlations under investigation. This approach triangulates mixed methods, instead of the obviously complicated method of mixing conflicting paradigms (Davies, 2003). To measure eTrust, hotel star rating, and hotel ownership, this study needs to develop measurement scales first.

Consequently, the study follows Churchill's (1979) approach and uses the positivist research paradigm to ascertain items representing the variables of interest as a sequence of steps applicable to multi-item measures. This study initiated the development of measurement scales for eTrust in China's hotel industry, perceptions of hotel star rating system and hotel ownerships in terms of hotel performances. This required the

identification of measurement items as well as examining the face validity of a newly developed scale before testing it on a large scale (Narver & Slater, 1990).

As the subjective assessment of consistency among the items that compose a construct, desirable face validity represents the minimized possibility of overlaps among items. Therefore, the present study adopts qualitative research techniques (i.e. focus groups and semi-structured interviews) to identify items and examine face validity. This approach is consistent with many other empirical studies that use qualitative methods as forerunners for the quantitative method of questionnaire surveys (e.g., Hung & Petrick, 2010).

3.3 Research Nature

According to Burns and Bush (2000), there are three types of studies: exploratory, descriptive, and causal. An exploratory study is concerned with preliminary data collection, problem identification and situations specification; a descriptive study depicts the phenomenon involved; and a causal research work test the hypotheses for better understanding of a cause-effect relationship. A definitive cause needs to be established before the analysis of its effect (Sekaran, 2003).

This study took the first step of examining perceived eTrust, perceptions of hotel star rating, and hotel ownership against the background of China's hotel industry. Then it

attempted to identify the influence of perceptions of hotel star rating and hotel ownership upon eTrust and the extent to which these two factors influence eTrust and consequent Chinese Internet users' intentions to book a hotel room online. Given the initial efforts in designing measurement scales as well as inter-construct correlations, this study is both exploratory and causal in nature.

3.4 Questionnaire Development Process

As to the content of the questionnaire, this study follows Brace's (2008) study by including three sections in the questionnaire: 1) exclusion or security question; 2) screening questions; and 3) main questionnaire. This research is not for commercial use and it is not necessarily important to exclude respondents who work in the same area as the researcher, the potential competitors, for the protection of confidentiality. Normally, the questionnaire generally falls into four parts: (1) opening remarks; (2) screening questions, (3) main constructs in the research, and (4) demographic characteristics. In the opening words, the questionnaire articulates the purpose of the study and the research ethics (e.g., safety and anonymity of the collected data).

In general, people approached are not necessarily the targeted samples in this survey and this study needs to control this survey to include qualified participants. In this fashion, screening questions are designed to "screen the respondents for eligibility for the

survey” (Brace, 2008, p. 38). This study has two screening questions: “Have you ever purchased anything online in the past 12 months?” and “Have you ever stayed at one or more hotels in the past 12 months?” Cheng, Lam, and Hsu (2005) and Law and Hsu (2006) contended that 12 months could be an appropriate recall period. Only positive responses to both screening questions enabled respondents to proceed the survey.

The following sections delineate the measurements of the proposed constructs and demographic profile, as they involved much more complicated work. Considering the cultural and linguistic background of the respondents, the questionnaire was presented in simplified Chinese to improve respondents’ participation intentions, which could then increase the response rate. Measurement items originally from literature in English were translated into Chinese. A back-to-back translation procedure was used, and two translation professionals who were Chinese native speakers participated in the process. To ensure further proper wording and expression of the items following Chinese-speaking habits, a group of graduate students majoring in tourism- and hotel-related programs and 11 experienced Chinese web users pre-tested the questionnaire. Because respondents may be sensitive to the time required, a self-administered questionnaire with tick boxes and close-ended questions was most appropriate.

3.4.1 Measurements Development Process of Main Constructs

Traditionally, approaches to scale development emphasize the internal consistency of a scale, which refers to the extent of inter-item correlation. Such trends reflect the general adoption of EFA, which examines item-total correlations and scale reliability. However, it is also important to test external consistency, which reflects correlations between items and other measures. To achieve this, CFA is used to obtain complementary information as it tests external consistency of the scale items.

Table 3. 1 Procedures for Measurement Development Process

Suggested procedure for developing better measures (Churchill, 1979)	Recommended coefficients or techniques	Techniques used in this study
1. specify domain of construct	Literature search	Literature search
2. generate sample of items	Literature search	Literature search
3. collect data	Experience survey Insight stimulating examples Critical incidents Focus groups	Face validity: focus group; semi-structured interviews; panel of experts Pretest
4. purify measure	Coefficient alpha Factor analysis	Pilot test (online panel survey) Factor analysis (EFA) Coefficient alpha
5. collect data		Main survey (online panel survey)
6. assess reliability	Coefficient alpha Split-half reliability	Composite reliability
7. assess validity	Multitrait-multimethod matrix Criterion validity	Convergent validity Discriminant validity
8. develop norms	Average and other statistics Summarizing distribution of scores	N/A

In social science, it is a key methodological goal to develop and improve measurements to measure variables of interests (Bearden, Netemeyer, & Mobley, 1993), as measurement quality could significantly influence research findings. As previously mentioned, the development of measures for variables of interest in this study follows procedures recommended by Churchill (1979), with some flexibilities for adding qualitative techniques. Table 3.1 offers a detailed comparison between techniques recommended by Churchill (1979) and those adopted in the current study reflecting the research objectives.

3.4.2 Generation and Selection of Initial Measurement Items

This study uses multiple items to measure all constructs of interest because experts generally discourage the adoption of single-item measures to examine consumer perceptions; the internal consistency of reliability cannot be estimated in the case of single-item measures (Bergkvist & Rossiter, 2007; Wanous & Reichers, 1996). If the reliability of a proposed construct cannot be secured, its generalizability would be greatly hindered, reducing the value of a study. Multiple-item measures could capture more information compared to a single-term measure. Comparing single-item and multiple-item measures, Churchill (1979) went even further by stating “In sum, marketers are

much better served with multi-item than single-item measures of their constructs, and they should take the time to develop them” (p. 66).

To study eTrust in the context of the hotel industry, this study first had to develop measurement scales. In accordance with proposed techniques in Table 3.1, the researcher derived an initial pool of measurement items from literature reviews on website attributes, eTrust, and online purchase intention. More specifically, the measurements on website attributes come from a series of empirical studies conducted by Au Yeung and Law (2004), Chung and Law (2003), and Law and Hsu (2006) analyzing website functionality and usability. Measures of eTrust come from studies conducted by Kim, Kim, and Kim (2009b), Gefen et al., (2003), Corbitt et al., (2003), Zhou (2005), and Wu (2011). The scale of online users’ purchase intention comes from Bai et al., (2008), Hausman and Siekpe (2009). These measurements items became the starting point because they have been empirically tested for acceptable validity and reliability. Furthermore, adopting similar scales in different cultural communities may increase the explanatory power of the proposed models, especially in attitude studies (Sirakaya, Tse, & Sonmez, 2002).

The proposed scale required respondents to report their perceived trust towards hotel websites on a 7-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Compared to a 5-point scale, the 7-point scale ensured the stability of

participant responses and captured the detailed differences among the perceived agreement levels of respondents on eTrust attributes and dimensions (Preston & Colman, 2000). Demographic information included gender, age group, education level, and monthly personal income. As noted by Law and Hsu (2006), most tourism and hospitality scholars use these standard demographic variables.

3.5 Survey Design

3.5.1 Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis is “the entity whose characteristics are of central importance for observation and interpretation” (Anheier, 2004, p.226). In other words, it is the major entity analyzed in a study (Craig & Douglas, 2005). The choice of the unit of analysis determines the composition of the sample population, defines the study scope, and influences the selection of variables to be included in a research framework (Sekaran, 2003).

The current study attempts to check the impacts of proposed antecedents and consequence of eTrust in China’s hotel industry from consumers’ perspectives. Thus, the unit of analysis is at the individual level, which is in accordance with the study scope presented in Chapter 1. In other words, the entity being analyzed is the individual Internet user. Only Chinese citizens will be included in this study, because foreigners may not

have adequate knowledge about background of Chinese hotels or their products and services.

However, not all Chinese web users were qualified as respondents in the current study. Consequently, the study presented certain criteria in the form of screening questions, detailed the previous section on the questionnaire development process. The screening questions help obtain more reliable and valid information as participants having no prior experience would have to give answers based solely on their imagination.

3.5.2 Sampling Size

To examine empirically the relationships among the constructs in the proposed model, the study adopted factor analysis and SEM. A sufficiently large sample size is necessary to ensure the precision of the statistical estimation and sampling representation. According to Tabachnick, Fidell, and Osterlind (2001), a sample of 300 cases is appropriate to produce stable factor solutions (Field, 2005). Dispensing with the view of fixed sample size, some researchers use a flexible method of using the ratio of respondents to items to decide the sample size. Such ratio could be 10:1 or 5:1. Hair et al. (2010) argued that 10:1 was too restrictive and suggested 5:1 was more suitable for multivariate analyses.

The determinants of the sample size for SEM should also be considered. As suggested by Hair et al. (2010), these factors include multivariate distribution of the data, estimation technique, model complexity, amount of missing data, and amount of average error variance among the reflective indicators.

3.5.3 Questionnaire Administration

Due to the originality of the conceptual framework developed in this study, this study employed an empirical method to realize the research objectives. It collected primary data for future analysis. Primary data, as defined by Polonsky and Waller (2010), are “originated by the researcher for the specific purpose of addressing the research problem” (p. 296). While numerous methods are available for collecting primary data, researchers commonly use interviews, questionnaires, observations, and projective tests for data collection in studies relating to hotel industries (Sekaran, 2003).

All these approaches have their own advantages and disadvantages. For example, the questionnaire method is a comparatively economical for data collection and is suitable for investigation, which is directly observed by researchers (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1992). Additionally, this method offers superior flexibility, control of the interview situation, and a high response rate, (Zikmund, 1994; Nachmias & Nachmias, 1992).

Considering the targeted samples and time constraints, the researcher adopted an online survey method for questionnaire distribution and collection. Hung and Law (2011) summarized a series of advantages of online surveys, one being its time efficiency. Accordingly, the researcher employed an online survey company of Sojump and it distributed email invitations to its panel members.

As mentioned above, prior to identifying inter-construct correlations among variables of interest, the researcher developed measurement scales. Two phases of data collection further refined the scale items of proposed constructs. Two surveys followed identical procedures with different sample sizes. A total of 422 and 843 questionnaires were collected in the first and second survey rounds respectively. To maintain research rigor, respondents included in the first round were excluded in the second. The following sections present the details of the data analysis methods.

3.6 Methods of Data Analysis

As delineated above, this study proposed a model to discuss eTrust in the context of the hotel industry in China. It is imperative to test the validity and reliability of a newly proposed conceptual model before proceeding to further analysis. Validity is “extent to which a measure or a set of measures correctly represents the concept of study – the degree to which it is free from any systematic or nonrandom error” (Hair et al, 2010.

p. 3), while reliability concerns the “extent to which a variable or a set of variables is consistent in what it is intended to measure” (Hair et al, 2010, p.2). Any summated scale should be analyzed for reliability to ensure its appropriateness before proceeding to an assessment of its validity. The following paragraphs briefly introduce the statistical techniques used in this research.

To determine the number of dimensions underlying the constructs, analysts often perform factor analysis “before doing anything else” (Churchill, 1979, p.19). Churchill (1979) argued that factor analysis is helpful in suggesting the construct dimensions but doubted its function in confirming or refuting “components isolated by other means” (p. 69). Researchers commonly perform factor analysis in two stages: EFA and CFA. These serve different functions at different stages in a single research project. EFA purifies the construct dimensions at the early stage while CFA assesses the extent to which the data meet the expected structure at later stages.

Field (2005) recommended EFA as a proper method at the pilot phase of research to refine questionnaires and reduce the data set. Hair et al. (2010) found that CFA is the most direct way of verifying the results of EFA. Samples can be divided into two subsets to test factor models of each subset if the sample is large enough. In line with these

recommendations, this study first uses EFA to analyze the survey data, and follows later with CFA.

3.6.1 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

Exploratory factor analysis tests the dimensionality of the proposed scales, which identifies underlying items of each construct through the factor extraction method. In the SPSS statistical software package, there are six methods factor analysis extraction: (1) principal components analysis, (2) un-weighted least squares, (3) generalized least squares, (4) maximum likelihood, (4) principal axis factoring, (5) alpha factoring, and (6) image factoring.

Among the six methods, principal components analysis (PCA) is most commonly used. Some researchers contribute its popularity of the observation that PCA is the default extraction method in SPSS. However, some argue that PCA is not a true method of factor analysis and suggest restricting its use (e.g. Bentler & Kano, 1990; Floyd & Widaman, 1995; MacCallum & Tucker, 1991). However, some other researchers argue if a continuous outcome is desired, the method of PCA would be preferable (Steiger, 1990a; Velicer & Jackson, 1990). Holding the similar stance, Johnson and Wichern (1992) also considers PCA is suitable for analyzing data measured with a Likert-type scale. Therefore,

this study follows previous studies and adopts PCA as the extraction method in EFA (Costello & Osborne, 2005).

After locating underlying dimensions of a data set, it is a common practice to name each extracted factor, after which the study could proceed with the labeled factors. Many experienced researchers suggest running a reliability test of each construct prior to subsequent uses of these factors as independent or predictor variables to guarantee the quality of the measurement (Churchill, 1979). According to Field (2005), reliability means a specific item should be consistent with other items measuring the same construct.

The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient has been generally regarded as one of the most popular reliability statistics test. Churchill (1979) suggested that various empirical studies adopted Cronbach's coefficient alpha to reflect construct reliability. As to the cutoff value, different scholars have different understandings. According to Field (2005), the value of 0.7 is the cutoff point to judge the quality of the measures. In addition, the present researcher will use the Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity to evaluate the adequacy of the sample and the validity of correlation matrix. Table 3.2 presents the criteria for Cronbach's alpha and KMO.

Additionally, item-total correlation refers to the correlations between each item and the total score from the questionnaire to measure reliability. Item-total correlation can

also serve as a criterion for deleting items, with 0.3 being the cutoff point. If values of any items are less than 0.3, problems will appear and these items should be dropped (Field, 2005).

Table 3. 2 Criteria for Cronbach’s Alpha and KMO

	≥ 0.9	0.8-0.9	0.7- 0.8	≤0.7
Cronbach alpha	excellent	good	acceptable	Eliminate the items
KMO	superb	great	good	NA

3.6.2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

As suggested by Hair et al. (2010), CFA is the most direct method to validate EFA results. Thus, after EFA, CFA will analyze main survey data for cross-validation. CFA is widely used to examine hypothesized correlations among ordinal variables (e.g. Likert-type scale) and is reckoned as “a best-known statistical procedure for testing a hypothesized factor structure” (Wang & Ahmed, 2004, p.306).

Table 3. 3 Forms of construct validity

Validity type	Method form	Description
Convergent Validity	Factor loadings	High loadings would indicate they converge. The standardized loading estimate should be 0.5 or higher, and ideally 0.7 or higher.
	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Mean variance extracted for the factor loading on a contrast and is a summary indicator of convergence. An AVE should be 0.5 or higher.
Discriminant Validity	Comparison between the values of average variance-extracted for any two constructs and the squared correlations estimate of these two constructs	The variance-extracted estimates should be greater than the square of the correlation estimates.

The main objective of CFA is to assess the validity of a proposed model. As aforementioned, convergent and discriminant validity needed to be assessed in the model evaluation process. Table 3.3 lists several ways to estimate the two types of validity.

Byrne (2010) suggested a process of three steps to validate the conceptual model using CFA. The first step examines the first order CFA model, testing the multidimensionality of endogenous and exogenous constructs in a theoretical model. The second step analyzes the second-order CFA, which examines the higher order endogenous and exogenous constructs presented. The last step is to examine the overall structural model and to calculate validity parameters. This study follows Byrne (2010) and uses three steps to conduct CFA. More specifically, the first step examines interrelationships between the proposed constructs. The second step tests perceived importance of hotel website functionality and usability attributes, perceived hotel performance according to hotel star rating and ownership types, consumers' online booking intentions, all of which are multidimensional constructs. The third step examines the linkages among these proposed variables.

3.6.3 Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

It is common to employ Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to analyze the hypothesized model in many areas (e.g. Hair et al., 2010; Shook et al., 2004), especially

in the field of marketing and consumer behaviors. Baumgartner and Homburg (1996) found that top journals in marketing and consumer behavior mainly adopt SEM in their analyses. Such popularity could be accredited to the fact that SEM provides scholars a comprehensive method to assess and modify the proposed model (Bentler, 1983). According to Byrne (2010), the term of structural equation modeling conveys two essential messages: 1) the structural linkages can be graphically specified to clearly conceptualize the theory under examination, and 2) two or more causal relationships can be discussed concurrently. As such, compared to multiple-regression, SEM is more powerful in simultaneously testing the interchangeable relationships in which a dependent variable changes into an independent variable in the succeeding relationships within the same model. The objective of this research is to investigate the interrelated linkages among the constructs in the proposed conceptual model and SEM can appropriately serve this purpose.

With SEM, the structural model, which represents the hypotheses under study, will be tested from perspectives of the directions, magnitude, and statistical significance of the structural coefficients (Baumgartner & Homburg, 1996). Maximum likelihood (ML) estimation is the most widely used approach to assess the model. The approach is

efficient and unbiased when the assumption of multivariate normality is met (Hair et al., 2006). Values of alpha coefficients and goodness-of-fit statics are reported.

The study uses AMOS statistics software for data analysis and it provides a series of goodness-of-fit statistics. Based on recommendations by researchers in tourism and hospitality, the following fit indices are reported: Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI), Normed Fit Index (NFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) (Hung & Petrick, 2010; Dyer et al., 2007).

The GFI measures how much variance and covariance in sample data is jointly explained by the hypothesized model. The AGFI is very similar to GFI, with the only difference coming from the degree of freedom being adjusted in the former. Values of GFI and AGFI range from 0 to 1.00, with values close to 1.00 indicating good fit (Byrne, 2010). Normed fit index has been identified as the practical criterion of choice for the past decade. However, realizing the tendency that the value of NFI can be easily influenced by sample size, Bentler (1990), who developed the concept of NFI in 1980, revised it by taking sample size into consideration. This resulted in a new index: CFI. Both indices are derived from comparison between the hypothesized model and the null model. Values for both range from 0 to 1.00. Originally, values larger than 0.90 indicate a

well-fitting model (Bentler, 1992). However, Hu and Bentler (1999) later suggested a cutoff value of 0.95. The fit index of RMSEA considers the error of approximation in the population and measures the discrepancy between a proposed model and the observed data (Byrne, 2010). There is a major debate as to the cutoff values. Hu and Benlter (1999) suggested a value of 0.06 while Browne and Cudeck (1993) argued that values less than 0.05 indicating good fit and values up to 0.08 representing reasonable errors of approximation in the population. To increase the precision of RMSEA estimates, Steiger (1990b) recommended the use of confidence intervals which can provide more assistance in the evaluation of model fit. Furthermore, a test of Closeness of Fit (PCLOSE) can test the hypothesis that RMSEA is “good” in the population, with the p -value for this test smaller than 0.05. AMOS can report both interval estimate and p -value for PCLOSE.

3.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter elucidates the research methodologies of this study, including research design, measurement development, and methods for data analysis. Fully illustrating a range of critical matters, the chapter outlines the overall arrangement of the study. To explore how hotel website attributes and China’s hotel characteristics will affect perceived level of eTrust which will then influence online users’ purchase intentions, the study used a mixed research method of quantitative and qualitative approaches. It is

noteworthy that main findings of this research are from quantitative methods. As to the data analysis techniques, software of SPSS and AMOS was adopted to analyze the main data statistically and comparatively.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis -- Preliminary Analysis

4.1 Chapter Introduction

A wide range of data-gathering techniques is available for a researcher to probe answers to numerous enquiries. As discussed in Chapter 3, this study seeks to obtain answers to research questions by following a mixed qualitative and a quantitative data collection procedure. Specifically, to arrive at a justifiable scale for each construct of interests, this study decided to conduct semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and pretest before the pilot test and the main survey. Figure 4.1 depicts the schematic summary of the overall process of the preliminary study. Particularly, the researcher conducted focus group discussion with ten participants, individual interviews with twelve experienced Chinese Internet users, and eight cases for pretest. The researcher sorted and analyzed systematically data obtained from each step.

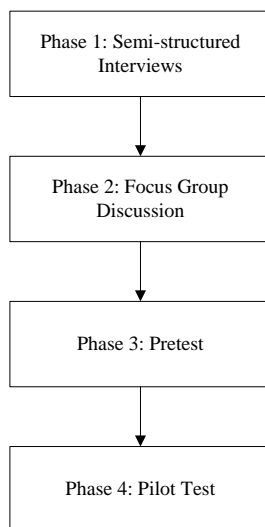


Figure 4. 1 Four Phrases of Preliminary Studies

4.2 Qualitative Methods

Spending time to conceptualize a variable of interest is an imperative preliminary step to developing a sound research project. Once the study's conceptual framework is consolidated, it is still crucial to check how procedures can be developed and operationalized. That is where the exploratory qualitative methods come into play. This study used focus group discussions and semi-interview for this step.

4.2.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

Face validity must be checked prior to any theoretical testing to minimize the possibility that scales may overlap with each other. Face validity can be established through expert judgment, pretest, and other means. The researcher selected semi-structured interviews to realize face validity examination because of two primary considerations. First, these interviews are suitable for exploring respondents' perceptions and opinions regarding complex issues, enabling the discovery of more information relevant to the research topics. Second, compared to standardized interviews, semi-structured interviews allow respondents to express their opinions more freely. This is because structured interviews use the same words repeatedly while not all respondents have the same vocabulary, which may hinder the validity and reliability of data obtained (Barriball & While, 1994).

Table 4. 1 Profile of Interviewees for Semi-interviews

	Data	Time	City of China	Occupation	Experience of Travelling /Online Purchase
1	12/27/2011	19:00	Shanghai City	Founder of a travel agency	Experienced traveler/experience online buyer
2	12/30/2011	18:30	Shanghai City	Manager from Ctrip	Experienced traveler/experience online buyer
3	12/30/2011	20:30	Shanghai City	Tourism Planner	Experienced traveler/experience online buyer
4	1/1/2012	10:30	Hangzhou City	Hotel General Manager	Experienced traveler/experience online buyer
5	1/1/2012	19:30	Hangzhou City	Hotel Manager	Experienced traveler/experience online buyer
6	1/7/2012	14:30	Shenzhen City	Company Supervisor	Experienced traveler/experience online buyer
7	1/7/2012	18:30	Shenzhen City	Hotel Sales	Experienced traveler/experience online buyer
8	1/8/2012	11:30	Shenzhen City	Customer Service	Experienced traveler/experience online buyer
9	1/9/2012	20:30	Shenzhen City	Teacher	Experienced traveler/experience online buyer
10	1/17/2012	15:30	Changsha City	Hotel Sales Director	Experienced traveler/experience online buyer
11	1/17/2012	18:30	Changsha City	Company Supervisor	Experienced traveler/experience online buyer
12	1/19/2012	15:30	Yiyang City	Self-employed	Experienced traveler/experience online buyer
13	1/19/2012	18:00	Yiyang City	Civil Servant	Experienced traveler/experience online buyer

In the current study, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews among a small sample of Chinese Internet users. The group consisted of four hotel practitioners and eight experienced Internet users who were mature travelers (see Table 4.1). The interviews primarily aimed at examining the items for clarity and the researcher administered in person, with a questionnaire that included all the items. Participants were asked to complete the questionnaire and point out any items that were either ambiguous or difficult to answer.

As previously described, Chapter 3 proposed four constructs of interest, three of which have scarcely been empirically measured in the hotel industry, especially in the context of China. The purpose of the interviews was to obtain participants' perspectives on operationalizing each construct, based on the initial measurement list developed from extant literature. To elicit perspectives and knowledge of participants as much as possible, the researcher prepared five simple open-ended questions for the focus group discussion:

Q1: To what extent do you agree with the listed items representing the construct of hotel website quality? Are there any other factors you would consider when booking a room from a hotel's own website?

Q2: To what extent do you agree with the listed statements of hotel profile perceptions? Are there any other things you would add while discussing hotel profiles in terms of star rating system and ownership?

Q3: To what extent do you agree with the listed items of eTrust in the context of Chinese hospitality industry? Are there any other things you think would increase your trust in a hotel's official website?

Q4: To what extent do you agree with the listed items of online purchase intentions? Are there any other items that should be included?

Q5: To what extent do you agree with the demographic elements included and the way they are presented?

The researcher analyzed and summarized suggestions and comments from the interviewees to revise the measurement scales for each construct, with details being delineated as below.

Attributes of Hotel Website

As to measurements of attributes of hotel website, interviews mainly addressed the issues of credit card and personal information that were not included in the questionnaire. Over the years, hotel website has gradually evolved from online information brochures into a more integrative form. In today's market, hotel websites function as a main platform for information dissemination and business transaction (Ting et al., 2012). Such a development makes security and privacy issues critical in travelers' decisions to book a hotel on the Internet (Kim & Kim, 2004; Law & Hsu, 2006; Lee, Au, & Law, 2013). Respondents in the interviews echoed this point of view.

Additionally, the majority expressed confusion about technical terms, layout, and navigation. After the researcher clarified issues, the participants all suggested further explanation as technical terminology may hinder respondents' interpretations.

Consequently, the researcher further expanded these items, making their meaning more positive and consistent with measurements of other variables.

Furthermore, some respondents directly told the researcher that they “got bored” by reading all the measurements of hotel profiles starting “I think of hotels with higher star rankings” and “compared to other hotels, I think of state-owned hotels and privately-owned hotels” in hotel ownership. So, the researcher removed the words to make the statement more concise and simpler to increase respondents’ participation intentions.

eTrust

It had been pointed out that the eTrust scale is intended to measure the extent of respondents’ agreement. This makes the usage of “I think” at the beginning of each statement redundant. Consequently, the researcher modified eTrust items to be presented in an objective manner.

Except the redundancy issue of eTrust measures, several non-hotel people clearly expressed that “if hotels’ own websites offered the lowest price, then I will trust them” or made similar statements relating to price. Another respondent said, “I trust hotels’ website. I always compared prices on online travel agencies and that on hotels’ own websites. Most of time, they offer lowest prices and highest discounts. This price difference is obvious for those online travel agencies charge commissions from hotels and of course

their prices are higher than the hotels’.” Hotel marketers also shared the same opinions about price sensitivity among Chinese consumers. One interviewee said:

When we receive enquiries from customers, no matter whether they are individuals or corporate, the first question they always have is price. If they book from our own website, they will get the lowest price.

Low prices have become one of the major reasons why people purchase travel products and services on the Internet. Studies have proven that price sensitivity is higher on the Internet as online promotions heavily compared to the offline environment (Degeratu, Rangaswamy, & Wu, 2000). In discussing other relationship marketing variables like customer loyalty, studies have shown that loyal customers are willing to pay a price premium and are less price sensitive (Aydin & Özer, 2005). It would be reasonable to argue that customers holding trusting beliefs could be assumed less price sensitive. Based on this reasoning, this study included two more items relating to price in the eTrust measurement scale.

Two respondents specified the importance of “resources” in doing business, saying “if a hotel has resources, I will trust this hotel and also its website.” The researcher responded by pointing to included items relating to abilities and expertise to do online business. Participants emphasized that “ability does not equal resources. In China, if you

want your business to be successful, you need to have resources. This also applies to online business. If you have resources, your website can do a good job. Then, I will trust your website.” At the same time, three respondents from a third-tier city of Yi Yang mentioned the importance of knowledge in running a trustworthy website. The researcher also pointed out similar words relating to ability in the eTrust measurement scale. Three respondents replied:

(A) *“Knowledge is power. Without it you can do nothing;”*

(B) *“Doing business online requires a lot of knowledge. There are so many cases about hacker attacks and online fraud. Also there are a lot of phishing websites. If you want your website to be trusted, you need the knowledge to protect it from hackers and also show to customers that these are not phishing websites”; and*

(C) *“Running online businesses is all about experience. That is knowledge. If you have encountered many of these problems, you become experienced. When new problems occur, you know how to handle them.”*

The researcher referred to relevant literature and found that such arguments were justifiable because available resources and knowledge of a hotel website have been widely regarded as key factors to hotel website development (e.g. Chung & Law, 2003;

Wang, Hung, & Shang, 2006). However, lack of knowledge on how to manage and sell hotels' websites has been identified as a limitation for increasing online reservations (Zafiroopoulos & Vrana, 2006).

Most interviewees expressed high agreement with “being honest” and “fulfilling commitment and promises,” although many of them doubt the honesty of a website and the commitment of a hotel website to keep customers' interests in mind. When the researcher mentioned the website here was “official website of a hotel,” some of them rephrased their statement and said “*if that is an official website, it is trustworthy*” or “*if it is an official website, its information can be relied on*”. However, some others expressed unfavorable words like “it is exactly those official websites that exaggerate their services and products.”

Online Booking Intentions

As to the measurements of online purchase intentions, the interviewees generally agreed with the initially proposed three items and noted very few concerns. However, one interviewee said “*using willingness to measure online purchase intentions is not accurate enough. Take myself for example, I am willing to do anything only if it will not hurt others and it obeys the law. But if I have such a plan, it means I give a thought on it. This will be more accurate in predicting a real intention.*” Another interviewee suggested similar

opinion by stating “*I have never booked a room via hotels’ official websites and at the moment, I have no such plan. But if you ask if I am willing to do it or not, the answer is definitely yes! There is no harm in showing willingness.*” As such, this study further added item to evaluate if respondents have such plan to purchase from a hotel’s own website to assess online purchase intention.

Demographics

As to the demographic profiles, the interviewees generally agreed with the questions included. However, some of them skipped the question of “average monthly income” and some directly told the researcher that they did not feel comfortable mentioning their salary. So, another option of “no salary/ refuse to answer” was included into the questions of “average monthly income.”

Table 4.2 summarizes the findings from the semi-structured interviews. After the interviews, the researcher further modified the measuring scales of the constructs.

Table 4. 2 Revisions based on Semi-structured Interviews

Variables of Interest	Initial efforts	Revisions with inputs from focus group participants
Hotel website quality	1. No “information of promotions/special offers”	Added with suggestions from the interviews
	2. No “privacy policy relating to the collection, usage, storage, and disclosure of customers’ personal data”	Added with suggestions from the interviews
	3. No “information of secured online payment system”	Added with suggestions from the interviews
	3. Categorizing items of hotel website quality into “hotel functionality” and “hotel usability”	Added with suggestions from the interviews
	4. Language	Further expanded as “clear language”
5. Layout	Further expanded as “user-friendly layout”	

	6. Graphics	Further expanded as “graphics matched with texts”
	7. Navigation	Further expanded as “simple website navigations”
Hotel star rating	8. I think hotels with higher star ratings can provide service /better meet my needs / are more professional	Revised into “ I think hotels with higher star ratings (luxurious, 5-star, and 4-star hotels) can provide service /better meet my needs / are more professional
eTrust	9. Hotel official websites have adequate knowledge to manage their business on the Internet	Added with suggestions from the interviews
	10. Hotel official websites have sufficient resources to do business on the Internet	Added with suggestions from the interviews
	11. Hotel official websites will fulfill commitment they made	Added with suggestions from the interviews
	12. No items relating to price	Addition of items relating to price “hotel official websites offer the lowest room rate” and I will not be overcharged when booking a room via hotel official websites”
Online Purchase Intentions	13. No items relating to exploring consumers’ plan	Addition of item “I plan to book hotel rooms from hotel websites”
Demographics	14. As to monthly income, no option of “no salary/refuse to answer”	Added with suggestions from the interviews

4.2.2 Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussion is “a research methodology in which a small group of participants gather to discuss a specified topic or an issue to generate data” (Wong, 2008, p. 256). In addition to interactions between the moderator and the groups as in one-to-one interviews, focus group discussions also encourage communications among group members. This allows the researcher to obtain more knowledge, perspectives, and attitudes from participants on the topic under discussion. Wong (2008) suggested that the process of focus group discussions involve eight steps (see Table 4.3).

In considering the time, cost, and availability of participants, this study made some compromises. For example, the study used convenience sampling to select

participants. The sample was generated from three sources in the School of Hotel and Tourism Management, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University: 1) doctoral students having expertise of tourism and hospitality related sections; 2) research assistants and associates involved in tourism and hospitality related research projects; 3) academic staff members from the school.

Table 4. 3 Steps in the Process of Focus Group Discussions

Process of a focus group discussion (Wong, 2008)	Key points suggested by Wong (2008)	Extent of adoption in this study
1. Formulating research questions	A clear and specific purpose statement; specific or narrowly-focused topics	Fully adopted
2. Developing protocols	Adoption of a discussion guide; questions on it should be general to allow the flexibility	Fully adopted
3. Soliciting participants: size of the group; numbers of focus group sessions; group composition	Purposive and snowball sampling are favorable	Little adopted. Convenient sampling; 10 participants
4. Arranging venue	Comfortable and conducive to discussion	Fully adopted. A seminar classroom was used for both sessions
5. Facilitating focus groups: role of moderator and note-taker; conduct discussion	Welcome speech, introduction of the discussion by the moderator; self-introductions among participants	Partially adopted. The moderator also did note taking for both sessions; few self-introductions among participants
6. Transcribing	Similar steps to typical qualitative data analysis	N/A
7. Analysing data		Partially adopted. The whole group decided a certain piece of information should be included or not
8. Reporting the findings		

It seems participants were not divergent enough to provide more information as they were all from tourism and hospitality related research areas. However, some participants earned degrees from non-tourism disciplines like engineering, English, literature, or computer science. In this regard, this study recruited participants who were

representative and could offer more insights from divergent aspects. As to the questions, the researcher continued to use the five guiding questions from the interviews in the focus group discussions.

The focus group discussion occurred on February 19, 2013 with a group of 10 participants. At the beginning, the researcher explained her research frameworks and the terms of the constructs. She then distributed copies of the proposed measurement list. Afterwards, the participants were invited to critically evaluate the items and the researcher took notes recorded critical information for further interactions. During the whole discussion, an overhead projector presented the five questions used during the semi-structured interviews.

Table 4. 4 Revisions made in the Focus Group Discussion

Variables of Interest	Initial efforts	Revisions with inputs from focus group participants
Online Purchase Intentions	1. No time frame	12 months were added
	2. differentiate possibility degrees	Addition of probably
Hotel star rating	No items relating to low star rating	Addition of items relating to low star rating “I think hotels with lower star ratings (1-star, 2-star, 3- star and economic hotels) can provide better service / can better meet my needs /are more professional”

The focus group participants agreed that the most items included could measure the intended constructs. Based on the detailed comments and suggestions in this phase, the researcher modified some items. However, in the late stage the discussion evolved into a debate about online purchase intentions. The major controversies came from the

inclusion of the time frame and differentiation between willingness and plans in assessing purchase intentions (Table 4.4).

The initial efforts mainly followed research findings from Bai et al. (2008) by adopting a two-item 7-point scale to reflect Internet users' online purchase intentions. In their study, they differentiated between "in the near future (6 months)" and "relatively long term (2 years)". Considering that not too many Chinese mainlanders have purchased from hotels' own websites, this study used "in the near future" without specifying a period of time. At the same time, literature also suggested that consumers' willingness to purchase is critical in assessing their purchase intentions. Finally, in accordance with recall period adopted in the screening questions, this study used "12 months" in assessing respondents' purchase intentions.

Some participants questioned items for hotel star rating. With the initial efforts, items included "I think hotels in China with higher star ratings can provide better service/ can better meet my needs/ are more professional." Focus group participants commented that these measures intentionally excluded items testing respondents' perceptions of low star ratings of a certain hotel. They further pointed out that the opposite of consumers' perceptions of higher star ratings did not necessarily lead to measurements of lower star

ratings. As such, they suggested items measuring lower star rating should be included as a part of a hotel star rating scale.

Based on this reasoning, this study included items related to lower star rating similar to those of higher star rating. Furthermore, to avoid confusion, this study specified that higher stars included three-star or above while lower stars referred to those below three-star and economy hotels. This information appeared in parentheses after higher star rating and lower star rating.

Participants suggested the possibility that degrees could be differentiated by using different words. In this way, statement of booking intention having the word of “probably” was added to mean higher chance than that of likely.

The author invited eight postgraduates and teachers from the School of Hotel and Tourism Management at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University to check the drafted questionnaire on March 18, 2013, a month after the focus group discussion. They were invited them to comment on the measurement items of each construct of interest in terms of wording and the existence of overlapping meanings.

4.2.3 Summary of Qualitative Methods

Collectively, the qualitative methods of semi-interviews and focus group discussions proved to be helpful in understanding the variables and items used to measure them.

4.3 Quantitative Method: Pilot Test to Purify the Items

Based on measurement items derived from the literature, semi-interviews, and comments from focus groups discussions, the researcher designed a questionnaire and conducted a pilot test. Data in this process were collected through a professional online survey company (Sojump, www.sojump.com).

4.3.1 Descriptive Statistics Results

Table 4.5 provides descriptive statistics in descending mean values for the pilot test. Most measurement items for all four constructs were rated above the mid-point (4.0) value, implicating high or positive perception levels of proposed variables.

Regarding items measuring quality of hotel official websites, the means of all items are above 5. This indicates that items relating to website attributes are perceived important for customers to purchase hotel rooms online. The highest rated items were “Price information of hotel rooms,” “Information of secured online payment system,” and “Information of destinations where hotels are located,” with mean values of 6.17, 6.10,

and 6.02, respectively. These items measure functionality and payment security system on hotel official websites. Results indicate that the participants deemed it important to release price related information on the websites. The lowest rated items were “information of promotions/special offers” and “user-friendly layout.”

Considering the items of hotel features, only three items have mean values larger than the positive point (5.0) among a total of 12 items, indicating that respondents did not assign a lot of importance to perceived hotel features. The top rated items were three items relating to higher star ratings, indicating that the participants generally have high perception levels of services and products provided by hotels with higher star ratings. The lowest rated items all related to lower star rating hotels. This is not surprising considering the requirements for obtaining the higher star ratings are decided by official authority.

Regarding trust level, participants rated all items above the mid-point (4.0) value, indicating relatively preferable eTrust level toward hotel official websites. The highest rated items were “Hotel official websites have the necessary abilities to handle sales transactions on the Internet” and “Hotel official websites have sufficient resources to do business on the Internet,” both of which relate to functional elements. This indicates participants were mainly function oriented. However, they still pay attention to a non-functional element like “Designs of hotel official websites.” The lowest rated item was

“Hotel official websites do not deceive customers,” which points to a lack of confidence in the reliability of hotel official websites.

As previously stated, the questionnaire inquired about the agreement levels of respondents on eTrust items in accomplishing online purchases on hotel websites. The three dimensions received mean values above 5, which indicated satisfactory perception on the eTrust items among the respondents. However, the mean values of the integrity dimension were lower than 5, which indicated that the respondents doubted the intentions presented on hotel websites regarding their promises.

Measures of proposed constructs from other disciplines were adapted to the context and settings of official hotel official in China. Measures for hotel features were developed from the interviews. Thus, it was necessary to conduct EFA to reassess the dimensionality and reliability of these measures. The dimensionality of each construct was assessed from perspectives of factor loading, eigenvalue, and variance. The researcher measure the internal reliability for each factor identified in the EFA process, calculating the Cronbach alpha to evaluate the reliability of a certain scale (Nunnally, 1994). Normally, a value of .7 for Cronbach’s alpha is satisfactory for scales. If a more contingent stringent measure was taken, item-to-total correlations could also be checked in assessing reliability. Usually, a value of item-to-total equal to .5 or above is deemed

acceptable (Lankford& Howard, 1994). At the same time, Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity and KMO results were also reported. The following sections discuss these results and amendments to the main survey questionnaire.

Table 4. 5 Descriptive Statistics of Pilot Test (n=422)

Measurements	Mean	Std. Deviation
Attributes of Hotel Website		
Price information of hotel rooms	6.1659	.95801
Information of secured online payment system	6.1043	1.11288
Information of destinations where hotels are located	6.0284	1.06739
Hotel facilities information	5.91	.97544
Privacy policy relating to customers’ personal data	5.8815	1.24454
Information of third-party recognition	5.8815	1.15957
Hotel reservation information	5.7773	.97603
Clear language	5.6872	.99966
Graphics matched with texts	5.6706	1.07135
Easily understandable information	5.6422	1.05768
Well-organized information	5.6422	1.01879
Simple website navigations (e.g. menu or site map)	5.628	1.04369
Information of promotions/special offers	5.5355	1.18278
User-friendly layout	5.2915	1.14002
Hotel Profiles		
	Mean	Std. Deviation
I think hotels with higher star ratings (luxurious, 5-star, and 4-star hotels) are more professional	6.2109	.96276
I think hotels with higher star ratings (luxurious, 5-star, and 4-star hotels) can provide better service	6.0924	.93671
I think hotels with higher star ratings (luxurious, 5-star, and 4-star hotels) can better meet my needs	5.7938	1.11037
I think hotels with lower star ratings (1-star, 2-star, 3-star, and economic hotels) can better meet my needs	3.2891	1.56925
I think hotels with lower star ratings (1-star, 2-star, 3-star, and economic hotels) can provide better service	3.0948	1.6457
I think hotels with lower star ratings (1-star, 2-star, 3-star, and economic hotels) are more professional	2.9597	1.54144
I think privately-owned hotels (including civilian-run and foreign-invested hotels) can provide better service	4.9479	1.25667
I think privately-owned hotels (including civilian-run and foreign-invested hotels) can better meet my needs	4.8436	1.20537
I think privately-owned hotels (including civilian-run and foreign-invested hotels) are more professional	4.763	1.31346
I think publicly owned hotels can better meet my needs	4.1848	1.36601
I think publicly owned hotels are more professional	4.1825	1.39131
I think publicly owned hotels can provide better service	4.1588	1.44114
eTrust		
	Mean	Std. Deviation
Hotel official websites have the necessary abilities to handle sales transactions on the Internet	5.6919	.85248
Hotel official websites have sufficient resources to do business on the Internet	5.6398	.94662

Designs of hotel official websites take consumers' needs into consideration	5.6137	1.11781
Hotel official websites have sufficient expertise to do business on the Internet	5.5592	.90396
Hotel official websites have adequate knowledge to manage their business on the Internet	5.5592	.96497
Most hotel official websites have a good reputation	5.3555	1.13536
All in all, I trust hotel official websites	5.3128	1.03239
Recommendations on hotel official websites are made for mutual interests	5.2678	1.10789
Hotel official websites are professional	5.1517	1.09011
Hotel official websites provide information in an honest way	5.0948	1.2636
I have confidence on promises made by hotel official websites	5.0687	1.25871
I will not be overcharged when booking a room via hotel official websites	5.0569	1.33528
Hotel official websites keep customers' interests in mind	5.0284	1.22684
Hotel official websites fulfill commitments they made	4.9929	1.26433
Hotel official websites do not make false statements	4.9194	1.32333
Hotel official websites offer the lowest room rate	4.7251	1.42268
Hotel official websites do not deceive customers	4.6991	1.39628
Online Booking Intention	Mean	Std. Deviation
It is likely that I will book hotel rooms from hotel websites the next 12 months	5.8602	.94348
It is possible that I will book hotel rooms from hotel websites the next 12 months	5.8602	.92825
I am willing to book hotel rooms from hotel websites	5.7725	.87477
I plan to book hotel rooms from hotel websites	5.7085	.92619

4.3.2 Perceived Importance of Hotel Website Attributes

The researcher generated a three-factor solution explaining 61.028 percent of the total variance, the value of which differed from the conceptualization of perceived website attributes in the literature as a two-dimension construct (see Chapter 3). The researcher loaded three items proposed to measure website functionality onto a new underlying factor. Cronbach's alphas for all three factors exceeded the baseline, which confirmed internal consistency of the measurements (Field, 2005). The item of "reservation information" loaded on website functionality had low item-to-total coefficient (.444), lower than the cutoff value of .5. However, its deletion not only greatly lowered the scale reliability but also negatively influenced factor loadings of other items

loaded on website functionality. As such, the researcher retained “reservation information” for validation using main survey data.

Table 4. 6 EFA Results of Perceived Importance of Hotel Website Attributes (n=422)

	Measurements	Factor Loadings	Item-to-total correlations	Eigenvalue	Variance Explained	Coefficient α
Perceived Importance of Usability Attributes						
U1	Clear language	.740	.740	3.738	62.301	.876
U2	Easily understandable information	.779	.742			
U3	User-friendly layout	.808	.643			
U4	Well-organized information	.798	.751			
U5	Graphics matched with texts	.590	.605			
U6	Simple website navigations (e.g. menu or site map)	.628	.619			
Perceived Importance of Functionality Attributes						
F1	Hotel reservation information	.591	.444	2.542	50.833	.753
F2	Hotel facilities information	.729	.529			
F3	Information of promotions/special offers	.586	.509			
F4	Price information of hotel rooms	.736	.607			
F5	Information of destinations where hotels are located	.650	.525			
Perceived Importance of Security and Privacy Attributes						
SP1	Privacy policy relating to customers' personal data	.832	.561	2.116	70.524	.787
SP2	Information of secured online payment system	.727	.679			
SP3	Information of third-party recognition	.710	.648			
KMO=0.914, Approx. Chi-Square=2566.803, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: df=91, Sig.=.000; Total variance explained = 61.028						
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. Rotation converged in 5 iterations						

Items relating to privacy and payment security were obtained from in-depth interviews. Considering attributes of website functionality relating to information

presented on a website, this study originally decided to include them as website functionality items. However, the statistically vigorous EFA results revealed a new factor the researcher scrutinized the literature to justify an addition of a new variable as theoretically sound. The literature review revealed that transactional security (including privacy protection) has become a central success factor for building consumer trust in online shopping (Hoffman et al., 1999; Lee & Turban, 2001).

Mainly presented on a website in the form of either text messages or underlying technology/certification, elements of security and privacy policy should fall in the category of website functionality. However, considering the particularly important roles played by both these elements, this study considers it more appropriate to treat these items as a single variables, rather than items of website functionality. Based on EFA results, and given their stable and clear dimensionality, no changes were made for the measurements of website usability for the main survey questionnaire.

4.3.3 Hotel Profiles

The researcher loaded the nine items proposed for hotel profiles onto four factors: high star rating, low star rating, publicly owned, and privately owned. These four factors emerged explained 84.89 percent of the total variance. During the conceptualization stage, star rating was a unidimensional construct. However, interview results suggested that

high star rating and low star rating should be measured differently. This suggestion was consistent with the interview results and two factors were extracted out of six items. Both these factors have high Cronbach's alpha, 0.796 and .942 respectively, indicating established internal consistency of items within the factor.

Table 4. 7 EFA Results of Perceived Performance across Hotel Profiles (n=422)

Measurements	Factor Loading	Item-to-total correlations	Eigenvalue	Variance Explained	Reliability Alpha
Star Rating					
Perceived Performance of High Rated Hotels					
I think hotels with higher star ratings (luxurious, 5-star, and 4-star hotels) can provide better service (HS1)	.857	.678	2.151	47.989	.796
I think hotels with higher star ratings (luxurious, 5-star, and 4-star, hotels) can better meet my needs (HS2)	.817	.591			
I think hotels with higher star ratings (luxurious, 5-star, and 4-star, hotels) are more professional (HS3)	.858	.665			
Perceived Performance of Low Rated Hotels					
I think hotels with lower star ratings (1-star, 2-star, 3-star, and economic hotels) can provide better service (LS1)	.949	.880	2.688	32.846	.942
I think hotels with lower star ratings (1-star, 2-star, 3-star, and economic hotels) can better meet my needs (LS2)	.935	.874			
I think hotels with lower star ratings (1-star, 2-star, 3-star, and economic hotels) are more professional (LS3)	.946	.884			
	Loading	Item-to-total correlations	Eigenvalue	Variance Explained	Reliability Alpha
Hotel Ownership					
Perceived Performance of Publicly owned Hotels					
I think publicly owned hotels can provide better service (SO1)	.961	.911	2.717	47.679	.948
I think publicly owned hotels can better meet my needs (SO2)	.947	.880			
I think publicly owned hotels	.945	.882			

are more professional (SO3)

Perceived Performance of Privately owned Hotels

I think privately-owned hotels (including civilian-run and foreign-invested hotels) can provide better service (PO1)	.931	.844	2.601	40.999	.923
I think privately-owned hotels (including civilian-run and foreign-invested hotels) can better meet my needs (PO2)	.929	.839			
I think privately-owned hotels (including civilian-run and foreign-invested hotels) are more professional (PO3)	.934	.848			

KMO=0.743, Approx. Chi-Square=4047.479,
 Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: df=66, Sig.=.000;
 Total variance explained = 84.896

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. Rotation converged in 5 iterations

Exploratory factor analysis generated two factors for hotel ownership, which were labeled as perceived performance of publicly- and privately owned hotels. Item-to-total correlations for all items were more than 0.8 and reliability alpha were over .9, indicating good internal consistency.

4.3.4 eTrust

Table 4.8 lists the three dimensions of eTrust in the hotel industry. The researcher used PCA and varimax rotation procedures. Items with factor loadings lower than .5 were deleted, to avoid cross-loading and to ascertain each item was loaded on a single factor. In this way, the item of “official websites offer the lowest room rate” was eliminated, as it had a factor loading lower than .5. Finally, the researcher loaded 16 items on three factors, categorizing them as integrity, benevolence, and ability. These items explained 69.2 percent of the total variance. As to reliability, all item-to-total correlations were over .5

and the Cronbach's alpha for each dimension was greater than .8, which indicated satisfactory internal consistency.

The first factor, integrity, had seven items loaded on it and accounted for nearly 30 percent of the total variance. The second factor, benevolence, had five items loaded on it, accounting for about 23 percent of the total variance. The third fact, ability, consisted of four items and accounted for about 17 percent of the total variance.

Table 4. 8 EFA Results of eTrust in the Hotel Industry (n=422)

	Measurements	Factor Loadings	Item-to-total Correlations	Eigenvalue	Variance Explained	Cronbach's Alpha
	Integrity					
T10	Hotel official websites do not deceive customers.	.0793	.806	8.913	30.200	.930
T11	Hotel official websites fulfill commitments they made.	.796	.819			
T12	Hotel official websites provide information in an honest way.	.828	.828			
T13	I have confidence in promises made by hotel official websites.	.794	.835			
T14	Hotel official websites do not make false statements.	.808	.782			
T16	I will not be overcharged when booking a room via hotel official websites.	.686	.690			
T17	All in all, I trust hotel official websites.	.634	.516			
	Benevolence					
T5	Most official websites have a good reputation.	.620	.616	1.499	20.500	.864
T6	Designs of hotel official websites consider consumer needs.	.765	.715			
T7	Hotel official websites are professional.	.723	.733			
T8	Hotel official websites keep customer interests in	.716	.740			

mind.

T9	Recommendations on hotel official websites are made for mutual interest.	.671	.622			
Ability						
T1	Hotel official websites have the necessary ability to handle sales transactions on the Internet.	.828	.683	.959	18.457	.847
T2	Hotel official websites have sufficient expertise to do business on the Internet.	.836	.722			
T3	Hotel official websites have sufficient resources to do business on the Internet.	.744	.685			
T4	Hotel official websites have adequate knowledge to manage their business on the Internet.	.663	.651			

KMO=0.949, Sig.=.000
 Total variance explained=69.157
 Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization; Rotation converged in five iterations

4.3.5 Online Booking Intentions

The EFA of online purchase intention generated a single factor and explained 61.245 percent of the total variances in the underlying construct (Table 4.9).

Table 4. 9 EFA Results of Online Purchase Intentions (n=422)

	Measurements	Factor Loading	Item-to-total Correlations	Eigenvalue	Variance Explained	Reliability Alpha
Online Booking Intention						
OPI1	It is likely that I will book hotel rooms from hotel websites the next 12 months	.775	.623	2.822	70.545	.861
OPI2	It is possible that I will book hotel rooms from hotel websites the next 12 months	.837	.706			
OPI3	I am willing to book hotel rooms from hotel websites	.875	.755			
OPI4	I plan to book hotel rooms from hotel websites	.869	.746			

KMO=0.949, Approx. Chi-Square=4698.497,
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: df=136, Sig.=.000;
Total variance explained = 61.245
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. Rotation converged in 3 iterations

4.4 Chapter Summary

In an aim to provide a reliable foundation for the main survey, this study engaged in a preliminary analysis process which consisted of four steps: semi-structured interviews, a focus group, and a pilot test. All steps set out to derive the instrument measures for each construct. With items obtained from extant literature, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with Chinese Internet users and hotel practitioners. They examined the initial items and commented on their relevance. At the same time, they were invited to make inputs to the measurement lists. Based on feedback from the interviews, the researcher modified the questionnaire. Afterwards, a focus group discussions was conducted to further examine the modified questionnaire. To refine further the measurement scales, the researcher conducted a pilot test and performed an EFA. The EFA results were encouraging in that the majority of measurement items obtained in the previous steps statistically proved to represent the variables they intended to measure. In summary, EFA for the pilot test resulted in a three-factor solution for the website quality construct, a four-factor solution for hotel features, a three-factor solution for eTrust, and a single factor solution for online booking intention.

Chapter 5: Data Analysis -- Main Survey

5.1 Chapter Introduction

After consolidating items for each proposed variable, the researcher conducted an online survey. The main survey sampling process was the same as the pilot test. This chapter presents analysis results of the main survey data. It first reports demographic profiles of respondents, prior to which data were examined for missing values, outliers, and normality. Sections afterwards presented reliability and validity test results of individual measurement scales: perceived importance of website attributes, perceived performance across hotel profiles (i.e. hotel star rating and hotel ownership), perceived eTrust level, and online booking intentions. After confirming that each measurement model was reliable and valid, this study integrated them together to ensure they were statistically sound. Afterwards, the researcher examined interrelationships, especially the causal relationships, among the latent variables by performing SEM.

5.2 Data Examination

To be effective, multivariate analyses require an examination of the collected data from perspectives of missing data, outlier identification, and a normality test to satisfy assumptions underlying most multivariate techniques. A more rigorous way is to check these three aspects simultaneously as their compounded effects can be substantive.

Multivariate analysis requires a complete data set of variables included in the proposed model, therefore it is necessary to check for missing values. Missing data often occurs when a respondent only completes part of the survey and leaves one or more questions unanswered. Therefore, missing data detection normally starts with diagnosing it; some missing data can be ignored while some others are due to procedural factors. Missing data is more frequent in traditional data collection techniques, especially the onsite survey. In the situation of web surveys, the program can skip irrelevant questions and lower respondents' perceived load level to some extent (Yun & Trumbo, 2000). More importantly, the majority online survey businesses offer a required answer feature, which prevents survey submission unless every question is answered. This feature can greatly reduce missing data (Wright, 2005). The researcher followed this model, commissioning an online survey company for data collection and setting all questions as required questions. If a question is left unanswered, respondents would be reminded or if the questions are not answered, the questionnaire could not be submitted.

After securing its completeness, this researcher examined the data to discover any outliers. Outliers are those cases having extremely high or low values and the existence of outliers may seriously threaten validity and reliability of a proposed scale (Tabachnick et al., 2001). As such, detection and handling of any outliers are necessary in multivariate

situations. Normally, three perspectives of outlier identification are available: univariate, bivariate, or multivariate. Hair et al. (2010) suggested a multiple perspective in identifying outliers. However, this study has seven variables, which makes the bivariate methods inadequate as it allows two dimensions at a time. The Mahalanobis distance (Mahalanobis D^2) is a well-known criterion that can be used to identify and exclude outliers in multivariate analyses (Penny, 1996). Mahalanobis distance refers to “a generalized distance measure that accounts for the correlation among variables in a way that weights each variable equally (Hair et al., 2010, p. 506). Its calculation formula is as follows, in which n is the number of observations. \bar{x} is the sample mean and S is the sample covariance matrix.

$$S = \frac{1}{n-1} \sum_{i=1}^n (x_i - \bar{x})(x_i - \bar{x})$$

Then

$$D_i = \sqrt{(x_i - \bar{x})^T S^{-1} (x_i - \bar{x})}$$

The Mahalanobis D^2 value is then divided by the degree of freedom (df) and the number of variables of interests is approximately distributed as t -value. In considering the

statistical testing characteristics, Hair et al. (2010) suggested that conservative levels of significance, say 0.005 or 0.001, should be adopted as the critical values. As such, observations of D^2/df values larger than 2.5 in small samples and 3 or 4 in large samples indicate possible outliers. In the current study, values of D^2/df for all observations fell below 0.22, suggesting the clearance of outliers.

In addition to identifying missing data and outliers, this study continued to check data normality, which is a critical assumption in conducting SEM analyses in general and in AMOS in particular (Byrne, 2010). Table 5.1 presents the AMOS output of normality statistics with respect to kurtosis and skew. The first 45 rows listed the values of univariate kurtosis and skewness and their critical ratios. In considering the detrimental effects of multivariate kurtosis in SEM analysis, the AMOS also reported the values of multivariate kurtosis and its critical ratio, shown at the bottom of Table 5.1.

There appears to be no clear consensus among experts on which critical value is reliable for drawing conclusions regarding the assumption of normality. However, Curran, West, and Finch (1996) suggested skewness values lower than 2 and kurtosis values up to 7 indicate normal distribution. Using this as a guide, a review of the kurtosis and skew values that fell in the range of .507 and 2.427 and that of 1.238 to .888 individually suggested the variables used in the current study did not significantly indicate kurtotic

and skewed information. However, the large value (484.046) of multivariate kurtosis reflects significant positive kurtosis, suggesting that the assumption of multivariate normality was violated (Bentler, 2005).

Table 5. 1 Normality Test Results (n=842)

Variable	Min.	Max.	Skew	c.r.	Kurtosis	c.r.
All in all, I trust hotel official websites (T17)	1.000	7.000	-.336	-3.982	.398	2.358
Recommendations on hotel official websites are made for mutual interests (T9)	1.000	7.000	-.216	-2.555	-.182	-1.077
Hotel official websites keep customers' interests in mind (T18)	1.000	7.000	.068	.810	-.460	-2.723
Hotel official websites are professional (T7)	1.000	7.000	-.091	-1.072	-.195	-1.157
Designs of hotel official websites take consumers' needs into consideration (T6)	2.000	7.000	-.111	-1.309	-.507	-3.004
I will not be overcharged when booking a room via hotel official websites (T16)	1.000	7.000	-.232	-2.749	-.094	-.554
Hotel official websites do not make false statements (T14)	1.000	7.000	.016	.192	-.190	-1.124
I have confidence on promises made by hotel official websites (TB13)	1.000	7.000	-.025	-.299	.111	.657
Hotel official websites provide information in an honest way (T12)	1.000	7.000	-.048	-.566	-.126	-.744
Hotel official websites fulfill commitments they made (T11)	1.000	7.000	-.113	-1.337	-.300	-1.778
Hotel official websites do not deceive customers (T10)	1.000	7.000	.079	.934	-.372	-2.201
Hotel official websites have adequate knowledge to manage their business on the Internet (T4)	2.000	7.000	-.436	-5.166	-.132	-.784
Hotel official websites have sufficient resources to do business on the Internet (T3)	2.000	7.000	-.454	-5.381	-.054	-.320
Hotel official websites have sufficient expertise to do business on the Internet (T2)	2.000	7.000	-.484	-5.735	-.102	-.604
Hotel official websites have the necessary abilities to handle sales transactions on the Internet (T1)	2.000	7.000	-.678	-8.027	.417	2.470
I plan to book hotel rooms from hotel websites (OPI4)	3.000	7.000	.833	9.864	.294	1.740
I am willing to book hotel rooms from hotel	3.000	7.000	.699	8.275	-.033	-.194

Variable	Min.	Max.	Skew	c.r.	Kurtosis	c.r.
websites (OPI3)						
It is possible that I will book hotel rooms from hotel websites the next 12 months (OPI2)	3.000	7.000	.727	8.612	.937	5.551
It is likely that I will book hotel rooms from hotel websites the next 12 months (OPI1)	3.000	7.000	.888	10.514	.732	4.336
I think state-owned hotels can provide better service (SO1)	1.000	7.000	.046	.545	.630	3.732
I think state-owned hotels can better meet my needs (SO2)	1.000	7.000	.082	.976	.761	4.508
I think state-owned hotels are more professional (SO3)	1.000	7.000	-.008	-.090	.873	5.169
I think privately-owned hotels (including civilian-run and foreign-invested hotels) can provide better service (PO1)	1.000	7.000	-.207	-2.451	.497	2.943
I think privately-owned hotels (including civilian-run and foreign-invested hotels) can better meet my needs (PO2)	1.000	7.000	-.097	-1.145	.346	2.047
I think privately-owned hotels (including civilian-run and foreign-invested hotels) are more professional (PO3)	1.000	7.000	-.021	-.248	.323	1.916
I think hotels with higher star ratings (luxurious, 5-star, and 4-star hotels) can provide better service (HS1)	1.000	7.000	-1.168	-13.836	1.425	8.442
I think hotels with higher star ratings (luxurious, 5-star, and 4-star hotels) can better meet my needs (HS2)	1.000	7.000	-.652	-7.725	-.010	-.059
I think hotels with higher star ratings (luxurious, 5-star, and 4-star hotels) are more professional (HS3)	3.000	7.000	-.979	-11.602	.446	2.644
I think hotels with lower star ratings (1-star, 2-star, 3-star, and economic hotels) can provide better service (LS1)	1.000	7.000	.298	3.529	-.300	-1.780
I think hotels with lower star ratings (1-star, 2-star, 3-star, and economic hotels) can better meet my needs (LS2)	1.000	7.000	.179	2.123	-.434	-2.573
I think hotels with lower star ratings (1-star, 2-star, 3-star, and economic hotels) are more professional (LS3)	1.000	7.000	.376	4.455	-.315	-1.868
Privacy policy relating to customers' personal data (SP1)	1.000	7.000	-1.018	-12.054	.441	2.612
Information of secured online payment system (SP2)	1.000	7.000	-1.207	-14.295	1.164	6.893
Information of third-party recognition (SP3)	1.000	7.000	-.873	-10.343	.553	3.274
Hotel reservation information (F1)	1.000	7.000	-1.059	-12.543	1.491	8.833

Variable	Min.	Max.	Skew	c.r.	Kurtosis	c.r.
Hotel facilities information (F2)	1.000	7.000	-.974	-11.543	1.651	9.781
Information of promotions/special offers (F3)	1.000	7.000	-.694	-8.218	1.037	6.142
Price information of hotel rooms (F4)	2.000	7.000	-.919	-10.884	.932	5.521
Information of destinations where hotels are located (F5)	1.000	7.000	-1.238	-14.660	2.427	14.377
Clear language (U1)	1.000	7.000	-.913	-10.820	1.230	7.283
Easily understandable information (U2)	1.000	7.000	-.902	-10.690	1.393	8.249
User-friendly layout (U3)	1.000	7.000	-.537	-6.362	.284	1.684
Well-organized information (U4)	1.000	7.000	-.654	-7.749	.888	5.258
Graphics matched with texts (U5)	1.000	7.000	-.684	-8.097	.502	2.975
Simple website navigations (e.g. menu or site map) (U6)	2.000	7.000	-.686	-8.124	.311	1.842
Multivariate					484.046	107.980

This interpretations based on the ML estimation adopted in this study were problematic as the ML-based estimation method operates under the assumption of multivariate normality (Reisinger & Turner, 1999). Accordingly, this study followed Shang and Marlow (2005) in remedying nonnormality by employing the bootstrapping approach, which is useful when the assumptions underlying the multivariate analysis are violated.

5.3 Demographic Profiles of Respondents

Table 5.2 presents demographic profiles of respondents. In the main survey, samples had a relatively balanced distribution across gender as 47.1 percent were males and 52.9 percent were females. About 70 percent fell in the age group of 26 -45 and more than 90 percent respondents were at least university graduates. Most respondents were

well paid as only 14 percent received monthly salaries around RMB 3,000 or less.

Generally, in terms of demographics respondents in the current research were relatively young, well educated, and moderately well paid. Such demographic distribution is consistent with Ye et al. (2011) that “most online customers of hotels in China are educated young travelers” (p. 637), indicating the soundness of the sampling in this study.

Table 5. 2 Demographic profiles of respondents (n=842)

Characteristics	Frequency	Proportion (%)
Gender		
Male	397	47.1
Female	445	52.9
Age		
less than 18	2	.24
18-25	251	29.81
26-35	403	47.86
36-45	149	17.70
46-55	32	3.80
56-65	5	.59
Education		
less than secondary/high school	3	.4
completed secondary/high school	64	7.6
completed college/university diploma/ degree	710	84.3
completed postgraduate degree	65	7.7
Your average monthly income (RMB)		
3,000 or below	118	14.01
3,001-6,000	346	41.09
6,001-9,000	200	23.75
9,001-12,000	104	12.35
12,001 or above	38	4.51
No salary/ refuse to answer	36	4.28

5.4 Assessment of Reliability and Validity of Measurement Scales

To verify the underlying factor structure in the proposed scales from previous studies and interviews, the researcher performed CFA in AMOS 7.0 to assess reliability

and validity of measurement scales. This study checked composite reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity.

The reliability of a scale refers to whether the scale is stable or consistent across varying situations. This study used Cronbach's alpha coefficient, a popular diagnostic measure of reliability, to assess the internal consistency of the construct. With SEM models, a slightly different composite reliability is often used. Composite reliability is analogous to Cronbach's alpha, with its calculation being based on both factor loadings and error variances of each item to a given factor (Hatcher, 1994). Its calculation formula is as follows, in which L_i is the factor loading and e_i is the error variance for each construct.

$$\frac{\sum_{i=1}^n L_i^2}{\sum_{i=1}^n L_i^2 + \sum_{i=1}^n e_i}$$

A scale is reliable if the value of composite reliability equals or is greater than .6 (Bagozzi & Kimmel, 1995). During CFA, composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha were calculated to assess the reliability of the construct. Table 5.3 presents the results and indicates the composite reliability for the eleven factors ranged from .722 to .926. For this study, Cronbach's alpha were all larger than .07. Therefore, good internal consistency among the variables was secured.

Table 5. 3 Composite Reliability of the Major Constructs (n=842)

Factors	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's alpha
Attributes of Hotel Website		
Hotel Website Usability	.882	.882
Hotel Website Functionality	.752	.746
Security and Privacy	.797	.782
Hotel Profiles		
High star rating	.796	.789
Low star rating	.906	.905
Public ownership	.878	.878
Private ownership	.722	.885
eTrust		
Benevolence	.858	.856
Integrity	.924	.922
Ability	.889	.887
Online Booking Intentions	.813	.815

Convergent validity evaluates the extent to which the common variance is shared among items of a specific construct (Hair et al., 2010). Several ways are available to measure the convergent validity. Fornell and Larcker (1981) recommended average variance extracted (AVE), which is a summary indicator of convergence. It is the average amount of variance in measurement items that a latent variable is able to explain and it can be calculated by:

$$\left(\sum_{i=1}^n L_i\right)^2/n$$

in which L_i is the standardized factor loadings.

Besides AVE, Bagozzi and Yi (1988) suggested factor loadings larger than .5 were predictive of acceptable convergent validity, which should be statistically significant. In this research, the AVEs of all constructs except hotel website functionality were above the

critical value of .5, suggesting that these proposed items have captured more than 50 percent of the variances in the factors they intended to measure. The factor loadings of the items were greater than .5 and therefore were statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). These results indicated that the convergent validity of the constructs was satisfactory.

Table 5. 4 Factor Loadings of Measurement Items (n=842)

Measurements	Mean	S.D.	Factor Loadings	C.R.	AVE ^a
Perceived Importance of Usability Attributes					.560
Clear language (U1)	5.67	1.057	.848	--	
Easily understandable information (U2)	5.70	1.021	.851	30.038	
User-friendly layout (U3)	5.18	1.133	.717	23.395	
Well-organized information (U4)	5.56	.999	.640	26.308	
Graphics matched with texts (U5)	5.70	1.026	.778	20.110	
Simple website navigations (e.g. menu or site map) (U6)	5.55	1.085	.619	19.293	
Perceived Importance of Functionality Attributes					.379
Hotel reservation information (F1)	5.71	1.155	.643	--	
Hotel facilities information (F2)	5.90	.947	.678	15.145	
Information of promotions/special offers (F3)	5.44	1.091	.602	12.840	
Price information of hotel rooms (F4)	6.18	.826	.545	13.900	
Information of destinations where hotels are located (F5)	6.06	.957	.602	13.892	
Perceived Importance of Security and Privacy Attributes					.574
Privacy policy relating to customers' personal data (SP1)	5.91	1.225	.565	--	
Information of secured online payment system (SP2)	6.05	1.108	.800	15.940	
Information of third-party recognition (SP3)	5.69	1.184	.873	16.221	
Perceived Performance of High Star Rated Hotels					.566
I think hotels with higher star ratings (luxurious, 5-star, and 4-star hotels) can provide better service (HS1)	6.06	1.002	.725	--	
I think hotels with higher star ratings (luxurious, 5-star, and 4-star hotels) can better meet my needs (HS2)	5.68	1.120	.713	17.386	
I think hotels with higher star ratings (luxurious, 5-star, and 4-star hotels) are more professional (HS3)	6.17	.906	.815	17.697	
Perceived Performance of Low Star Rated Hotels					.762
I think hotels with lower star ratings (1-star, 2-star, 3-star, and economic hotels) can provide better service (LS1)	2.98	1.230	.863	--	
I think hotels with lower star ratings (1-star, 2-star, 3-	3.17	1.344	.873	31.730	

star, and economic hotels) can better meet my needs (LS2)					
I think hotels with lower star ratings (1-star, 2-star, 3-star, and economic hotels) are more professional (LS3)	2.81	1.239	.883	32.096	
Public ownership					.707
I think state-owned hotels can provide better service (SO1)	4.24	1.090	.843	--	
I think state-owned hotels can better meet my needs (SO2)	4.29	1.064	.878	27.631	
I think state-owned hotels are more professional (SO3)	4.31	1.084	.799	25.825	
Private Ownership					.886
I think privately-owned hotels (including civilian-run and foreign-invested hotels) can provide better service (PO1)	4.93	1.053	.835	--	
I think privately-owned hotels (including civilian-run and foreign-invested hotels) can better meet my needs (PO2)	4.86	1.049	.891	28.640	
I think privately-owned hotels (including civilian-run and foreign-invested hotels) are more professional (PO3)	4.76	1.097	.822	27.045	
Ability					.668
Hotel official websites have the necessary abilities to handle sales transactions on the Internet (T1)	5.55	1.003	.781	--	
Hotel official websites have sufficient expertise to do business on the Internet (T2)	5.45	1.022	.870	26.841	
Hotel official websites have sufficient resources to do business on the Internet (T3)	5.47	1.011	.818	25.073	
Hotel official websites have adequate knowledge to manage their business on the Internet (T4)	5.33	1.090	.798	24.370	
Benevolence					.637
Most hotel official websites have a good reputation (T5)	5.02	1.179	.687	--	
Designs of hotel official websites take consumers' needs into consideration (T6)	5.10	1.098	.789	20.516	
Hotel official websites are professional (T7)	4.90	1.120	.810	20.987	
Hotel official websites keep customers' interests in mind (T8)	4.73	1.201	.799	20.746	
Recommendations on hotel official websites are made for mutual interests (T9)	5.02	1.154	.686	18.106	
Integrity					.602
Hotel official websites do not deceive customers (T10)	4.33	1.341	.810	22.577	
Hotel official websites fulfill commitments they made (T11)	4.66	1.224	.864	23.558	
Hotel official websites provide information in an honest way (T12)	4.74	1.174	.871	23.735	
I have confidence on promises made by hotel official websites (T13)	4.71	1.142	.849	23.185	
Hotel official websites do not make false statements (T14)	4.46	1.251	.806	22.072	

I will not be overcharged when booking a room via hotel official websites (T16)	4.74	1.224	.645	17.840	
All in all, I trust hotel official websites (T17)	5.07	1.015	.697	--	
Online Booking Intentions					.528
It is likely that I will book hotel rooms from hotel websites the next 12 months (OPI1)	5.26	.879	.555	--	
It is possible that I will book hotel rooms from hotel websites the next 12 months (OPI2)	5.09	.902	.634	13.621	
I am willing to book hotel rooms from hotel websites (OPI3)	5.30	.959	.836	15.658	
I plan to book hotel rooms from hotel websites (OPI4)	5.27	.911	.838	15.664	

*** p<0.001

Discriminant validity is the degree to which two measures are different from each other. In general, inter-correlations among variables lower than 0.85 indicate acceptable discriminant validity (Kline, 2005). Another more stringent criterion for adequate discriminant validity maintains that the squared root of AVE for each construct should exceed the correlation coefficients of the corresponding inter-constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The results of discriminant validity shown in Table 5.5 suggested satisfactory discriminant validity, as the square root of the AVE estimates are larger than any inter-correlation coefficients. This indicated that each variable is more highly correlated with its measurement items than any others. Furthermore, it was found in the current study that all inter-variable correlations were lower than 0.85. Therefore, the discriminant validity of the proposed scale was established.

The high correlations among the three factors of hotel website quality and eTrust strongly suggested the presence of a higher-order factor. Following Dabholkar, Thorpe,

and Rentz (1996), the researcher constructed and tested a second-order factor model. The following section presents the details.

Table 5. 5 Inter-variable Correlations of Measurement Scales (n=842)

	Usability	Functionality	Security and Privacy
Usability	0.748		
Functionality	0.669	0.616	
Security and Privacy	0.649	0.600	0.758
	Ability	Benevolence	Integrity
Ability	0.818		
Benevolence	0.655	0.776	
Integrity	0.491	0.716	0.798
	Publicly Owned	Privately Owned	
Publicly Owned	0.841		
Privately Owned	0.073	0.941	
	High Star Rating	Low Star Rating	
High Star Rating	0.752		
Low Star Rating	-0.247	0.873	

Note: inter-correlation coefficients are below the diagonal and squared root of AVE estimates are presented on the diagonal

Given that the eigenvalue of one eTrust dimension of ability is lower than 1 in the pilot test, the researcher ran another round of CFA to examine the discriminant validity of the three dimensions of the proposed scale by comparing the significance of the different χ^2 values between the original model with three dimensions and the alternative less restrictive models that combined some or all of these dimensions (Gefen, 2002). Table 5.6 shows the χ^2 and the degrees of freedom of the alternative models. The χ^2 of the three-dimensional model is significantly smaller, given the difference in degrees of freedom, than the χ^2 of any of the alternative models that combined any two or all three

dimensions. From this finding, the three-dimensional model is significantly better, and its discriminant validity is confirmed (Segars, 1997).

Table 5. 6 χ^2 of Alternative Models

Model	χ^2	Difference in χ^2 compared with the proposed model
Proposed three-dimensional model	579.861 (101)	
All the items loaded on one factor	2688.606 (104)	2108.745
Ability and benevolence as one factor and integrity as another	1352.065 (103)	772.204
Ability and integrity as one factor and benevolence as another	2096.970 (103)	1517.109
Integrity and benevolence as one factor and ability as another	1462.051 (103)	882.19

Note: Degrees of freedom are indicated in the parentheses

5.5 Testing of Measurement Models

As suggested by Bentler (1978), the estimation of measurement models and structural models allows a comprehensive and confirmatory assessment of construct validity. More specifically, the measurement model provides a confirmatory assessment of convergent and discriminant validity (Campbell & Fiske, 1959) while assessment of the structural model enables the confirmatory assessment of nomological validity (Campbell, 1960; Cronbach & Meehl, 1955). Accordingly, Anderson and Gerbing (1988) suggested a two-step approach in using SEM, in which prior to examining the overall measurement and structural model, researchers should evaluate individual measurement models specifying the relationships of the observed measures to the posited latent

constructs. This study followed this two-stage approach in analyzing the measurement models separately. The following sections present the findings.

5.5.1 Perceived Importance of Hotel Website Attributes

The study used 14 observed indicators in the measurement model of perceived hotel website attributes (Figure 5.1). After testing the measurement model, the researcher modified the models and scales to improve performance with the latent variables being investigated (Netemeyer, Bearden, & Sharma, 2003). Figure 5.1 presents the first-order measurement model of perceived hotel website attributes. The path between error terms of e1 (clear language) and e2 (easily understandable information) was free of estimation. Since both items were measuring website usability attributes, it is acceptable to connect them as they might share some similarities. This additional path significantly improved the model fit as χ^2 decreased by 109.810. Table 5.7 presents the results of the modified model.

All the indices fell in the acceptable range, exhibiting an acceptable fit of the data with the posited model ($\chi^2 (df) = 418.572 (73)$; RMR= .055; GFI= .935; NFI= .922; RMSEA= .075). The previous section on validity and reliability discussed factor loadings and composite reliability values. With regard to squared multiple correlations (SMC), four items have SMC values lower than .4, suggesting that less than 40 percent of

variances in these items were explained by their intended latent variables. Overall, the first order of hotel website attributes measurement model was supported and the items showed good measurement features.

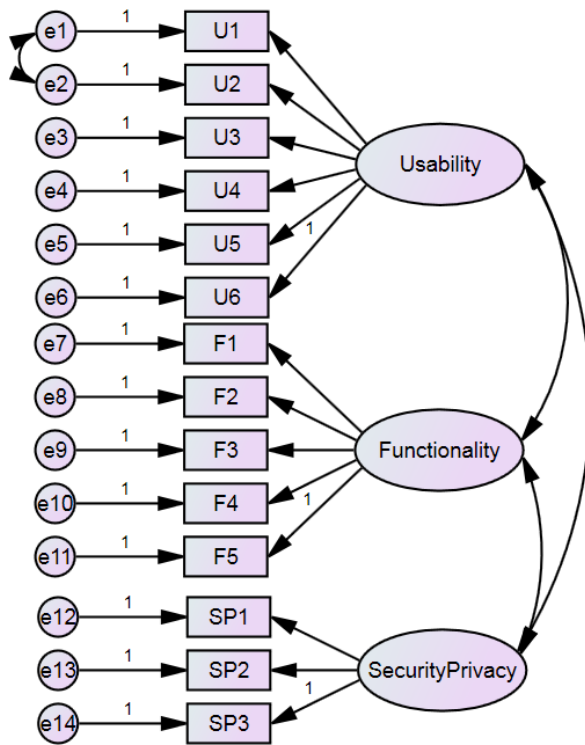


Figure 5. 1 Measurement Model of Perceived Website Attributes (First order)

Table 5. 7 Measurement Model of Perceived Website Attributes (First order)

Measurements	Std. Factor Loadings	C.R.	SMC
Perceived Importance of Usability Attributes			
Clear language (U1)	.757	18.551	.573
Easily understandable information (U2)	.766	18.733	.586
User-friendly layout (U3)	.755	18.577	.570
Well-organized information (U4)	.818	19.736	.669
Graphics matched with texts (U5)	.686	17.179	.470
Simple website navigations (e.g. menu or site map) (U6)	.657	--	.432
Perceived Importance of Functionality Attributes			
Hotel reservation information (F1)	.640	13.789	.409
Hotel facilities information (F2)	.678	14.302	.460

Information of promotions/special offers (F3)	.552	12.429	.304
Price information of hotel rooms (F4)	.604	13.272	.365
Information of destinations where hotels are located (F5)	.599	--	.359
Perceived Importance of Security and Privacy Attributes			
Privacy policy relating to customers' personal data (SP1)	.567	16.181	.322
Information of secured online payment system (SP2)	.806	22.796	.650
Information of third-party recognition (SP3)	.867	--	.751
$\chi^2(df) = 418.572 (73)$; RMR= .055; GFI= .935; NFI= .922; RMSEA= .075			

Figure 5.2 presents the second-order measurement model of hotel website attributes, which includes three first-order factors, their indicators, and measurement errors. This study also tested the overall fit of the measurement model to the data. Table 5.7 shows the model fit indices. Each of the three factors has significant factor loadings of .839, .799, and .750 respectively on the second-order latent variable, suggesting that three latent factors were significantly loaded on a common variable. The SMC values for the three factors were above .5, indicating that more than 50 percent of the variances of the three factors could be explained by the higher level construct. This suggested that Chinese web users evaluated hotel websites not only on the basis of the three dimensions but also they regarded the website quality as a whole, rather than separately. Furthermore, the second-order model exhibits satisfactory goodness of fit indices ($\chi^2 (df) = 418.572 (73)$; RMR= .055; GFI= .935; NFI= .922; RMSEA= .075).

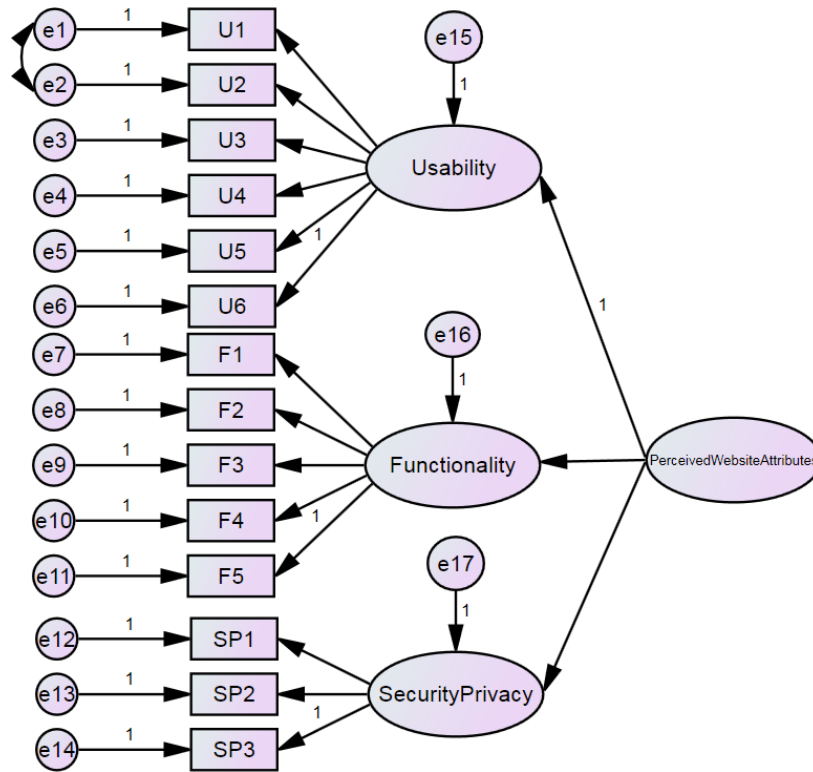


Figure 5. 2 Measurement Model of Perceived Importance of Website Attributes (Second order)

Table 5. 8 Measurement Model of Perceived Importance of Website Attributes (Second order)

Factors	Std. Factor Loadings	C.R.	SMC	AVE	Composite Reliability
Perceived Importance of Website Attributes				.634	.839
Website Usability Attributes	.838	--	.702		
Website Functionality Attributes	.799	11.003	.639		
Security and Privacy Attributes	.750	12.671	.563		

$\chi^2(df) = 418.572 (73)$; RMR= .055; GFI= .935; NFI= .922; RMSEA= .075

In summary, based on the CFA findings (first- and second order), it can be concluded that website attributes perceived important by Chinese Internet users' is a could be categorized into three groups: 1) hotel website usability; 2) hotel website functionality, and 3) privacy and security. The next section reports the results of

perceived hotel performance across hotel profiles in terms of hotel star rating and hotel ownership.

5.5.2 Hotel Star Rating

There was only one order for the measurement model of perceived importance of high star and low star rated hotels, respectively (Figure 5.3). Previous sections offered the rationale for developing the measurement scale. All factor loadings of these six indicators were over .5 and significant at .001 level. At the same time, all SMC values were above .5, indicating that at least 50 percent of the posited items could be explained by the latent construct. While RMSE was .157, model fit indices still showed that the measurement model of hotel star rating reasonably fitted the data ($\chi^2 (df) = 173.654 (8)$; RMR= .049; GFI= .941; NFI= .934; RMSEA= .157).

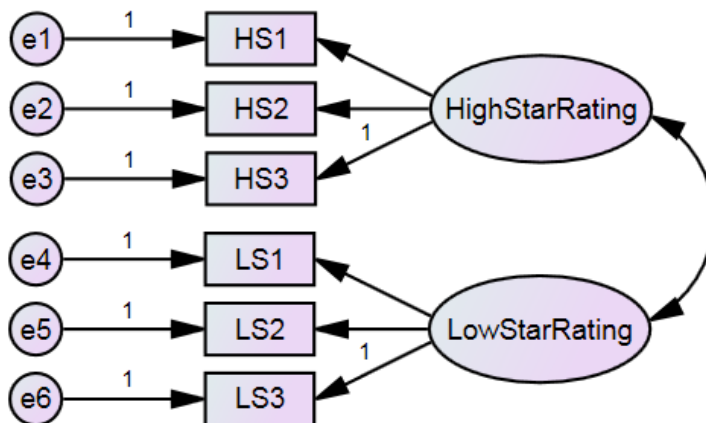


Figure 5. 3 Measurement Model of Perceived Performance Star Rate-based Performance

Table 5. 9 Measurement Model of Perceived Star Rate-based Performance

Measurements	Std. Factor Loadings	C.R.	SMC
Perceived Performance of High Star Rated Hotels			
I think hotels with higher star ratings (luxurious, 5-star, and 4-star hotels) can provide better service (HS1)	.725	--	.526
I think hotels with higher star ratings (luxurious, 5-star, and 4-star hotels) can better meet my needs (HS2)	.713	17.386	.509
I think hotels with higher star ratings (luxurious, 5-star, and 4-star hotels) are more professional (HS3)	.815	17.697	.665
Perceived Performance of Low Star Rated Hotels			
I think hotels with lower star ratings (1-star, 2-star, 3-star, and economic hotels) can provide better service (LS1)	.863	--	.745
I think hotels with lower star ratings (1-star, 2-star, 3-star, and economic hotels) can better meet my needs (LS2)	.873	31.730	.763
I think hotels with lower star ratings (1-star, 2-star, 3-star, and economic hotels) are more professional (LS3)	.883	32.096	.779
$\chi^2(df) = 173.654 (8)$; RMR= .049; GFI= .941; NFI= .934; RMSEA= .157			

5.5.3 Perceived Importance across Hotel Ownership Types

Figure 5.4 presents the measurement model of perceived performance across hotel ownership types, which consisted of six observed indicators. Table 5.10 shows the CFA results. As mentioned previously, the results exhibited reasonable reliability and validity. All the SMC values exceeded .6, demonstrating that more than 60 percent of the observed indicators could be explained by the underlying latent constructs. In addition, the 6-factor measurement model showed a close-to-perfect fit to the data ($\chi^2 (df) = 9.272 (8)$; RMR= .015; GFI= .996; NFI= .997; RMSEA= .014).

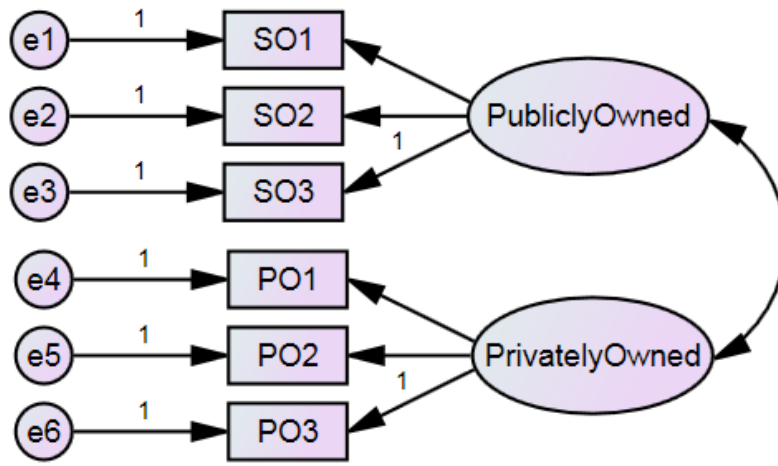


Figure 5. 4 Measurement Model of Perceived Performance across Hotel Ownership

Table 5. 10 Measurement Model of Perceived Performance across Hotel Ownership

Measurements	Std. Factor Loadings	C.R.	SMC
Perceived Performance of Publicly Owned Hotels			
I think state-owned hotels can provide better service (SO1)	.843	--	.711
I think state-owned hotels can better meet my needs (SO2)	.878	27.631	.770
I think state-owned hotels are more professional (SO3)	.799	25.825	.639
Perceived Performance of Privately Ownership			
I think privately-owned hotels (including civilian-run and foreign-invested hotels) can provide better service (PO1)	.835	--	.697
I think privately-owned hotels (including civilian-run and foreign-invested hotels) can better meet my needs (PO2)	.891	28.640	.794
I think privately-owned hotels (including civilian-run and foreign-invested hotels) are more professional (PO3)	.822	27.045	.676
$\chi^2(df) = 9.272 (8)$; RMR= .015; GFI= .996; NFI= .997; RMSEA= .014			

In summary, based on the CFA findings of hotel star rating and hotel ownership, it can be concluded that hotel star rating and hotel ownership in terms of perceived

performance from Chinese Internet users' perspectives has two attributes respectively: 1) high star rating vs low star rating; 2) state ownership vs privately ownership.

5.5.4 eTrust

In consistent with the results obtained in the pilot test, the measurement model of eTrust consisted of 16 observed items (Figure 5.5). One additional path between error terms of e16 (I will not be overcharged when booking a room via hotel official websites) and e17 (all in all, I trust hotel official websites) was added. Since these two items fell in the same dimension of integrity, it is justifiable to connect them as they might share some similarities. This additional path significantly improved the model fit as χ^2 decreased by 83.5.

Table 5.11 presents the CFA results and fit indices of the modified model. All factor loadings were above .6 and statistically significant. Although one item has the SMC estimate lower than .4, the others were well above it. The fit indices appeared to be good (χ^2 (df) = 496.355 (100); RMR= .057; GFI= .928; NFI= .946; RMSEA= .069), indicating the good fit of the measurement model.

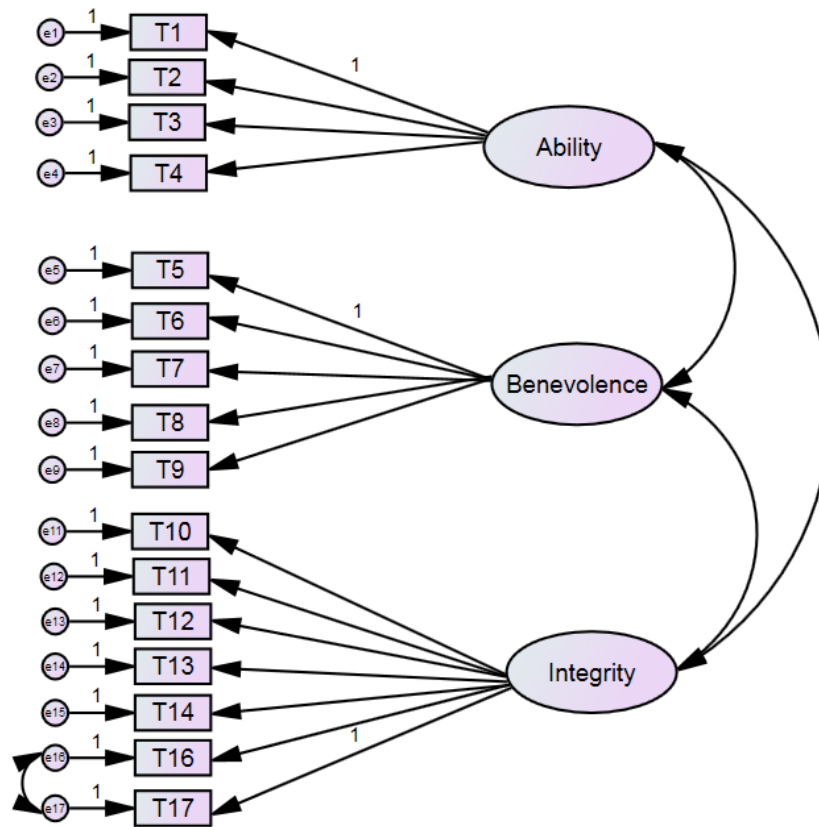


Figure 5. 5 Measurement Model of eTrust (First order)

Table 5. 11 Measurement Model of Hotel Website Quality (First order)

Measurements	Std. Factor Loadings	C.R.	SMC
Ability			
Hotel official websites have the necessary abilities to handle sales transactions on the Internet (T1)	.781	--	.610
Hotel official websites have sufficient expertise to do business on the Internet (T2)	.870	26.840	.757
Hotel official websites have sufficient resources to do business on the Internet (T3)	.818	25.073	.669
Hotel official websites have adequate knowledge to manage their business on the Internet (T4)	.798	24.369	.637
Benevolence			
Most hotel official websites have a good reputation (T5)	.687	--	.472
Designs of hotel official websites take consumers' needs into consideration (T6)	.789	20.514	.622
Hotel official websites are professional (T7)	.810	20.989	.657
Hotel official websites keep customers' interests in mind (T8)	.799	20.747	.639

Recommendations on hotel official websites are made for mutual interests (I9)	.686	18.093	.470
Integrity			
Hotel official websites do not deceive customers (T10)	.829	21.982	.688
Hotel official websites fulfill commitments they made (T11)	.868	22.869	.753
Hotel official websites provide information in an honest way (T12)	.874	23.008	.764
I have confidence on promises made by hotel official websites (T13)	.848	22.416	.719
Hotel official websites do not make false statements (T14)	.805	21.416	.648
I will not be overcharged when booking a room via hotel official websites (T16)	.628	20.658	.394
All in all, I trust hotel official websites (T17)	.682	--	.465
$\chi^2(df) = 496.355 (100)$; RMR= .057; GFI= .928; NFI= .946; RMSEA= .069			

The reliability and validity test revealed high correlations among the three factors of eTrust, suggesting the presence of a higher-order factor. Figure 5.6 presents the second-order measurement model of eTrust, which includes three first-order factors, their indicators, and measurement errors. This study tested the overall fit of the measurement model to the data and Table 5.12 shows the model fit indices. Each of the three factors has significant factor loadings of .680, .995, and .716 respectively on the second-order latent variable, suggesting that three latent factors significant loaded on a common variable. The SMC values for the three factor were above .4, indicating more than 40 percent of the variances of the three factors could be explained by the higher level construct. Furthermore, the second-order model exhibits satisfactory goodness of fit indices ($\chi^2 (df) = 496.355 (100)$; RMR= .057; GFI= .928; NFI= .946; RMSEA= .069).

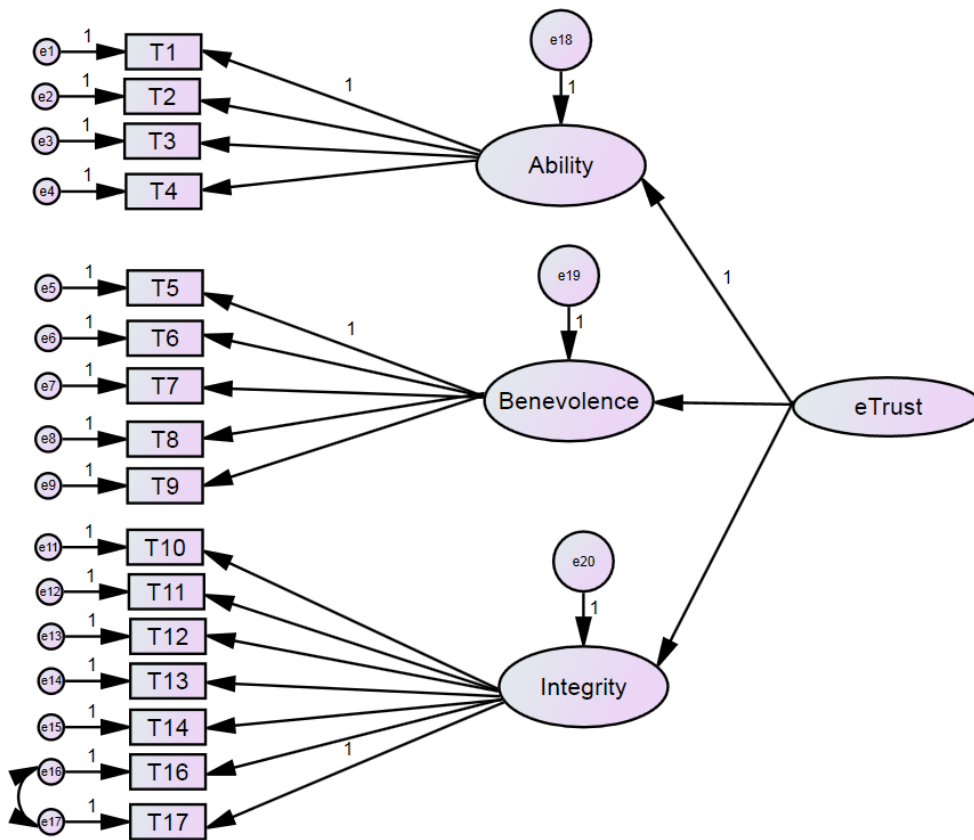


Figure 5. 6 Measurement Model of eTrust (Second order)

Table 5. 12 Measurement Model of eTrust (Second order)

Factors	Std. Factor Loadings	C.R.	SMC	AVE	Composite Reliability
eTrust				.655	.847
Ability	.680	--	.512		
Benevolence	.995	12.944	.991		
Integrity	.716	13.418	.463		
$\chi^2(df) = 496.355 (100)$; RMR= .057; GFI= .928; NFI= .946; RMSEA= .069					

In summary, based on the CFA findings (first- and second order), it can be concluded that eTrust perceived from Chinese Internet users' perspectives is a higher order construct consisting of three factors: 1) ability; 2) benevolence, and 3) integrity.

5.5.5 Online Booking Intentions

There was only one order for the measurement model of online booking intentions (Figure 5.7). The path between error terms of e1 (it is likely that I will book hotel rooms from hotel websites in the next 12 months) and e2 (it is possible that I will book hotel rooms from hotel websites in the next 12 months) was free of estimation. This additional path significantly improved the model fit as χ^2 decreased by 108.860. Table 5.13 presents the goodness-of-fit indices of the modified model. All indices fell in the acceptable range ($\chi^2 (df) = 2.970 (1)$; RMR= .006; GFI= .998; NFI= .998; RMSEA= .048), indicating the good fit of the measurement model.

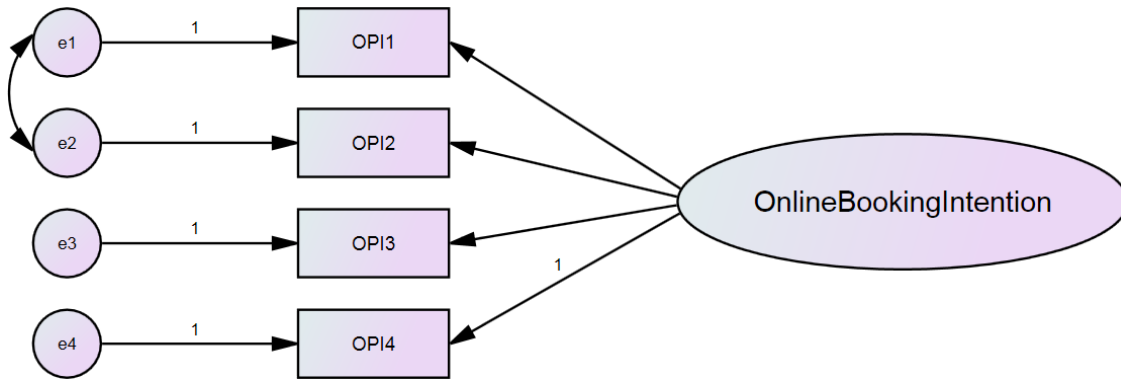


Figure 5. 7 Measuremnt Model of Online Booking Intentions

Table 5. 13 Estimation of Fit Indices of the Measurement Model of Online Booking Intentions

Measurements	Std. Factor Loadings	C.R.	SMC
Online Booking Intentions			
It is likely that I will book hotel rooms from hotel websites the next 12 months (OPI1)	.498	20.639	.248
It is possible that I will book hotel rooms from hotel websites the next 12 months (OPI2)	.588	16.491	.346
I am willing to book hotel rooms from hotel websites (OPI3)	.846	13.749	.716

I plan to book hotel rooms from hotel websites (OPI4)	.856	--	.732
$\chi^2(df) = 2.970(1)$; RMR= .006; GFI= .998; NFI= .998; RMSEA= .048			

In summary, based on the CFA findings (first- and second order), it can be concluded that online booking intentions perceived from Chinese Internet users' is a higher order construct consisting of four observed indicators.

5.5.6 Overall Measurement Model Test

After identifying the individual measurement models for the constructs of interest, a CFA assessed the overall measurement model with all the variables of the model (Figure 5.8). In this overall model, latent constructs identified in previous individual measurement models were set to be pairwise correlated freely. Measurement items identified previously were indicators for each latent variable. More specifically, hotel website quality was defined as a second-order variable of attributes falling in website usability, website functionality, as well as security and privacy, having 14 observed indicators. eTrust was defined as a second-order construct of ability, benevolence, and integration, composed of 16 indicators. The latent variables of high star rating, low star rating, public ownership, and private ownership in terms of performance had three indicators respectively. The latent variable of online purchase intentions had four indicators. Table 5.14 shows the CFA results of the overall measurement model and goodness-of-fit indices.

Table 5. 14 Overall Measurement Model Fit (n=842)

Measurements	Std. Factor Loading	C.R.	SMC	AVE	Composite Reliability
Usability Attributes				.549	.879
Clear language (U1)	.752	--	.566		
Easily understandable information (U2)	.764	32.345	.584		
User-friendly layout (U3)	.754	21.382	.569		
Well-organized information (U4)	.818	23.205	.670		
Graphics matched with texts (U5)	.689	19.428	.474		
Simple website navigations (e.g. menu or site map) (U6)	.659	18.543	.434		
Functionality Attributes				.380	.752
Hotel reservation information (F1)	.649	--	.421		
Hotel facilities information (F2)	.683	15.455	.467		
Information of promotions/special offers (F3)	.552	13.118	.304		
Price information of hotel rooms (F4)	.596	13.958	.355		
Information of destinations where hotels are located (F5)	.592	13.882	.350		
Security and Privacy Attributes				.575	.797
Privacy policy relating to customers' personal data (SP1)	.568	--	.322		
Information of secured online payment system (SP2)	.809	15.995	.654		
Information of third-party recognition (SP3)	.864	16.179	.747		
High Star Rated				.566	.796
I think hotels with higher star ratings (luxurious, 5-star, and 4-star hotels) can provide better service (HS1)	.714	18.596	.510		
I think hotels with higher star ratings (luxurious, 5-star, and 4-star hotels) can better meet my needs (HS2)	.727	18.816	.529		
I think hotels with higher star ratings (luxurious, 5-star, and 4-star hotels) are more professional (HS3)	.813	--	.660		
Low Star Rated				.762	.906
I think hotels with lower star ratings (1-star, 2-star, 3-star, and economic hotels) can provide better service (LS1)	.864	32.140	.746		
I think hotels with lower star ratings (1-star, 2-star, 3-star, and economic hotels) can better meet my needs (LS2)	.873	32.550	.762		
I think hotels with lower star ratings (1-star, 2-star, 3-star, and economic hotels) are more professional (LS3)	.882	--	.779		
Publicly owned				.707	.878

I think state-owned hotels can provide better service (SO1)	.844	25.986	.713		
I think state-owned hotels can better meet my needs (SO2)	.875	26.504	.766		
I think state-owned hotels are more professional (SO3)	.801	--	.642		
Privately Owned				.722	.886
I think privately-owned hotels (including civilian-run and foreign-invested hotels) can provide better service (PO1)	.833	27.275	.695		
I think privately-owned hotels (including civilian-run and foreign-invested hotels) can better meet my needs (PO2)	.892	28.398	.796		
I think privately-owned hotels (including civilian-run and foreign-invested hotels) are more professional (PO3)	.823	--	.677		
Ability				.669	.890
Hotel official websites have the necessary abilities to handle sales transactions on the Internet (T1)	.782	--	.611		
Hotel official websites have sufficient expertise to do business on the Internet (T2)	.868	26.891	.754		
Hotel official websites have sufficient resources to do business on the Internet (T3)	.819	25.173	.670		
Hotel official websites have adequate knowledge to manage their business on the Internet (T4)	.799	24.453	.638		
Benevolence				.572	.870
Most hotel official websites have a good reputation (T5)	.689	20.672	.474		
Designs of hotel official websites take consumers' needs into consideration (T6)	.793	--	.629		
Hotel official websites are professional (T7)	.810	25.138	.656		
Hotel official websites keep customers' interests in mind (T8)	.794	24.529	.630		
Recommendations on hotel official websites are made for mutual interests (T9)	.687	20.598	.471		
Integrity				.635	.923
Hotel official websites do not deceive customers (T10)	.733	--	.537		
Hotel official websites fulfill commitments they made (T11)	.861	32.174	.742		
Hotel official websites provide information in an honest way (T12)	.874	33.020	.764		
I have confidence on promises made by hotel official websites (T13)	.855	31.766	.731		
Hotel official websites do not make false statements (T14)	.803	28.650	.645		
I will not be overcharged when booking a	.664	24.656	.442		

room via hotel official websites (T16)					
All in all, I trust hotel official websites (T17)	.764	--	.584		
Online Booking Intentions				.518	.806
It is likely that I will book hotel rooms from hotel websites the next 12 months (OPI1)	.533	--	.284		
It is possible that I will book hotel rooms from hotel websites the next 12 months (OPI2)	.611	16.065	.374		
I am willing to book hotel rooms from hotel websites (OPI3)	.844	14.946	.713		
I plan to book hotel rooms from hotel websites (OPI4)	.839	14.938	.703		
<hr/>					
$\chi^2 (df) = 2516.571 (960)$; RMR= .060; GFI= .883; NFI= .891; RMSEA= .044					
<hr/>					

*** p<0.001

Generally, the fit indices ($\chi^2 (df) = 2516.571 (960)$; RMR= .060; GFI= .883; NFI= .891; RMSEA= .044) indicated that the data fit the overall model satisfactorily. At the same time, all standard factor loadings were significant at .001 level and evidenced the desirable convergent validity of the overall measurement model. Comparison between factor loadings in this model and those in the individual measurement models showed that factor loadings were very stable. The researcher noticed only very insignificant discrepancies among the factor loadings in the overall measurement model compared to those displayed in the individual measurement models. The largest absolute value of factor loading difference was .096, from the eTrust dimension of integrity “hotel official websites do not deceive customers”. This once again proved the reliabilities of the individual measurement models as well as overall measurement model. Meanwhile,

further comparison revealed that most *t*-values in the overall model were larger than the associated values in individual models.

Table 5.14 also presents the SMC values, AVE values, and composite reliability coefficients for the latent variables. In general, the researcher spotted no significant discrepancies between the SMC and composite reliability values of the overall measurement model and those of the separate measurement model.

5.6 Structural Model Testing

Having assessed the measurement model with respect to the fit indices and parameter estimates, the researcher examined the structural model. Measurement models deal with relationships between latent variables and observed variables while structural models examine the causal relationships among latent variables (Bryne, 2010). This is where multiple regression analyses examine interrelationships among latent variables and test proposed hypotheses.

As proposed in the conceptual framework in Chapter 2, six sets of hypotheses included: 1) the effects of perceived importance of hotel website attributes on eTrust, 2) the effects of perceived performance of high star rated hotels on eTrust, 3) the effects of perceived performance of low star rated hotels on eTrust, 4) the effects of perceived performance of publicly owned hotels on eTrust, 5) the effects of perceived performance

of privately owned hotels on eTrust, and 6) the effects of eTrust on online booking intentions. This section reports the analysis results and the overall fit of the proposed data to the collected data (Figure 5.9).

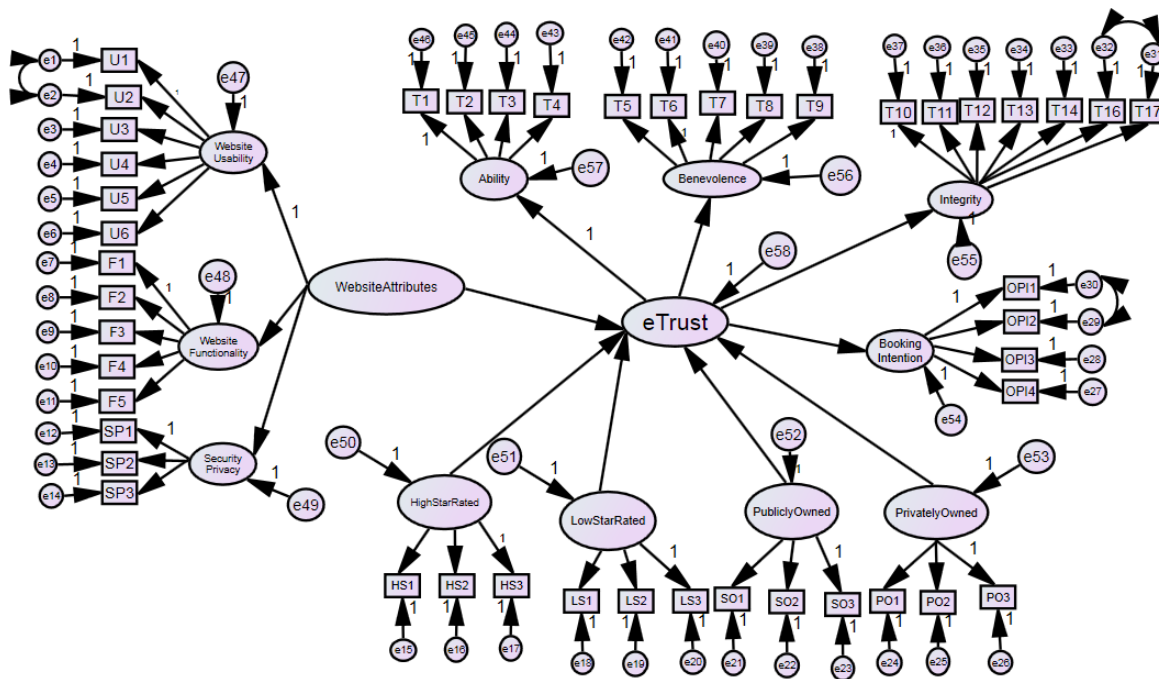


Figure 5. 8 Structural Model of Inter-relationships among Variables

The researcher tested the proposed model using AMOS. The model fit indices (χ^2 (df) = 2626.229 (974); RMR= .091; GFI= .876; NFI= .886; RMSEA= .045) suggested that the proposed model examining the interrelationships among the latent variables had an acceptable fit to the data (Table 5.15). The comparisons between the values of factor loading, composite reliability, and SMC in the structural model and those in the

measurement model revealed few differences, suggesting the robustness of the measurement items.

Table 5. 15 Proposed Structural Model

Measurements	Standard Regression Weights (β)	C.R. (t-value)	SMC (R^2)
Perceived Importance of Website Attributes	.514		
Clear language (U1)	.754	--	.569
Easily understandable information (U2)	.764	32.382	.583
User-friendly layout (U3)	.755	21.458	.569
Well-organized information (U4)	.818	23.306	.670
Graphics matched with texts (U5)	.687	19.426	.472
Simple website navigations (e.g. menu or site map) (U6)	.659	18.603	.435
Hotel reservation information (F1)	.646	--	.417
Hotel facilities information (F2)	.679	15.238	.461
Information of promotions/special offers (F3)	.555	13.097	.308
Price information of hotel rooms (F4)	.600	13.920	.360
Information of destinations where hotels are located (F5)	.593	13.807	.352
Privacy policy relating to customers' personal data (SP1)	.568	--	.323
Information of secured online payment system (SP2)	.808	15.999	.652
Information of third-party recognition (SP3)	.865	16.188	.748
Perceived Performance of High Star Rated	.278	6.907	
I think hotels with higher star ratings (luxurious, 5-star, and 4-star hotels) can provide better service (HS1)	.725	17.810	.525
I think hotels with higher star ratings (luxurious, 5-star, and 4-star hotels) can better meet my needs (HS2)	.719	17.745	.516
I think hotels with higher star ratings (luxurious, 5-star, and 4-star hotels) are more professional (HS3)	.811	--	.658
Perceived Performance of Low Star Rated	.036		
I think hotels with lower star ratings (1-star, 2-star, 3-star, and economic hotels) can provide better service (LS1)	.865	32.098	.749
I think hotels with lower star ratings (1-star, 2-star, 3-star, and economic hotels) can better meet my needs (LS2)	.872	32.394	.761
I think hotels with lower star ratings (1-star, 2-star, 3-star, and economic hotels) are more professional (LS3)	.882	--	.778
Perceived Performance of Publicly Owned Hotels	.171		
I think state owned hotels can provide better service (SO1)	.845	25.904	.713

I think state owned hotels can better meet my needs (SO2)	.876	26.382	.767
I think state owned hotels are more professional (SO3)	.800	--	.641
Perceived Performance Privately Owned Hotels	.171	4.558	
I think privately-owned hotels (including civilian-run and foreign-invested hotels) can provide better service (PO1)	.834	27.006	.691
I think privately-owned hotels (including civilian-run and foreign-invested hotels) can better meet my needs (PO2)	.893	28.236	.797
I think privately-owned hotels (including civilian-run and foreign-invested hotels) are more professional (PO3)	.821	--	.675
eTrust	.484		.399
Hotel official websites have the necessary abilities to handle sales transactions on the Internet (T1)	.772	--	.596
Hotel official websites have sufficient expertise to do business on the Internet (T2)	.861	25.855	.741
Hotel official websites have sufficient resources to do business on the Internet (T3)	.810	24.253	.656
Hotel official websites have adequate knowledge to manage their business on the Internet (T4)	.789	23.547	.623
Most hotel official websites have a good reputation (T5)	.671	19.537	.450
Designs of hotel official websites take consumers' needs into consideration (T6)	.780	--	.608
Hotel official websites are professional (T7)	.796	23.728	.634
Hotel official websites keep customers' interests in mind (T8)	.778	23.133	.606
Recommendations on hotel official websites are made for mutual interests (I9)	.669	19.477	.448
Hotel official websites do not deceive customers (T10)	.818	--	.669
Hotel official websites fulfill commitments they made (T11)	.859	29.840	.738
Hotel official websites provide information in an honest way (T12)	.867	30.260	.752
I have confidence on promises made by hotel official websites (T13)	.842	28.958	.709
Hotel official websites do not make false statements (T14)	.796	26.712	.634
I will not be overcharged when booking a room via hotel official websites (T16)	.617	19.106	.381
All in all, I trust hotel official websites (T17)	.674	21.326	.454
Online Booking Intentions			.234
It is likely that I will book hotel rooms from hotel websites the next 12 months (OPI1)	.523	--	.273
It is possible that I will book hotel rooms from hotel websites the next 12 months (OPI2)	.603	15.684	.364
I am willing to book hotel rooms from hotel websites (OPI3)	.844	14.516	.696
I plan to book hotel rooms from hotel websites (OPI4)	.834	14.511	.713
$\chi^2 (df) = 2626.229 (974); RMR = .091; GFI = .876; NFI = .886; RMSEA = .045$			

Given an acceptable goodness-of-fit of the structural model, the researcher examined the proposed hypotheses among the latent constructs (Table 5.15). In the regression analysis, contributions of independent variables are reflected by R square, standardized regression coefficients (β), and t -values in general. More specifically, R square values indicate the percentage of variance of the dependent variable can be explained by a certain independent variable. The standardized coefficient of β assesses the extent to which the dependent variable will change as the independent variable changes by one unit. The statistical significance of regression paths are indicated by t -values and the corresponding p -values. Generally, t -values greater than 1.96 ($p>0.05$), 2.58 ($p>0.01$), or 3.29 ($p>0.001$) indicate statistically significant regression paths.

Squared multiple correlation (R^2) measures the extent to which the independent variable measures the variance of the dependent variable. The R^2 values for eTrust and online purchase intentions were .399 and .234, respectively. This indicated that about 40 percent of the variance of eTrust could be explained by perceived importance of hotel website attributes, perceived performance of high star rated hotels, perceived performance of publicly owned hotels, and perceived performance of privately owned hotels. Meanwhile, the single variable of eTrust could explain about 24 percent of online purchase intention variance.

Hypothesis 1 posited a positive impact of perceived importance of hotel website attributes upon perceived eTrust level. The AMOS outputs suggested that this relationship was statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). The standard regression coefficient was .514, which means for each unit of hotel website attributes, the corresponding increase of eTrust would be .514. This positive regression coefficient signals positive influences of hotel website quality on eTrust as predicted in the hypothesis. As such, Hypothesis 1 was supported.

Hypothesis 2 and Hypothesis 3 concerned relationships between perceived performance of high- and low-star rated hotels. Given the dyadic nature of star rating system, this study categorizes the star rated hotels into high and low star rated hotels. Hypothesis 2 posited a positive relationship between the perceived performance of high star rated hotels and eTrust while a negative relationship was proposed between that of low star rated hotels and eTrust. Hypothesis 2 was supported while Hypothesis 3 was not supported. More specifically, when in the case of high star rated hotels, the influence of perceptions of hotel performance upon eTrust was positive. However, when low star rating hotels were involved, such positive impact was not statistically significant.

Hypothesis 4 and Hypothesis 5 related to relationships between perceived ownership-based performance and eTrust. Hypothesis 4 proposed that the degree of

public ownership negatively affects web users' perceived level of eTrust and Hypothesis 5 posited a negative relationship between privately owned hotels and perceived eTrust level. The findings here were interesting. Both types positively influence online users' eTrust perceptions.

Hypothesis 6 proposed that consumers' perceived eTrust level positively affects their online booking intentions. It was hypothesized that eTrust positively influences web users' online purchase intention. Results indicated eTrust has a strong positive effect on purchase intentions. The path coefficient .484 was significant at the 0.01 level. Therefore, Hypothesis 6 was supported.

In summary, the findings statistically supported all hypotheses except Hypothesis 3, which examined relationships between eTrust and consumers' perceived performance of low star rated hotels.

5.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter focused on data analysis, presenting results systematically. As a first step, Chapter 5 examined data to ensure that it did not violate the underlying assumptions of multivariate analysis. Then, it reported the demographic profiles of the respondents. Prior to model testing, the researcher examined reliability and validity of the measurement scales composite reliability, discriminant validity, and convergent validity.

Model testing started with assessing each individual measurement model of constructs of interest, using CFA. The researcher made modifications when necessary, according to literature and modification outputs generated by AMOS. Afterwards, she integrated individual measurement models into an overall measurement model, checking if collected data fit the proposed model well. After ensuring the goodness-of-fit in the overall measurement model, the researcher assessed the structural model examining the proposed relationships. Finally, the proposed hypotheses were revisited to determine whether this research supported them.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Implications

6.1 Chapter Introduction

This research was designed to address the research question “How will perceived hotel website attributes and hotel profiles affect users’ perceived level of eTrust, which then influences online booking intentions?” The context is China’s hotel industry. This final chapter summarizes the findings, and discusses their theoretical and practical implications.

6.2 Interpretations and Discussions of the Research Findings

6.2.1 Identify the underlying dimensions of eTrust in the context of China’s hotel industry.

This study first sought to determine the perceived level of Internet users towards official hotel websites, and then to identify the underlying dimensions of such levels in the hotel industry. As an important construct in relationship marketing, consumer trust has generally been regarded as a crucial factor determining eCommerce success (Jarvenpaa et al.; Lee & Turban 2001). The growing interest in the importance of consumer trust in eCommerce requires a closer examination of its conceptual and statistical dimensions. This study takes an initial step in that direction.

Following the seminal work on relationship marketing, this study first conceptualized eTrust as the positive confidence of consumers in the characteristics of hotel official websites. Then, based on data obtained from Internet users in mainland China, this study validated the proposed measurement scale of eTrust in the hotel industry. Although one empirical study is clearly insufficient in this regard, the results showed that eTrust in this context is multidimensional in its statistical dimensionality.

To contribute to the existing body of knowledge concerning relationship marketing, this study developed and validated an eTrust scale in the service context of the hotel industry. The results of this research have highlighted several important issues. First, the findings confirmed the nature of eTrust in the hotel industry as a tripartite measurement model, which was found to be empirically superior to the alternative models that combined some or all of these dimensions. Such a result is consistent with the previous research findings in other fields. Collectively, the three dimensions of integrity, benevolence, and ability represented the fundamental building blocks of eTrust in the hotel industry.

The first dimension of integrity explained a significant amount of variance in eTrust. Integrity, as previously mentioned, refers to consumer perceptions of the willingness of a hotel to do precisely what they promised on their official websites. To

this extent, Butler and Cantrell (1984) connected integrity to the reputation of the trustee in terms of honesty, whereas Mayer et al. (1995) conceptualized integrity as the belief that the other party would adhere to their promises (Mayer et al., 1995; Yukl & Van Fleet, 1992). Notably, in the context of the current study, the integrity dimension also captured the honesty-related feature of eTrust in the hotel industry. Integrity is cognitive in nature and is more objective based on a rational process. This observation indicated that respondents in this study were relatively mature Internet users. Therefore, during the process of website design, hoteliers need to accentuate the elements that would provoke a sense of security, and then convince consumers that hotel official websites are trustworthy. In other words, hotels need to communicate to their prospective or existing customers that they will adhere to their promises of delivering quality service and products at reasonable prices.

The second dimension of eTrust in the hotel industry is benevolence. Benevolence is the belief that the trustee, aside from making a legitimate profit, would have only positive intentions for customers. Perceived benevolence of eTrust is affective in nature. In other words, this value is based on consumer emotions about the care and concerns displayed by a hotel on its official website. Notably, affective commitment can create a sense of attachment to a hotel website, which would facilitate actions such as frequent

patronage to a website. In this respect, if consumers emotionally feel that hotels were concerned about their interests and welfare, they would be willing to respond to hotel marketing activities, as they affectively trust hotel websites.

An interesting and unexpected finding is that the third dimension of ability seems to have limited impact on constituting eTrust in the hotel industry. The finding may be surprising as quality service has long been discerned as a critical factor in developing consumers trust in the offline and online context (Thom, Hall, & Pawlson, 2004; Ye & Li 2009). Therefore, in the hotel industry, if consumers were to perceive that a hotel website has the expertise to deliver quality services, consumers were more likely to trust the website. This study, therefore, expects a higher weighting of ability in eTrust. This finding is inconsistent with that of previous studies, but is also an interesting phenomenon that calls for exploration in future research.

The value of eTrust in the hotel industry generally refers to the positive expectation of consumers from official hotel websites. More specifically, this expectation covers three aspects: integrity, benevolence, and ability. However, two related but distinctive approaches should be adopted to understand this expectation. First, eTrust relates to the overall cognitive perceptions of consumers regarding hotels in terms of their ability to offer quality service and products as well as to obey rules and regulations to

fulfill their promises. Second, eTrust refers to the affective benefits that consumers perceive they can reap from trusting hotel websites.

Interestingly, the item “Hotel official websites offer the lowest room rates” was deleted from the final measurement scale because of low factor loading. This finding reflects the essence of relationship marketing as the development of sustainable customer relationships that can go beyond providing lower costs and broad product range (see Reichheld & Scheffer 2000). As such, aside from price-related promotion activities, hotels can use their official websites as an effective medium to develop relationships with prospective customers.

6.2.2 Assess the Extent to which eTrust is Influenced by Perceived Importance of Hotel Website Attributes

As mentioned above, the Internet in general, and a hotel’s own website in particular, should be used as a marketing tool with which to attract and retain consumers by developing good relationships with them. A website is usually regarded as the proxy of a physical retail store in consumers’ decision-making processes. Researchers and practitioners have long agreed on the importance of a website in facilitating online transaction and developing long-term relationships. In considering the risks and uncertainties involved in the virtual world, a website should also communicate messages

of trustworthiness to prospective customers. In other fields, such relationships between website attributes and eTrust has been proved while efforts from hotel researchers in this aspect are modest, not mentioning the context of China's domestic tourism. This leads to the second objective of the current study: to identify relationship between perceived importance of hotel website attributes and eTrust.

Prior to examining any causal relationship, this study first delved into the fundamental dimensions of perceived website attributes. Results showed that website attributes that were perceived important by Chinese Internet users represented three perspectives, namely usability, functionality, as well as security and privacy. This implies that to Chinese Internet users, hotel owned websites are not only the information channel but also the transaction platform. Research findings have also suggested that perceived importance of these website attributes together has a significantly positive impact on consumers' perceived eTrust level. Furthermore, the regression coefficient was .521, indicating the substantial explanatory power of hotel website attributes.

6.2.3 Assess the extent to which eTrust is influenced by perceived performance of high and low star rated hotels, respectively.

The third objective of the current study is to examine the influence of perceived performance of high and low star rated hotels on eTrust. The results of structural

relationships supported the proposed positive association between perceptions of high star rated hotels and eTrust while the proposed negative relationship between perceptions of low star rated hotels and eTrust was not statistically supported. This may be attributed to prices of products and services offered by hotels varying across star ratings.

As mentioned above, it is a folk theorem that hotel star rankings are effective signals of service quality that enable hotels to charge premium price (Israeli, 2002). The uncertainty of possible monetary losses among high star hotels could be higher than that of low star hotels, which renders a higher financial risk (Bart et al., 2005). Consumers are aware of this point and consequently they may be alerted when they are asked their perceptions of higher star hotels while remaining less alert in the case of lower star hotels. More importantly in mainland China, hotel rack rates vary tremendously, which range from as low as USD 13 to as high as 4,000, which further increases consumers' concerns over their purchase of services they could not physically examine beforehand. Such findings further confirmed the Chinese consumers' high awareness of hotel's own websites as the transaction platforms through which they book hotel rooms.

6.2.4 Assess the extent to which eTrust is influenced by perceived performance of publicly owned and privately owned hotels respectively.

The issue of ownership is one of the central problems in the negotiation and subsequent use of hotel-management or partnership (Saunders & Renaghan, 1992). In China, most hotels are state-owned and controlled by different government bodies. The ownership system may cause many problems, primarily in creating a situation in which hotels are not profit-conscious. For many existing hotel owners in China, controlling a hotel is usually regarded as more important than generating profits, which is why those in control do not favor franchise or contract management by another party. Reform is regarded as the basic step for hotel chain operation (Pine et al., 2000), which may create a management model for the standardization and branding of China's hotels. Wan and Hu (1998) emphasized ownership restructuring as one of the five necessary aspects of asset restructuring. Reform in the ownership system by the Chinese government has already started. For example, separating assets from the various government agencies and transferring them to holding companies could be a chance to restructure the hotel sector. Given the ubiquitous impacts of hotel ownership upon hotel performance, this study also discussed how it would influence eTrust as part of the third research objective.

It is generally agreed that privately owned hotels, especially those invested and owned by international hotel groups, perform better than their publicly owned counterparts in terms of sales. Therefore, this study proposed that consumers' perceived performance of privately owned hotels would positively affect eTrust while that of public ownership would negatively affect it. However, the results were interesting: perceptions of both publicly and privately ownership positively influence eTrust with indistinctive strength. This may be attributed to the situation that ownership types are not as obvious as other features like star rating, leading to consumers' lower understanding of hotel ownership.

As well, the special situation of China may be a contributing factor. Most respondents in this study were more than 26 years old. These people spent their childhood or youth in 1990s when the country launch the reforms of state-owned entities. At the same time, this group of people also went through times when economy in China was booming and there was a sudden influx of foreign investments. They inherited the legacy of the traditional "iron rice bowl" system while at the same time living and working in the new era that helped them understand the advantages of new economic systems. However, their perceptions of ownership types did not weigh that much in

forming their trustworthiness towards either type of hotels as both regression coefficients were low.

6.2.5 Assess the effects of perceived eTrust upon online booking intentions.

In discussing roles of eTrust, it is common to integrating the concept into a research model and then analyze it statistically. Researchers frequently adopt the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) for this purpose. Van der Heijden et al. (2003) analyzed influencing factors of online purchase intentions, which included consumer trust. Zhu et al. (2009) developed a TAM-based model of consumer trust and their research proved the significant impacts of trust, perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, and perceived risk upon consumers' purchase intentions. Adopting this approach, this study established a sixth objective to assess the extent to which perceived eTrust could influence consumers' online purchase intentions in the context of China's hotel industry. This study has confirmed that consumers' perceived eTrust is positively associated with their purchase intentions in the context of China's hotel industry.

6.3 Theoretical Implications

In recent years, new technologies have advanced applications of marketing principles, one of which is the profoundly revolutionized exercises of hotel websites. Currently, hotel websites have been developed into a more dynamic platform on which a

mixture of informational, transactional, and relational strategies could be implemented (Escobar-Rodríguez & Carvajal-Trujill, 2013). For this reason, online relationship marketing is increasingly a topic of interest to hospitality literature, many of which have examined the functional aspect by discussing components to be integrated into hotel websites (e.g., Schmidt, Cantalops, & dos Santos, 2008) and little attention has been given to more comprehensive relationship marketing concept like consumer trust. The current study contributes to the body of knowledge in several different manners.

Given the impacts of cultural settings upon understanding of consumer trust, this study for the first time developed a context-specific conceptual model, which includes antecedent and consequent variables. It differs from prior studies in which the concept of trust was integrated into an existing model. In this research, based on related literature, especially the TRA and TAM, it constituted a model in a novel context and empirically testified it. Such efforts not only offer new insights into this often discussed topic but also provide a starting point for studying it in China's business context. More specifically, the central contribution is it formulates the measurement scale of eTrust in the context of China's hotel industry, validity and reliability of which were statistically testified. Same as findings of prior studies in the Western context, statistical results in this study supported the multi-dimensional solution of eTrust in the hotel industry, which was found

to be empirically superior to the alternative and less restrictive models that combined some or all of these dimensions.

Collectively, the three dimensions of integrity, benevolence, and ability represented the fundamental building blocks of eTrust in the hotel industry. More specifically, eTrust relates to the overall cognitive perceptions of consumers regarding hotels in terms of their ability to offer quality service and products as well as obey rules and regulations to fulfill their promises. At the same time, eTrust regards the affective benefits that consumers perceive they can reap from trusting hotel websites. However, an interesting and unexpected finding comes from the third dimension of ability, which seems to have limited impacts upon eTrust formation in the hotel industry. The finding may be surprising as quality service has long been discerned as a critical factor in developing consumers trust in the offline and online context (e.g. Thom et al., 2004; Ye & Li, 2009).

As mentioned above, conceptual model of this study was developed within the broad framework of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), which postulated that beliefs lead to attitudes, behavioral intentions, and afterwards behaviors (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). More specifically, this framework is an extension of the initial Trust Building Model (TBM) proposed by McKnight et al. (1998), while it also takes into consideration

of findings from other relevant studies like Wakefield, Stocks, and Wilder (2004). Particularly, in this model, perceptions of hotel official websites, hotel star rating, and hotel ownership in terms of their performance were designated as the antecedent variables and online booking intentions was the consequent variable. To the researcher's knowledge, this study was one of the few attempts to quantify variables related to hotel ownership and star rating in China as relevant studies were mainly in a qualitative manner (e.g., Heung, Zhang, & Jiang, 2008; Yu & Gu, 2005), not mentioning the examination of their roles as antecedent variables in a structural models. In this manner, this study offers new insights into understanding China's hotel industry.

Overall, the proposed model showed acceptable model fit and it offers theoretical insights into understanding consumer trust in a novel context. As to the inter-variable relationships, this study found the perceived importance of hotel website attributes was a strong predictor of eTrust, which is consistent with findings from previous studies. Differently, in discussing eTrust in the hotel industry, features of hotels should be considered as this study also discovered they were also predictive of consumer trust towards hotels' official websites.

6.4 Practical Implications

For hoteliers, this research found that respondents generally had a higher perceived trust level toward official hotel websites, although some items received mean values lower than 5. Additionally, findings revealed that the dimensions of eTrust in the hotel industry are not equally important. Expanding on the above findings, this study suggests that different eTrust dimensions would influence its consequent variables differently. In the hotel industry domain, the dimension of integrity is important to online hotel bookings. In such an interaction, consumers are mainly concerned that hotel websites may not fulfill the expectations based on their statements and, to a lesser degree, may not really care about the customer. Furthermore, the aspect of ability is less important, indicating that the competence of hotel websites in conducting business online is somewhat a minor issue once the customer has decided to book a hotel room. This finding may be attributed to the observation that prices offered on hotel websites are lower than offers on third-party websites.

One thing worth noting here is that as all three dimensions rest on consumer perceptions of the official websites of the hotels. This study recommends that hotels in China can improve their online performance through more efficient online communication, which is a factor in building consumer trust. Communication is

information exchange and sharing between merchants and customers should be either formal or informal (Sin et al. 2006). In the context of relationship marketing, meaningful and timely communication can foster trust as it could solve debates and match expectations and perceptions (Sin et al. 2006). In discussing the working partnerships of distributor and manufacturer firms, Anderson and Narus (1990) found that good communication facilitates the formation of cooperation and trust. In a service-oriented economy, Sin et al. (2006) discovered that communication was a strong predictor of trust as it explained more than 60 percent of the total variance. This finding suggests that to gain consumer trust towards official websites of hotels, hoteliers should communicate timely and accurate information on their websites in a credible manner. Additionally, more attempts should be devoted to establishing commitment or dedication to relationships with customers. Furthermore, to show consideration for customer interests, hotels should use their websites to seek customer feedback.

The findings of this study should be interpreted in the light of its cultural context. As previously mentioned, two phases of sampling were conducted in mainland China. In Asia, especially in the Chinese context, culture is significantly influenced by Confucianism, which promotes harmony through a set of guidelines at all levels of relationships (Miao, Adler, & Xu 2011). Hence, Chinese culture has a significant impact

on business management (Chen & Miller, 2010), which has generated an “emerging Chinese way of management” or “Confucian management” (Ritcher, 2002. quoted from Miao et al. 2011, p. 532). Such a cultural context emphasizes *guanxi* or relationship in business dealings, which enhances the function of relationship marketing in market-based situations while diluting the importance of marketing orientation (Sin et al., 2006). Furthermore, the past several decades have witnessed severe food safety scandals, which not only resulted in the distrust of Chinese consumers in the food system, but also in the ethical norms of merchants (Ortega et al. 2011). This finding may partially explain why the eTrust dimensions of integrity and benevolence outweigh that of ability.

6.5 Limitations

This research used both qualitative and quantitative approaches in examining Internet users’ perceived eTrust level toward hotels’ own websites, its influencing factors, as well as its impacts upon consumers’ online booking intentions. In a bid to find solutions to research issues, the researcher devoted great efforts to develop a highly justifiable research design. Nevertheless, there still exist some limitations, identification of which would provide some useful assumptions for future research efforts.

The first limitation comes from the data collection method of online survey. In acknowledging various pros, there are also some issues of conducting Internet-based

survey. Instant communications between investigators and respondents could be denied due to the absence of interviews, which accordingly may negatively statistical results. Due to the fast response time and high efficiency of an online survey (Schleyer & Forrest, 2000), the researcher collected 423 and 822 questionnaire for the pilot test and main survey in less than a month, respectively. In this manner, data in the current study mainly reflected respondents' opinions at a specific time point. In the area of service marketing, relationship marketing is "the process of attracting, maintaining, and enhancing relationships with customers and other constituents that have an interest in the company's business" (Bai et al., p. 33). Following this, studies of relationship marketing concepts like consumer trust emphasize its dynamic nature (e.g. Koufaris & Hampton-Sosa, 2004). Therefore, studies of consumer trust generally consider trust as an experience-based concept, which would change when they gain more information from another party (Eastlick & Lotz, 2009). This study does not consider respondents' past experience of visiting and using hotels' official websites, which may hinder the reliability and validity of research findings obtained.

Additionally, this research aimed at measuring perceived eTrust level towards hotels' own websites. Main findings are from statistical analysis of data generated in the forms of online questionnaires, which are less effective in capturing underlying concepts

of people's subjective attitudes than interactive interviews are. Interactive interviews can use synchronous communications (Opdenakker, 2006). At the same time, this study investigates consumers' perceptions towards hotel owned websites in a general manner. Hotel official websites vary because of the available resources and expertise of hotel marketers at a national level. Hence, implications offered could not be specific enough to guide hoteliers in building up trusting relationship with customers.

Another limitation of this study there is discrepancy between the demographic structure of respondents in this study and that of the CNNIC report on Internet development in China. The CNNIC report suggested that university graduates are a small proportion of the Internet population in China, a group of which was the overwhelming majority in the current study. This may influence the values of re-conceptualizing consumer trust in a novel cultural context.

Another limitation is about the operationalization of measuring variables of interests, especially China's hotel ownership and star rating systems. As to hotel ownership types, the researcher took a cue from previous researchers and divided the complicated ownership system, which consists of nine types, into two categories of public ownership and private ownership. Although to some extent such a division is justifiable, treating all non-state ownership types as a one type of private ownership

would deter obtaining further details about Chinese Internet users' perceptions of hotel ownerships. This is because opposite to state ownership, there are eight distinct types including foreign invested hotels and Hong Kong, Macau or Taiwan invested hotels. Hotels funded by outside investors, specifically those affiliated with international hotel chains, are superior to those independent ones in aspects of management expertise, technology, and reservations (Pine & Qi, 2004). It is not surprising that consumers are aware of this discrepancy and may form different perceptions of hotel performance according to whether a hotel is part of an international chain. This is even true when it comes to the constant combination of management types and ownership structures (e.g. Jiang et al., 2014), with the former being more conspicuous than the latter. This also applies to the categorization of equally complicated star rating system.

Lastly, this study aims to examine the impacts of selected factors upon eTrust, which is at the same time the antecedent variable of online booking intention. More specifically, based on the literature, this study integrated variables of perceived importance of website attributes, perceived performance across hotel profiles (i.e. hotel star rating system and hotel ownership) into the conceptual models and treated them as antecedents of eTrust. Wray (2005) suggested that “only by narrowing down their area of research, and thus a new specialty, are scientist able to effectively manage the

continuously growing literature” (p.153). This study does not consider impacts from other potential factors and the possible interrelationships among these influencing factors (i.e. hotel website attributes, star rating, and hotel ownership). For example, statistical analysis showed that the correlation index between perceived importance of website attributes and perceived performance of high star rated hotels was .174, though the correlation value between website attribute and low star rating performance was not statistically significant. Therefore, there is a chance that the impacts of these two variables upon eTrust would be influenced by the correlations among them, which was not controlled in this current study.

6.7 Future Research Directions

Based on research findings and limitations, this study identified several areas which need the attention of future researchers. To begin with, the vast majority of trust studies have been conducted in the Western context. To the author’s knowledge, China’s hotel industry has been largely neglected despite the booming eTourism industry in the mainland China. This is one of the motives for conducting the current research. For the prime purpose, it articulates the eTrust formation by examining its influencing factors as well as its consequent variable of consumers’ purchase intention within China’s hotel industry. Consequently, future researchers could build on the findings obtained and

continue examining mechanisms of eTrust as consumers accumulate their usage experience of a certain hotel website.

As noted, online questionnaires to collect data limits research because it precludes spontaneous interactions between investigators and respondents. Face-to-face interviews can avoid this potential problem. As such, future research discussing similar issues can use more qualitative research techniques to lower the bias and elicit more information from consumers.

While acknowledging the usefulness of the official rating systems in informing consumers of the services and facilities of a hotel, the Internet in general, and the Web 2.0 technology in particular, enabled the nonofficial rating systems (Leung, Lee, & Law, 2011). In today's market, travelers can give feedback to a hotel and disseminate it in the online community at exponential speed. Researchers generally agreed that such informal rating systems are more predictive and convincing in influencing consumers' intention to purchase products in the hospitality and tourism industries, compared to reviews posted by professional editors (Zhang et al., 2010). Furthermore, such user generated online reviews in the numeric form constitute a good alternative to the conventional hotel star rating system (Su & Sun, 2007). Sometimes, such online rating system is more comprehensive as it includes criteria employed in the traditional evaluation system.

A study conducted by Hensens et al. (2010) identified that criteria used in online hotel rating systems covered three aspects, one of which overlapped with the tradition rating system in referring to hotel facilities and services. The other two aspects concerned consumers' subjective judgment and their interpretations of their personal experiences. Given the high penetration of the Internet and consumers' reliance on online channels for information about hotels and destinations, it would be reasonable to argue that consumers' ratings of hotels could influence eTrust in the context of hotel industry. As such, future researchers can gain more insights into the formation mechanism of eTrust by including consumer generated online rating in the conceptual mode.

6.8 Chapter Summary

To highlight how research issues were solved, the researcher conducted a comparison of obtained findings to relevant research results in other fields, especially literature from established disciplines. The section afterwards presents with main findings, implications for theory building, and suggestions for industry practices. Finally, the researcher pointed out the limitations of this study and suggested some directions for future researchers who would be interested in this topic.

In brief, this work provides a structure for understanding the components of eTrust and its influencing factors on Internet users' online purchase intentions in the

context of China's hotel industry. Based on related literature and in-depth interviews, this study proposed a conceptual framework including variables of interest as a first step in understating how to build trustworthy relationships with potential and existing customers via official hotel websites. The researcher built this model from theory and empirical research, providing it as a foundation for future research.

Appendix I Questionnaire (First Version in English)



Web users' perceived eTrust level toward hotel websites

Dear Sir/Madam:

This survey is a part of a PhD study which aims to examine consumers' perceptions of eTrust towards hotel official websites in China and its influencing factors.

It should take about **5 minutes** to complete this questionnaire. All information will be kept strictly confidential and will be used for research purpose only.

Thank you for your participation and cooperation!

Qualifying Question:

1. Have you ever purchased anything online in the past 12 months?

Yes (Please proceed to Question 2) No (End of the survey, thank you for your participation)

2. Have you ever stayed at least a hotel in the past 12 months?

Yes (Please proceed to Section 1) No (End of the survey, thank you for your participation)

Section 1 Perceptions of Hotel Website Attributes

This section aims to understand the importance of hotel website quality (including website functionality and website usability) from website users' perspective on a seven-point Likert Scale. Please indicate the importance of each dimension based on your perceptions.

	Very important	Important	Somewhat important	neutral	unimportant	Somewhat unimportant	Very unimportant
Hotel reservation information	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Hotel facilities information	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Hotel surrounding area information	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Privacy policy	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

Security information	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	Very important	Important	Somewhat important	neutral	unimportant	Somewhat unimportant	Very unimportant
Language	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Layout	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Graphics	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Navigation	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

Section 2 Hotel Profiles

Please indicate the extent of agreement with the following statements relating to hotel profiles.

Hotel Profiles

Hotel Star Rating	Strongly agree	agree	Somewhat agree	neutral	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
I think hotels with higher star rankings can provide better service	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
I think hotels with higher star rankings can better meet my needs	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
I think hotels with higher star rankings are more professional	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

Hotel Ownership

	Strongly agree	agree	Somewhat agree	neutral	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Compared to other hotels, I think state-owned hotels can provide better service	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Compared to other hotels, I think state-owned hotels can better meet my needs	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Compared to other hotels, I think state-owned hotels are more professional	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Compared to other hotels, I think privately-owned hotels (including civilian-run and foreign-invested) can provide better service	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Compared to other hotels, I think privately-owned hotels (including civilian-run and foreign-invested) can better meet my needs	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

Compared to other hotels, I think privately-owned hotels are more professional	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Section 3: eTrust Level

Please indicate the extent of agreement with the following statements relating to the perceived level of eTrust towards hotel websites.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Hotel official websites have the necessary abilities to handle sales transactions on the Internet	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Hotel official websites have sufficient expertise to do business on the Internet	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Most hotel official websites have a good reputation	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Designs of hotel official websites take consumers' needs into consideration	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Hotel official websites are professional	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Hotel official websites keep customers' interests in mind	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Recommendations on hotel official websites are made for mutual interests	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Hotel official websites do not deceive customers	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Hotel official websites provide information in an honest way	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Hotel official websites do not make false statements	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
All in all, I trust hotel official websites	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

Section 4: Online Purchase Intentions

Please indicate the extent of agreement with the following statements relating to online purchase intention.

	Strongly agree	agree	Somewhat agree	neutral	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
I am willing to book hotel rooms from hotel websites	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
It is likely that I will book hotel rooms from hotel websites in the near future	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

Section 5: Profiles

1. Gender
 [1] Male [2] Female
2. Age
 [1] 18-25 [2] 26-35 [3] 36-45
 [4] 46-55 [5] 56-65 [6] 66+
3. Education
 [1] less than secondary/high school
 [2] completed secondary/high school
 [3] completed college/university diploma/ degree
 [4] completed postgraduate degree
4. Your monthly income (RMB)
 [1] 3,000 and below [2] 3,001-6,000
 [3] 6,001-9,000 [4] 9,001-12,000
 [5] 12,001 and above
5. Your occupation Please specify_____
6. In the past 12 months, how many times have you travelled?
 [1] Less than 3 times [2] 3-7 times
 [3] More than 7 times
7. How many nights did you stay in your most recent travel? Please specify_____
8. Who do you usually travel with?
 [1] Family members and relatives [2] Friends
 [3] Travel alone [4] Others (please specify)_____
9. What is your main purpose of travelling?
 [1] Vacation/leisure [2] Business/meeting
 [3] Visiting friends and relatives [4] Others (please specify)_____
10. Have you ever booked rooms from hotel websites (e.g., official website of Shangri-La) in the past 12 months?
 [1] Yes [2] No
11. How much time on average do you spend on the Internet per day? Please specify_____
12. When did you start using the Internet? Please specify the year _____

Questionnaire ends here and thank you very much!

Appendix II Questionnaire (First Version in Chinese)



网民对酒店网站信任水平调查

尊敬的女士/先生：

您好！非常感谢您参与本次的问卷调查！

此调查是本人博士课题的一部分，其目的是研究网民对于酒店官方网站的信任水平。整份问卷大约需要 5 分钟左右完成。所有资料绝对保密并仅供学术研究之用，请您放心作答！

感谢您的支持与合作！

筛选问题：

1. 请问在过去的 12 个月，您是否有网购的经历？

[1] 是（转至第二题）

[2] 否（停止调查，感谢您的参与）

2. 请问在过去的 12 个月，您是否住过酒店？

[1] 是（转至第一部分）

[2] 否（停止调查，感谢您的参与）

第一部分 酒店网站质量感知

本部分是通过李克特七级量表，了解网站使用者对酒店官方网站质量（包括功能性和可用性）的认知。请根据您的看法，请指出各维度的重要性。

功能性因子	非常重要	重要	有些重要	中立	有些不重要	不重要	非常不重要
酒店预订信息	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
酒店设施信息	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
酒店周边地区的信 息	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
隐私政策	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
交易安全信息	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
可用性因子	非常重要	重要	有些重要	中立	有些不重要	不重要	非常不重要
语言	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
版面	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
图画	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
导航	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

第二部分 酒店特征

请指出您对以下关于酒店特征表述的同意程度。

酒店星级

非常同意

同

有些

中

有些不

不

非常

		非常同意	同意	中立	有些不同意	不同意	非常不同意
我认为星级越高的酒店，服务越好	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
我认为星级越高的酒店，能更好地满足我的需求	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
我认为星级越高的酒店，更加专业	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
酒店所有制							
相较于其他酒店，我认为国有酒店的服务更好	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
相较于其他酒店，我认为国有酒店能更好地满足我的需求	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
相较于其他酒店，我认为国有酒店更加专业	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
相较于其他酒店，我认为私营酒店（包括民营和外资酒店）的服务更好	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
相较于其他酒店，我认为私营酒店（包括民营和外资酒店）能更好地满足我的需求	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
相较于其他酒店，我认为私营酒店（包括民营和外资酒店）更加专业	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

第三部分 在线信任水平

请指出您对以下关于在线信任水平表述的同意程度。

	非常同意	同意	有些同意	中立	有些不同意	不同意	非常不同意
酒店官方网站有相应的能力处理在线交易	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
酒店官方网站有足够的专业技能进行在线经营	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
大部分的酒店官方网站都有良好的声誉	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
酒店官方网站的设计考虑了顾客的需求	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
酒店官方网站很专业	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
酒店官方网站会考虑顾客的利益	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
酒店官方网站的在线推荐是在互惠互利的基础上而做出的	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
酒店官方网站不会欺骗顾客	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
酒店官方网站所提供的信息是真实的	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
酒店官方网站不会发表虚假声明	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
总体来说，我信任酒店官方网站	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

第四部分 在线购买意向

请指出您对以下关于在线购买意愿表述的同意程度。

	非常同意	同意	有些同意	中立	有些不同意	不同意	非常不同意
在线购买意向							
我愿意在酒店官方网站上预订酒店客	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

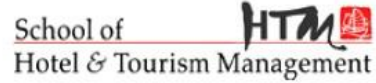
房
近期内,我可能会在我酒店官方网站上预订酒店客房

第五部分:基本信息

- 1.性别
[1]男 [2]女
- 2.年龄
[1]18-25 [2]26-35 [3]36-45 [4]46-55 [5]56岁及以上
- 3.请问您的文化程度是:
[1]初中及以下 [2]高中(含中专,技
校) [3]大专或大学本科
[4]硕士及以上
- 4.您的平均月收入(单位:人民币):
[1]3,000 及 3,000 以
下 [2]3,001-6,000 [3]6,001-9,000 [4]9,001-12,000
[5]12,001 及以上
- 5.您的职业是(请注明) _____
- 6.在过去的12个月中,您的出游次数是:
[1]少于3次 [2]3-7次 [3]多于7次
- 7.您最近一次出游停留的天数是:(请注明) _____
- 8.您通常出游的同伴是:
[1]家人和亲戚 [2]朋友 [3]独自出游 [4]其他(请注明) _____
- 9.你出游的主要目的是:
[1]休闲度假 [2]公务出差/会议 [3]探亲访友 [4]其他(请注明) _____
- 10.在过去的12个月中,您是否曾通过酒店网站(如香格里拉大酒店官网)预订过酒店客房?
[1]是 [2]否
- 11 您平均每天花多长时间上网?(请注明) _____
- 12 您什么时候开始接触互联网?(请注明年份) _____

问卷到此结束,谢谢!

Appendix III Questionnaire (Second Version in Chinese)



网民对酒店官方网站信任水平调查

尊敬的女士/先生:

您好!

此调查是研究中国网民对于酒店官方网站的信任水平及其影响因素。整份问卷大约需要 5 分钟左右完成。所有资料绝对保密并仅供学术研究之用, 请您放心作答!

感谢您的参与和合作!

筛选问题:

1. 请问在过去的 12 个月, 您是否有网购的经历?

[1] 是 (请继续)

[2] 否 (停止调查, 感谢您的参与)

2. 请问在过去的 12 个月, 您是否住过酒店?

[1] 是 (请继续)

[2] 否 (停止调查, 感谢您的参与)

第一部分 酒店网站质量感知

请指出下列因素在您预订酒店房间时的重要程度。

	非常重 要	重 要	有些重 要	中 立	有些不 重要	不重 要	非常不 重要
酒店预订信息	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
酒店设施信息	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
促销活动或精选优惠的信息	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
酒店客房的价格信息	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
酒店所在地的信息	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
关于顾客个人资料的隐私政策	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
安全在线支付系统的信息	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
第三方认证信息	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
清晰的文字表达	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
易懂的信息	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
用户友好的版面	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
条理清晰的信息	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
与网页文字内容匹配的图片	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
简单易用的网站导航 (如菜单目录 或站内地图)	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

第二部分 酒店特征

请指出您对以下关于酒店特征表述的同意程度。

		非常同意	同意	有些同意	中立	有些不同意	不同意	非常不同意
我认为星级越高的酒店（豪华酒店，五星，和四星）	服务越好	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	能更好地满足我的需求	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	更加专业	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	更加专业	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
我认为国营酒店	服务更好	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	能更好地满足我的需求	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	更加专业	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	更加专业	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
我认为私营酒店（包括民营和外资酒店）	的服务更好	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	能更好地满足我的需求	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	更加专业	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	更加专业	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

第三部分 在线信任水平

请指出您对以下关于在线信任水平表述的同意程度。

	非常同意	同意	有些同意	中立	有些不同意	不同意	非常不同意
酒店官方网站有相应的能力处理在线交易	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
酒店官方网站有足够的专业技能进行在线经营	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
酒店官方网站有足够的资源进行在线经营	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
我认为酒店官方网站有足够的知识来管理在线业务	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
大部分的酒店官方网站都有良好的声誉	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
酒店官方网站的设计考虑了顾客的需求	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
酒店官方网站很专业	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
酒店官方网站会考虑顾客的利益	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
酒店官方网站的在线推荐是在互惠互利的基础上而做出的	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
酒店官方网站不会欺骗顾客	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
酒店官方网站会履行已做出的各项承诺	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
酒店官方网站所提供的信息是真实的	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
我对酒店官方网站所做出的承诺有信心	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
酒店官方网站不会发表虚假声明	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
总体来说，我信任酒店官方网站	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

第四部分 在线购买意向

请指出您对以下关于在线购买意愿表述的同意程度。

在线购买意向 非常同 同 有些同 中 有些不 不同 非常不

	意	意	意	立	同意	意	同意
我愿意在酒店官方网站上预订酒店客房	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
我打算在酒店官方网站上预订酒店客房	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
近期内,我可能会在我酒店官方网站上预订酒店客房	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

第五部分：基本信息

1. 性别 [1] 男 [2] 女
2. 年龄 [1] 18岁以下 [2] 18-25岁 [3] 26-35岁 [4] 36-45岁 [5] 46-55岁 [6] 56-65岁 [7] 66岁或以上
3. 学历: [1] 初中或以下 [2] 已完成高中(含中专,技校)
[3] 已完成大专或大学本科 [4] 已完成硕士或以上
4. 您的平均月收入(单位:人民币): [1] 3,000 或以下 [2] 3,001-6,000
[3] 6,001-9,000 [4] 9,001-12,000 [5] 12,001 或以上
[6] 没有收入/不愿回答
5. 在过去的 12 个月中, 您的出游次数是:
[1] 少于 3 次 [2] 3-7 次 [3] 多于 7 次
6. 您最近一次出游停留的天数是: (请注明) _____
7. 您通常出游的同伴是: [1] 家人或亲戚 [2] 朋友
[3] 独自出游 [4] 其他 (请注明) _____
8. 您平常出游的主要目的是: [1] 休闲度假 [2] 公务出差/会议
[3] 探亲访友 [4] 其他 (请注明) _____
9. 在过去的 12 个月中, 您是否曾通过中国的酒店官方网站 (如香格里拉大酒店官网) 预订过酒店客房?
[1] 是 [2] 否
10. 您平均每天花多长时间上网? (请注明) _____
- 11 您接触互联网的时间 (请注明) _____ (年)

Appendix IV Questionnaire (Second Version in English)



Web users' perceived eTrust level toward hotel official websites

Dear Madam / Sir:

This survey aims to examine web users' perceptions of eTrust towards **hotel official websites** in China and their influencing factors.

It should take about **5 minutes** to complete this questionnaire. All information will be kept strictly confidential and will be used for research purpose only.

Thank you for your participation and cooperation!

Qualifying Question:

1. Have you ever purchased anything online in the past 12 months?

1 Yes (Please proceed)

2 No (End of the survey, thank you for your participation)

2. Have you ever stayed at one or more hotels in the past 12 months?

1 Yes (Please proceed)

2 No (End of the survey, thank you for your participation)

Section 1 Perceptions of Hotel Website Attributes

Please indicate the importance of hotel official website quality in booking hotels rooms online.

	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Neutral	Somewhat Unimportant	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
Hotel reservation information	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Hotel facilities information	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Information of promotions/special offers	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Information of destinations where hotels are located	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Privacy policy relating to customers' personal data	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Information of secured online payment system	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Texts of brevity	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

User-friendly layout	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Graphics matched with texts	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Simple website navigation (e.g. menu or site map)	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

Section 2 Hotel Profiles

Please indicate the extent of agreement with the following statements relating to hotel profiles.

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I think hotels with higher star ratings (luxurious, 5-star, and 4-star hotels)	can provide better service	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	can better meet my needs	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	are more professional	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
I think state owned hotels	can provide better service	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	can better meet my needs	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	are more professional	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
I think privately-owned hotels (including civilian-run and foreign-invested hotels)	can provide better service	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	can better meet my needs	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	are more professional	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	can better meet my needs	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	are more professional	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

Section 3: eTrust Level

Please indicate the extent of agreement with the following statements relating to the perceived level of eTrust towards hotel websites.

Strongly Agree Somewhat Neutral Somewhat Disagree Strongly

	Agree		t Agree		t Disagree		Disagree
	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Hotel official websites have the necessary abilities to handle sales transactions on the Internet							
Hotel official websites have sufficient expertise to do business on the Internet	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Hotel official websites have sufficient resources to do business on the Internet	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Hotel official websites have adequate knowledge to manage their business on the Internet	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Most hotel official websites have a good reputation	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Designs of hotel official websites take consumers' needs into consideration	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Hotel official websites are professional	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Hotel official websites keep customers' interests in mind	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Recommendations on hotel official websites are made for mutual interests	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Hotel official websites do not deceive customers	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Hotel official websites fulfill	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

commitments they made

Hotel official websites provide information in an honest way	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
I have confidence on promises made by hotel official websites	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Hotel official websites do not make false statements	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
All in all, I trust hotel official websites	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

Section 4: Online Purchase Intention

Please indicate the extent of agreement with the following statements relating to online purchase intention.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am willing to book hotel rooms from hotel websites	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
I plan to book hotel rooms from hotel websites	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
It is likely that I will book hotel rooms from hotel websites in the near future	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

Section 5: Demographic Profiles

- Gender
 - [1] Male [2] Female
- Age
 - [1] Less than 18 [2] 18-25 [3] 26-35
 - [4] 36-45 [5] 46-55 [6] 56-65
 - [7] 66 or above
- Education
 - [1] less than secondary/high school
 - [2] completed secondary/high school
 - [3] completed college/university diploma/ degree
 - [4] completed postgraduate degree
- Your average monthly income (RMB)
 - [1] 3,000 or below [2] 3,001-6,000
 - [3] 6,001-9,000 [4] 9,001-12,000
 - [5] 12,001 or above [6] No salary/ refuse to answer
- Your occupation
 - Please specify _____
- In the past 12 months, how many times have you travelled?

- [1] Less than 3 times [2] 3-7 times
[3] More than 7 times
7. How many days did you travel in your most recent trip? Please specify_____
8. Who do you usually travel with?
[1] Family members or relatives [2] Friends
[3] Travel alone [4] Others (please specify)_____
9. What is your usual purpose of travelling?
[1] Vacation/leisure [2] Business/Conference
[3] Visiting friends or relatives
[4] Others (please specify)_____
10. Have you ever booked a room from a hotel official website in China (e.g., official website of Shangri-La) in the past 12 months?
[1] Yes [2] No
11. How much time on average do you spend on the Internet per day? Please specify_____
12. When did you start using the Internet? Please specify the year _____

—————*Questionnaire ends here and thank you very much!*—————

Appendix V Questionnaire (Third Version in English)



Web users' perceived eTrust level toward hotel official websites

Dear Madam / Sir:

This survey aims to examine web users' perceived level of eTrust towards **hotel official websites** in China and its influencing factors.

It should take about **5 minutes** to complete this questionnaire. All information will be kept strictly confidential and will be used for research purpose only.

Thank you for your participation and cooperation!

Qualifying Question:

1. Have you ever purchased anything online in the past 12 months?

Yes (Please proceed)

No (End of the survey, thank you for your participation)

2. Have you ever stayed at one or more hotels in the past 12 months?

Yes (Please proceed)

No (End of the survey, thank you for your participation)

Section 1 Perceptions of Hotel Website Quality

Please indicate the importance of hotel official website quality in booking hotels rooms online.

	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Neutral	Somewhat Unimportant	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
Hotel reservation information	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Hotel facilities information	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Information of promotions/special offers	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Information of destinations where hotels are located	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Privacy policy relating to	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

customers' personal data								
Information of secured online payment system	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
Texts of brevity	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
User-friendly layout	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
Graphics matched with texts	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
Simple website navigation (e.g. menu or site map)	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	

Section 2 Hotel Profiles

Please indicate the extent of agreement with the following statements relating to hotel profiles.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutra	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I think hotels with higher star ratings (luxurious, 5-star, and 4-star hotels)	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
can provide better service	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
can better meet my needs	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
are more professional	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
I think hotels with lower star ratings (1-star, 2-star, 3-star, and economic hotels)	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
can provide better service	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
can better meet my needs	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
are more professional	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
I think state owned hotels	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
can provide better service	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
can better meet my needs	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
are more professional	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
I think privately-owned hotels (including civilian-run and foreign-invested hotels)	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
can provide better service	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
can better meet my needs	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
are more professional	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

Section 3: eTrust Level

Please indicate the extent of agreement with the following statements relating to the perceived level of eTrust towards hotel websites.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	----------------	---------	-------------------	----------	-------------------

Hotel official websites have the necessary abilities to handle sales transactions on the Internet	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Hotel official websites have sufficient expertise to do business on the Internet	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Hotel official websites have sufficient resources to do business on the Internet	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Hotel official websites have adequate knowledge to manage their business on the Internet	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Most hotel official websites have a good reputation	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Designs of hotel official websites take consumers' needs into consideration	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Hotel official websites are professional	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Hotel official websites keep customers' interests in mind	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Recommendations on hotel official websites are made for mutual interests	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Hotel official websites do not deceive customers	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Hotel official websites fulfill commitments they made	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Hotel official websites provide information in an honest way	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
I have confidence on promises made by hotel official websites	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Hotel official websites do not make false statements	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
All in all, I trust hotel official websites	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

Section 4: Online Purchase Intention

Please indicate the extent of agreement with the following statements relating to online purchase intention.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am willing to book hotel rooms from hotel websites	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
I plan to book hotel rooms from hotel websites	7̄	6̄	5̄	4̄	3̄	2̄	1̄
It is likely that I will book hotel rooms from hotel websites the next 12 months	7̄	6̄	5̄	4̄	3̄	2̄	1̄
It is possible that I will book hotel rooms from hotel websites the next 12 months	7̄	6̄	5̄	4̄	3̄	2̄	1̄

Section 5: Demographic Profiles

- 13. Gender [1] Male [2] Female
- 14. Age [1] Less than 18 [2] 18-25 [3] 26-35
[4] 36-45 [5] 46-55 [6] 56-65
[7] 66 or above
- 15. Education [1] less than secondary/high school
[2] completed secondary/high school
[3] completed college/university diploma/ degree
[4] completed postgraduate degree
- 16. Your average monthly income (RMB) [1] 3,000 or below [2] 3,001-6,000
[3] 6,001-9,000 [4] 9,001-12,000
[5] 12,001 or above [6] No salary/ refuse to answer
- 17. Your occupation Please specify_____
- 18. In the past 12 months, how many times have you travelled?
[1] Less than 3 times [2] 3-7 times
[3] More than 7 times
- 19. How many days did you travel in your most recent trip? Please specify_____
- 20. Who do you usually travel with?
[1] Family members or relatives [2] Friends
[3] Travel alone [4] Others (please specify)_____
- 21. What is your usual purpose of travelling?
[1] Vacation/leisure [2] Business/Conference
[3] Visiting friends or relatives
[4] Others (please specify)_____
- 22. Have you ever booked a room from a hotel official website in China (e.g., official website of Shangri-La) in the past 12 months?
[1] Yes [2] No

23. How much time on average do you spend on the Internet per day? Please specify_____
24. When did you start using the Internet? Please specify the year _____

—————*Questionnaire ends here and thank you very much!*—————

Appendix VI Questionnaire (Third Version in Chinese)



网民对酒店官方网站信任水平调查

尊敬的女士/先生:

您好!

此调查是研究中国网民对于**酒店官方网站**的信任水平及其影响因素。整份问卷大约需要**5分钟**左右完成。所有资料绝对保密并仅供学术研究之用, 请您放心作答!

感谢您的参与和合作!

筛选问题:

1. 请问在过去的 12 个月, 您是否有网购的经历?

[1] 是 (请继续)

[2] 否 (停止调查, 感谢您的参与)

2. 请问在过去的 12 个月, 您是否住过酒店?

[1] 是 (请继续)

[2] 否 (停止调查, 感谢您的参与)

第一部分 酒店网站质量感知

请指出下列因素在您预订酒店房间时的重要程度。

	非常重要	重要	有些重要	中立	有些不重要	不重要	非常重要
酒店预订信息	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
酒店设施信息	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
促销活动或精选优惠的信息	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
酒店客房的价格信息	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
酒店所在地的信息	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
关于开顾客个人资料的隐私政策	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
安全在线支付系统的信息	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
第三方认证信息	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
清晰的文字表达	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
易懂的信息	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
用户友好的版面	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
条理清晰的信息	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
与网页文字内容匹配的图片	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
简单易用的网站导航 (如菜单目录或站内地图)	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

第二部分 酒店特征

请指出您对以下关于酒店特征表述的同意程度。

		非常同意	同意	有些同意	中立	有些不同意	不同意	非常不同意
我认为星级越高的酒店（豪华酒店，五星，和四星）	服务越好	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	能更好地满足我的需求	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	更加专业	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
我认为星级越低的酒店（一星，二星，三星，和经济型酒店）	服务越好	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	能更好地满足我的需求	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	更加专业	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
我认为国营酒店	服务更好	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	能更好地满足我的需求	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	更加专业	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
我认为私营酒店（包括民营和外资酒店）	的服务更好	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	能更好地满足我的需求	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
	更加专业	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

第三部分 在线信任水平

请指出您对以下关于在线信任水平表述的同意程度。

	非常同意	同意	有些同意	中立	有些不同意	不同意	非常不同意
酒店官方网站有相应的能力处理在线交易	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
酒店官方网站有足够的专业技能进行在线经营	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
酒店官方网站有足够的资源进行在线经营	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
我认为酒店官方网站有足够的知识来管理在线业务	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
大部分的酒店官方网站都有良好的声誉	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
酒店官方网站的设计考虑了顾客的需求	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
酒店官方网站很专业	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
酒店官方网站会考虑顾客的利益	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
酒店官方网站的在线推荐是在互惠互利的基础上而做出的	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
酒店官方网站不会欺骗顾客	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
酒店官方网站会履行已做出的各项承诺	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
酒店官方网站所提供的信息是真实的	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
我对酒店官方网站所做出的承诺有信心	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
酒店官方网站不会发表虚假声明	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
酒店官方网站会提供最低房价	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
通过酒店官方网站预订房间时，我不	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

会被超额收费

总体来说,我信任酒店官方网站 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

第四部分 在线购买意向

请指出您对以下关于在线购买意向表述的同意程度。

	非常同意	同意	有些同意	中立	有些不同意	不同意	非常不同意
我愿意在酒店官方网站上预订酒店客房	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
我打算在酒店官方网站上预订酒店客房	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
我有可能在未来的12个月之内在酒店官方网站上预订客房	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
我也许会在未来的12个月之内在酒店官方网站上预订客房	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

第五部分: 基本信息

- 性别 [1] 男 [2] 女
- 年龄 [1] 18岁以下 [2] 18-25岁 [3] 26-35岁 [4] 36-45岁 [5] 46-55岁 [6] 56-65岁 [7] 66岁或以上
- 学历: [1] 初中或以下 [2] 已完成高中(含中专,技校) [3] 已完成大专或大学本科 [4] 已完成硕士或以上
- 您的平均月收入(单位:人民币): [1] 3,000或以下 [2] 3,001-6,000 [3] 6,001-9,000 [4] 9,001-12,000 [5] 12,001或以上 [6] 没有收入/不愿回答
- 在过去的12个月中,您的出游次数是: [1] 少于3次 [2] 3-7次 [3] 多于7次
- 您最近一次出游停留的天数是:(请注明) _____
- 您通常出游的同伴是: [1] 家人或亲戚 [2] 朋友 [3] 独自出游 [4] 其他(请注明) _____
- 您平常出游的主要目的是: [1] 休闲度假 [2] 公务出差/会议 [3] 探亲访友 [4] 其他(请注明) _____
- 在过去的12个月中,您是否曾通过中国的酒店官方网站(如香格里拉大酒店官网)预订过酒店客房? [1] 是 [2] 否
- 您平均每天花多长时间上网?(请注明) _____
- 您接触互联网的时间为多少年?(请注明) _____ (年)

问卷到此结束,谢谢!

References

Abouttourism (2012). *Online marketing survey reveals mobile among top priorities for*

hoteliers. Retrieved on February 25, 2012 from

<http://abouttourism.wordpress.com/2011/06/28/online-marketing-survey-reveals->

[mobile-among-top-priorities-for-hoteliers](http://abouttourism.wordpress.com/2011/06/28/online-marketing-survey-reveals-mobile-among-top-priorities-for-hoteliers).

Ajzen, I., & Fishbein, M. (1980). *Understanding Attitudes and Predicting Social*

Behaviour. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Álvarez, L. S., Casielles, R. V., & Martin, A. M. D. (2009). The role of commitment

perceived by the consumer in service industries. *Management Research*, 7(2), 141-

157.

Anderson J. C., & Gerbing, D. W. (1982). Some methods for respecifying measurement

models to obtain unidimensional construct measurement. *Journal of Marketing*

Research, 19(4), 453-460.

Anderson, J. C. & Gerbing, D. W. (1988). Structural equation modeling in practice: a

review and recommended two-step approach. *Psychological Bulletin*, 103(3), 411-

423.

- Anderson, J. C., & Narus, J. A. (1990). A model of distributor firm and manufacturer firm working partnerships. *Journal of Marketing*, 54(1), 42-58.
- Anderson, E., & Weitz, B. (1989). Determinants of continuity in conventional industrial channel dyads. *Marketing Science*, 8(4), 310-323.
- Andreu, L., Aldas, J., Bigne, E., & Mattila, A. S. (2010). An analysis of e-business adoption and its impact on relational quality in travel agency-supplier relationships. *Tourism Management*, 31(6), 777-787.
- Ang, L., Dubelaar, C., & Lee, B. C. (2001). To trust or not to trust? A model of Internet trust from the customer's point of view. *Proceedings of the 14th Bled Electronic Commerce Conference* (pp. 40-52), Bled, Slovenia.
- Anheier, H. K. (2004). *Civil Society: Measurement evaluation, policy*, USA: Earthscan.
- Ariffin, A. A. M., & Maghzi, A. (2012). A preliminary study on customer expectations of hotel hospitality: influences of personal and hotel factors. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 31(1), 191-198.
- Ariffin, A. A. M., & Maghzi, A. (2012). A preliminary study on customer expectations of hotel hospitality: Influences of personal and hotel factors. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 31(1), 191-198.

- Au Yeung, T. & Law, R. (2003). Usability evaluation of Hong Kong hotel websites. In A. Frew, P. O'Connor, & M. Hitz (Eds.), *Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism 2003* (pp. 261-269). New York: Springer-Verlag, Wien.
- Au Yeung, T., & Law, R. (2004). Extending the modified heuristic usability evaluation technique to chain and independent hotel websites. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 23(3), 307-313.
- Au Yeung, T., Law, R. (2006). Evaluation of usability: a study of hotel websites in Hong Kong. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research*, 30(4), 452-473.
- Aydin, S., & Özer, G. (2005). The analysis of antecedents of customer loyalty in the Turkish mobile telecommunication market. *European Journal of marketing*, 39(7/8), 910-925.
- Ba, S., & Pavlou, P. (2002). Evidence of the effect of trust building technology in electronic markets: price premiums and buyers behavior. *MIS Quarterly*, 26(3), 243-268.
- Bagozzi, R. P., & Kimmel, S. K. (1995). A comparison of leading theories for the prediction of goal-directed behaviours. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 34(4), 437-461.

- Bagozzi, R. P., & Yi, Y. (1988). On the evaluation of structural equation models. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 16(1), 74-94.
- Bai, B., Law, R., & Wen, I. (2008). The impact of website quality on customer satisfaction and purchase intentions: evidence from Chinese online visitors. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 27(3), 391-402.
- Bai, B., Hu, C., & Jang, S. C. (2006). Examining E-relationship marketing features on hotel websites, *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 21(2/3), 33-48.
- Barber, B. (1983). *The Logic and Limits of Trust*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Barber, N., Taylor, D. C., & Deale, C. S. (2010). Wine tourism, environmental concerns, and purchase intention. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 27(2), 146-165.
- Barriball, K. L., & While, A. (1994). Collecting Data using a semi-structured interview: a discussion paper. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 19(2), 328-335.
- Bart, Y., Shankar, V., Sultan, F., & Urban, G. L. (2005). Are the drivers and role of online trust the same for all web sites and consumers? A large-scale exploratory empirical study. *Journal of marketing*, 69(4), 133-152.

- Baumgartner, H., & Homburg, C. (1996). Applications of structural equation modeling in marketing and consumer: a review. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 12(2), 139-161.
- Bearden, W. O., Hardesty, D. M., & Rose, R. L. (2001). Consumer self-confidence: refinements in conceptualization and measurement. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 28(1), 121-134.
- Bearden, W. O., Netemeyer, R. G., & Mobley, M. F. (1993). *Handbook of Marketing Scales*. Newbury Park: Sage.
- Beldad, A., De Jong, M., & Steehouder, M. (2010). How shall I trust the faceless and the intangible? A literature review on the antecedents of online trust. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 26(5), 857-869.
- Benassi, P. (1999). TRUSTe: an online privacy seal program. *Communications of the ACM*, 42(2), 56-59.
- Bensaou, M. (1999). Electronically-mediated partnerships: the use of CAD technologies in supplier relations. In P. De & J. I. DeGros (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 20th International Conference on Information Systems* (pp.307-323). Atlanta, USA: Association for Information Systems.

- Bentler, P. M. (1978). The interdependence of theory, methodology, and empirical data: causal modeling as an approach to construct validation. In D. B. Kandel (Ed.) *Longitudinal Drug Research* (pp. 267-302). New York: Wiley.
- Bentler, P. M. (1983). Some contributions to efficient statistics in structural models: specification and estimation of moment structures. *Psychometrika*, 48(4), 493-517.
- Bentler, P. M. (1990). Comparative fit indexes in structural models. *Psychological Bulletin*, 107(2), 238-246.
- Bentler, P. M. (1992). On the fit of models of covariances and methodology to the *Bulletin*. *Psychological Bulletin*, 112(3), 400-404.
- Bentler, P. M. (2005). *EQS 6 for Structural Equations Program Manual*. Encino, CA: Multivariate Software.
- Bentler, P. M., & Kano, Y. (1990). On the equivalence of factors and components. *Multivariate Behavioral Research*, 25(1), 67-74.
- Bergkvist, L., & Rossiter, J. R. (2007). The predictive validity of multiple-item versus single-item measures of the same constructs. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 44(2), 175-184.
- Berry, L., & Parasuraman, A. (1991). *Marketing Services*. New York: The Free Press.

- Bigley, F., & Pearce, J. L. (1998). Straining for shared meaning in organisation science: Problems of trust and distrust. *Academy of Management Review*, 23(3), 405-421.
- Bowen, J. T., & Shoemaker, S. (1998). Loyalty: A strategic commitment. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 39(1), 12-25.
- Brace, I. (2008). *Questionnaire Design: how to plan, structure and write survey material for effective market research (2nd Eds.)*, Philadelphia: Kogan Page.
- Brown, M., Pope, N., & Voges, K. (2003). Buying or browsing?: An exploration of shopping orientations and online purchase intention. *European Journal of Marketing*, 37(11/12), 1666-1684.
- Browne, M. W. & Cudeck, R. (1989). Single sample cross-validation indices for covariance structures. *Multivariate Behavioral Research*, 24(4), 445-455.
- Buhalis, D. (1998). Strategic use of information technologies in the tourism industry. *Tourism Management*, 19(5), 409-421.
- Buhalis, D. (2003). *eTourism: Information Technology for Strategic Tourism Management*. Harlow, UK: Prentice Hall.
- Buhalis, D., & Law, R. (2008). Progress in information technology and tourism management: 20 years on and 10 years after the Internet—the state of eTourism research. *Tourism Management*, 29(4), 609-623.

- Burns, A. C., & Bush, R. F. (2000). *Marketing Research* (2nd Eds.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Businessweek (2001). *It's all about trust*, retrieved on May 3, 2012 from http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/01_49/b3760610.htm/.
- Butler Jr, J. K., & Cantrell, R. S. (1984). A behavioral decision theory approach to modeling dyadic trust in superiors and subordinates. *Psychological reports*, 55(1), 19-28.
- Byrne, B. M. (2010). *Structural Equation Modeling with AMOS: basic concepts, applications, and programming* (2nd Eds.), New York: Routledge.
- Cai, L. A., Zhang, L., Pearson, T. E., & Bai, X. (2000). Challenges for China's state-run hotels: a marketing perspective. *Journal of Hospitality and Leisure Marketing*, 7(1), 29-46.
- Callan, R. J. (1995). Hotel classification and grading schemes, a paradigm of utilization and user characteristics. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 14(3), 271-283.
- Campbell, D. T. (1960). Recommendations for APA test standard regarding construct, trait, or discriminant validity. *American Psychologist*, 15(8), 546-553.

- Campbell, D. T., & Fiske, D. W. (1959). Convergent and discriminant validation by the multitrait-multimethod matrix. *Psychological Bulletin*, 56(2), 81-105.
- Chandon, P., Morwitz, V. G., & Reinartz, W. J. (2005). Do intentions really predict behavior? Self-generated validity effects in survey research. *Journal of Marketing*, 69(2), 1-14.
- Chang, M. K. (1998). Predicting unethical behavior: a comparison of the theory of reasoned action and the theory of planned behavior. *Journal of business ethics*, 17(16), 1825-1834.
- Chang, K. C. (2012). Examining the effect of tour guide performance, tourist trust, tourist satisfaction, and flow experience on tourists' shopping behavior. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, (ahead-of-print), 1-29. DOI: 10.1080/10941665.2012.739189.
- Chaudhuri, A., & Holbrook, M. B. (2001). The chain of effects from brand trust and brand affect to brand performance: the role of brand loyalty. *Journal of Marketing*, 65(2), 81-93.
- Chen, C. G. (2006). Identifying significant factors influencing consumer trust in an online travel site. *Information Technology & Tourism*, 8(3-4), 197-214.

Chen, S. C., & Dhillon, G. S. (2003). Interpreting dimensions of consumer trust in e-commerce. *Information Technology and Management*, 4(2-3), 303-318.

Chen, M. J., & Miller, D. (2010). West meets East: Toward an ambicultural approach to management. *The Academy of Management Perspectives*, 24(4), 17-24.

Chen, M. H., Wu, K. L., & Chen, B. T. (2013). The impact of state ownership on hotel firms' characteristics and financial performance in China. *Tourism Economics*, 19(5), 1207-1214.

Cheng, S., Lam, T. & Hsu, C. H. C. (2006). Negative word-of-mouth communication intention: an application of the theory of planned behavior, *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 30(1): 95-116.

CNTA (1998). *The Yearbook of China Tourism Statistics*. Beijing: China Tourism Publishing House.

CNTA. (2000). *China Tourism Statistics Bulletin*. Beijing: China Tourism and Travel Press.

CNTA (2001). *China Tourism Statistics Bulletin*. Beijing: China Tourism and Travel Press.

CNTA. (2010). *China Tourism Statistics Bulletin*. Beijing: China Tourism and Travel Press.

- CNTA (2012). *The Yearbook of China Tourism Statistics*. Beijing: China Tourism Publishing House.
- Chiles, T. H., & McMackin, J. F. (1996). Integrating variable risk preference, trust, and transaction cost economics. *The Academy of Management Review*, 21(1), 73-99.
- Chiu, C. M., Huang, H. Y., & Yen, C. H. (2010). Antecedents of trust in online auctions. *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications*, 9(2), 148-159.
- Chua, R., Morris, M. W., & Ingram, P. (2009). Guanxi vs networking: distinctive configurations of affect- and cognition-based trust in the networks of Chinese vs American managers, *Journal of International Business Studies*, 40(3), 490-508.
- Churchill, G. A. (1979). A paradigm for developing better measures of marketing constructs. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 16(1), 64-73.
- Chung, T., & Law, R. (2003). Developing a performance indicator for hotel websites. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 22(1), 119-125.
- CNNIC (2014). *33rd report on Chinese internet development*. Accessed on March 20, 2014 from <http://www.cnnic.cn/>.
- Coleman, J. S. (1990). *Foundations of Social Theory*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

- Connolly, D. J., Olsen, M. D., & Moore, R. G. (1998). The internet as a distribution channel. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 39(4), 42-54.
- Corbitt, B. J., Thanasankit, T., & Yi, H. (2003). Trust and e-commerce: a study of consumer perceptions. *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications*, 2(3), 203-215.
- Corritore, C., Kracher, B., & Wiedenbeck, S. (2003). Online trust: concepts, evolving themes, a model. *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies*, 58(6), 737-758.
- Costello, A. B. & Osborne, J. W. (2005). Best practices in exploratory factor analysis: four recommendations for getting the most from your analysis. *Practical Assessment Research & Evaluation*, 10(7), 1-9.
- Craig, C. S., & Douglas, P. S. (2005). *International Marketing Research* (3rd Eds.). West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons.
- Cronbach, L. J., & Meehl, P. E. (1955). Construct validity in psychological tests. *Psychological Bulletin*, 52(4), 281-302.
- Cunliffe, D. (2000). Developing usable web sites- a review and model. *Internet Research*, 10(4), 295-308.

- Cunnings, L. L., & Bromiley, P. (1996). The organizational trust inventor (OTI). In R. M. Kramer & T. R. Tyler (Eds.). *Trust in organizations: frontiers of theory and research* (pp. 302-330). Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications
- Curran, P. J., West, S. G., & Finch, J. F. (1996). The robustness of test statistics to nonnormality and specification error in confirmatory factor analysis. *Psychological methods, 1*(1), 16-29.
- Dabholkar, P. A., Thorpe, D. I., & Rentz, J. O. (1995). A measure of service quality for retail stores: scale development and validation. *Journal of the academy of Marketing Science, 24*(1), 3-16.
- Dai, B., (2003). In the name of capital: China's hotel industry in 2002. *China Tourist Hotels, 11*, 14-17.
- Das, T. K., & Teng, B. S. (1998). Between trust and control: developing confidence in partner cooperation in alliances. *Academy of management review, 23*(3), 491-512.
- Day, G. S. (1969). A two-dimensional concept of brand loyalty. *Journal of Advertising Research, 9*(3), 29-35.
- Davies, B. (2003). The role of quantitative and qualitative research in industrial studies of tourism. *International Journal of Tourism Research, 5*(2), 97-111.

- Davis, F. D. (1985). A technology acceptance model for empirically testing new end-user information systems: Theory and results (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Massachusetts.
- Davis, F. D., & Venkatesh, V. (1996). A critical assessment of potential measurement biases in the technology acceptance model: three experiments. *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies*, 45(1), 19-45.
- Decrop, A. (1999). Triangulation in qualitative tourism research, *Tourism Management*, 20(1), 157-161.
- Degeratu, A. M., Rangaswamy, A., & Wu, J. (2000). Consumer choice behavior in online and traditional supermarkets: The effects of brand name, price, and other search attributes. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 17(1), 55-78.
- Deutsch, M. (1958). Trust and Suspicion. *Conflict Resolution*, 2(4), 265-279.
- Deutsch, M. (1960). The effect of motivational orientation upon trust and suspicion. *Human Relations*, 13(2), 123-139.
- Deutsch, M. (1962). *Cooperation and Trust: Some Theoretical Notes*. Lincoln: University. Nebraska Press.
- Doney, P. M., & Cannon, J. P. (1997). An examination of the nature of trust in buyer-seller relationships. *Journal of Marketing*, 61(2), 35-51.

- Doolin, B., Burgess, L., & Cooper, J. (2002). Evaluating the use of the Web for tourism marketing: a case study from New Zealand. *Tourism management*, 23(5), 557-561.
- Dyer, P., Gursoy, D., Sharma, B., & Carter, J. (2007). Structural modeling of resident perceptions of tourism and associated development on the Sunshine Coast, Australia. *Tourism Management*, 28(2), 409-422.
- Eastlick, M. A., & Lotz, S. (2009). Cognitive and institutional predictors of initial trust toward an online retailer. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 39(4), 234-255.
- Efendioglu, A. M. & Yip, V. (2004). Chinese culture and e-commerce: an exploratory study. *Interacting with Computers*, 16(1), 45-62.
- Egger, F. (2003). *From interactions to transactions: designing the trust experience for business-to-consumer electronic commerce* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ScientificCommons.
- Endo, K. (2006). Foreign direct investment in tourism –flows and volumes. *Tourism Management*, 27(4), 600-614.
- Escobar-Rodríguez, T., & Carvajal-Trujillo, E. (2013). An evaluation of Spanish hotel websites: Informational vs. relational strategies. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 33, 228-239.

European Travel Commission (2012). *Asia pacific online hotel bookings to reach 22% by 2013*. Retrieved on September 14, 2012 from <http://www.newmediatrendwatch.com/news/1090-asia-pacific-online-hotel-bookings-to-reach-22-by-2013>.

Fassnacht, M., & Koese, I. (2006). Quality of electronic services: conceptualizing and testing a hierarchical model. *Journal of Service Research*, 9(1), 19-37.

Fam, K. S., Foscht, T., & Collins, R. D. (2004). Trust and the online relationship – an exploratory study from New Zealand. *Tourism Management*, 25(2), 195-207.

Field, A. (2005). *Discovering statistic using SPSS* (2nd Eds.). London: Sage Publication

Fishbein, M., & Ajzen, I. (1975). *Belief, attitude, intention and behavior: an introduction to theory and research*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Flavian, C., Guinaliu, M., & Gurrea, R. (2006). The role played by perceived usability, satisfaction and consumer trust on website loyalty. *Information and Management*, 43(1), 1-14.

Floyd, F. J., & Widaman, K. F. (1995). Factor analysis in the development and refinement of clinical assessment instruments. *Psychological Assessment*, 7(3), 286-299.

Fogg, B. J., Marshall, J., Laraki, O., Osipovich, A., Varma, C., Fang, N., Paul, J., Rangnekar, A., Shon, J., & Treinen, M. (2001). What makes web sites credible: a

report on a large quantitative study. In J. Jacko (Eds.). *The SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (pp. 61-68). New York, USA: ACM.

Forgas, S., Moliner, M. A., Sanchez, J., & Palau, R. (2010). Antecedents of airline passenger loyalty: low-cost versus traditional airlines. *Journal of Air Transport Management*, 16(4), 229-233.

Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error: Algebra and statistics. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18(3), 382-388.

Forrester Report (2009). *US data compromise and online trust update: consumers' security and trust concerns still hampering e-business*. Retrieved on May 3, 2012 from <http://www.forrester.com/US+Data+Compromise+And+Online+Trust+Update+Consumers+Security+And+Trust+Concerns+Still+Hampering+eBusiness/fulltext/-/E-RES55077/>.

Franklin, A., & Crang, M. (2001). The trouble with tourism and travel theory. *Tourist studies*, 1(1), 5-22.

Fung, R., & Lee, M. (1999). EC-trust (trust in electronic commerce): exploring the antecedent factors. In: W. D. Haseman, D. L. Nazareth (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 5th*

Americas Conference on Information Systems (pp. 517-519). Milwaukee, USA:
Omnipress.

Gan, L., Sim, C. J., Tan, H. L., & Tan, J. (2006). Online relationship marketing by
Singapore hotel websites. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 30(3/4), 1-19.

Ganesan, S. (1994). Determinants of long-term orientation in buyer-seller relationships.
Journal of Marketing, 58(2), 1-19.

gbtimes (2013). China third most popular tourism destination. Accessed on March 27,
2014 from <http://gbtimes.com/news/china-third-most-popular-tourism-destination>.

Gefen, D. (2000). E-commerce: the role of familiarity and trust, *Omega*, 28(5), 725-737.

Gefen, D. (2002). Reflections on the dimensions of trust and trustworthiness among
online consumers. *Database for Advances in Information Systems*, 33(3), 38-53.

Gefen, D., Karahanna, E., & Straub, D. W. (2003). Trust and TAM in online shopping: an
integrated model. *MIS Quarterly*, 27(1), 51-90.

Gefen, D., & Straub, D. W. (2004). Consumer trust in B2C e-commerce and the
importance of social presence: experiments in e-products and e-services. *Omega*,
32(6), 407-424.

- Gibbs, J., Kraemer, K. L., & Dedrick, J. (2006). Environment and policy factors shaping global e-commerce diffusion: a cross-country comparison. *The Information Society: An International Journal*, 19(1), 5-18.
- Gilbert, D., & Powell-Perry, J. (2002). Exploring developments in web based relationship marketing within the hotel industry. *Journal of Hospitality & Leisure Marketing*, 9(3/4), 141-159.
- Golmohammadi, A. R., Jahandideh, B., & Gorman, K. D. O. (2012). Booking online or not: a decision rule approach. *Tourism Management Perspective*, 1(2/3), 85-88.
- Goetzmann, W. N., & Köll, E. (2005). The history of corporate ownership in China: State patronage, company legislation, and the issue of control. In R. K. Morck (Eds.) *A history of corporate governance around the world: family business groups to professional managers* (pp. 149-184). University of Chicago Press.
- Grabner-Kräuter, S., & Kaluscha, E. A. (2003). Empirical research in on-line trust: a review and critical assessment. *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies*, 58(6), 783-812.
- Gupta, H., Jones, E., & Coleman, P. (2004). How do Welsh tourism-SME websites approach customer relationship management? In: Frew A., (Eds.), *Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism* (pp. 525-536). Springer-Wien: New York.

- Ha, S., & Stoel, L. (2009). Consumer e-shopping acceptance: Antecedents in a technology acceptance model. *Journal of Business Research*, 62(5), 565-571.
- Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2010). *Multivariate data analysis* (7th Eds.). Newjersey: Prentice Hall.
- Ham, S., Kim, W. G., & Forsythe, H. W. (2008). Restaurant employees' technology use intention: validating technology acceptance model with external factors. *Journal of Hospitality & Leisure Marketing*, 17(1-2), 78-98.
- Hardin, R. (1992). The street-level epistemology of trust. *Analyse & Kritik*, 14, 152-176.
- Hardy, K. G., & Magrath, A. J. (1989). Dealing with cheating in distribution. *European Journal of Marketing*, 23(2), 123-129.
- Hawes, J. M., Mast, K. E., & Swan, J. E. (1989). Trust earning perceptions of sellers and buyers. *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 9(1), 1-8.
- HawkPartners (2012). *HawkPartners 2012 Hotel Channel Usage Study*. Retrieved on February 25, 2012, from <http://www.hawkpartners.com/perspectives/hawkpartners-2012-hotel-channel-usage-study/>.
- Hausman, A. V. & Siekpe, J. S. (2009). The effect of web interface features on consumer online purchase intentions. *Journal of Business Research*, 62(1), 5-13.

Hensens, W., Struwig, M., & Dayan, O. (2010). Guest review criteria on TripAdvisor compared to conventional hotel-rating systems to assess hotel quality. Accessed on December 20, 2013 at <http://dspace.nmmu.ac.za:8080/jspui/bitstream/10948/1631/4/Article%20EuroChrie%202010.pdf>.

Herbig, P., & Martin, D. (1998). Negotiating with Chinese: a cultural perspective. *Cross Cultural Management*, 5(3), 40-54.

Heung, V., Zhang, H., & Jiang, C. (2008). International franchising: opportunities for China's state-owned hotels? *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 27(3), 368-380.

Hill, C. W. L. (1990). Cooperation, opportunism, and the invisible hand: implications for transaction cost theory. *Academy of Management Review*, 15(3), 500-513.

Hines, M. A. (1984). Overseas investment in Chinese hotel joint ventures. *Real Estate Issues*, 9(2): 45-47.

Hoffman, D., Novak, T. P., & Peralta, M. (1999). Building consumer trust online. *Communications of the ACM*, 42(4): 81-85.

Hosmer, L.T. (1995). Trust: the connecting link between organizational theory and philosophical ethics. *Academy of Management Review*, 20(2), 379-403.

Hotel News Resource (2006). Online travel bookings will surpass offline bookings for the first time in 2007. Retrieved on April 1, 2014 from <http://www.hotelnewsresource.com/article25567.html>.

Hotel & Restaurant (2012). *Accor declares 2011 a record year for development*. Retrieved on February 25, 2012 from <http://www.hotelandrestaurant.co.za/tourism/accor-declares-2011-a-record-year-for-development/>.

Hsu, K., Zhu, Z., & Agrusa, J. (2004). Turning click-through visitors into customers: a study of Chinese hotel websites. *Journal of Hospitality & Leisure Marketing*, 11(4), 81-91.

Hu, L. T. & Bentler, P. M. (1999). Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: conventional criteria versus new alternatives. *Structural Equation Modeling*, 6(1), 1-55.

Huang, T., & Law, R. (2003). Modelling and comparing internet marketing: a study of mainland China based and Hong Kong based hotel websites. In A. J. Frew, M. Hitz, & P. O'Connor (Eds.). *Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism 2003* (pp. 173-182), New York: Springer-Verlag Wien.

- Huh, H. J., Kim, T. T., & Law, R. (2009). A comparison of competing theoretical models for understanding acceptance behavior of information systems in upscale hotels. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 28(1), 121-134.
- Hung, K., & Law, R. (2011). An overview of Internet-based surveys in hospitality and tourism journals. *Tourism Management*, 32(4), 717-724.
- Hung, K., & Petrick, J. F. (2010). Developing a measurement scale for constraints to cruising. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 37(1), 206-228.
- Hussin, A. R. C., Macaulay, L., & Keeling, K. (2007). The importance ranking of trust attributes in eCommerce website. Accessed on July 27, 2012 at <http://aisel.aisnet.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1060&context=pacis2007>.
- Husted, B. (1998). The ethical limits of trust in business relations. *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 8(2), 233-248.
- Internet World States (2011). *Internet users in Asia*. Retrieved on September 14, 2012 from <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats3.htm>.
- iResearch (2014). *China online travel market dramatically grows 29.0% in 2013*. Accessed on February 20, 2014 from <http://www.iresearchchina.com/views/5449.html>.

- Israeli, A. A. (2002). Star rating and corporate affiliation: their influence on room price and performance of hotel in Israel. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 21(4), 405-424.
- Jarvenpaa, S. L., Tractinsky, J., & Saarinen, L. (1999). Consumer trust in an Internet store: a cross-cultural validation. *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication*, 5(2): 45-71.
- Jayawardhena, C. (2004). Measurement of service quality in Internet banking: the development of an instrument. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 20(1/2), 185-207.
- Jefferson, G. H., & Singh, I. (1999). *Enterprise reform in China ownership, Transition, and Performance*. Washington: Oxford University Press.
- Jenkins, C., Corritore, C. L., & Wiedenbeck, S. (2003). Patterns of information seeking on the web: a qualitative study of domain expertise and web expertise. *IT & Society*, 1(3), 64-89.
- Jeong, M., Oh, H., & Gregoire, M. (2003). Conceptualizing web site quality and its consequences in the lodging industry. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 22(2), 161-175.

- Jiang, J., Gretzel, U., & Law, R. (2014). Influence of star rating and ownership structure on brand image of Mainland China hotels. *Journal of China Tourism Research*, 10(1), 69-94.
- Jick, T. D. (1979). Mixing qualitative and quantitative methods: Triangulation in action. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 24(4), 602-611.
- Johnson-George, C. & Swap, W. (1982). Measurement of specific interpersonal trust: construction and validation of a scale to assess trust in a specific other. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 43(6), 1306-1317.
- Johnson, D., & Grayson, K. (2005). Cognitive and affective trust in service relationships. *Journal of Business research*, 58(4), 500-507.
- Johnson, R., & Wichern, D. (1992). *Applied multivariate statistical analysis* (5th Eds.). New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Jones, G. R., & George, J. M. (1998). The experience and evolution of trust: Implications for cooperation and teamwork. *Academy of Management Review*, 23(3), 531-546.
- Koufaris, M., & Hampton-Sosa, W. (2004). The development of initial trust in an online company by new customers. *Information & Management*, 41(3), 377-397.
- Kalwani, M. U., & Silk, A. J. (1982). On the reliability and predictive validity of purchase intention measures. *Marketing Science*, 3(1), 243-285.

- Kantowitz, B. H., Hankowski, R. J., & Kantowitz, S. C. (1997). Driver acceptance of unreliable traffic information in familiar and unfamiliar settings. *Human Factors*, 39(2), 164-176.
- Kaplan, R. S., & Norton, D. P. (1996). Strategic learning & the balance scorecard. *Strategy & Leadership*, 24(5), 18-24.
- Kim, M. J., Chung, N., Lee, C. K., & Kim, J. M. (2012). Do loyalty groups differ in the role of trust in online tourism shopping? A process perspective. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 29(4), 352-368.
- Kim, W. G., Han, J. S., & Lee, E. (2001). Effects of relationship marketing on repeat purchase and word of mouth. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 25(3), 272-288.
- Kim, W. G., & Kim, D. J. (2004). Factors affecting online hotel reservation intention between online and non-online customers. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 23(4), 381-395.
- Kim, Y. H., Kim, M., & Goh, B. K. (2011). An examination of food tourist's behavior: Using the modified theory of reasoned action. *Tourism Management*, 32(5), 1159-1165.

- Kim, T., Kim, W. J., & Kim, H. B. (2009a). The effects of perceived justice on recovery satisfaction, trust, word-of-mouth, and revisit intention in upscale hotels. *Tourism Management, 30*(1), 51-62.
- Kim, H. B., Kim, T., & Shin, S. W. (2009b). Modeling roles of subjective norms and eTrust in customers' acceptance of airline B2C eCommerce websites. *Tourism Management, 30*(2), 266-277.
- Kim, S., & Littrell, M. A. (1999). Predicting souvenir purchase intentions. *Journal of Travel Research, 38*(2), 153-162.
- Kim, W. G., Ma, X., & Kim, D. J. (2006). Determinants of Chinese hotel customers' e-satisfaction and purchase intentions. *Tourism Management, 27*(5), 890-900.
- Kim, G., Shin, B. S., & Lee, H. G. (2009). Understanding dynamics between initial trust and usage intentions of mobile banking. *Information Systems Journal, 19*(3), 283-311.
- Kim, E., & Tadisina, S. (2005). Factors impacting customers' initial trust in e-business: an empirical study. *Proceedings of the 38th Annual Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences* (pp.51-61). Hawaii, USA: HICSS.
- Kline, R.B. (2005), *Principles and Practice of Structural Equation Modeling* (2nd Eds.). New York: The Guilford Press.

- Koehn, D. (1996). Should we trust in trust? *American Business Law Journal*, 34(2), 183-204.
- Kramer, R. M. (1999). Trust and distrust in organizations: emerging perspective, enduring questions. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 50(1), 569-598.
- Kshetri, N. (2007). Barriers to e-commerce and competitive business models in developing countries: a case study. *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications*, 6(4), 443-452.
- Kumar, N., Scheer, L. K., & Steenkamp, J. B. E. (1995). The effects of perceived interdependence on dealer attitudes. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 32(3), 348-356.
- Lajunen, T., & Summala, H. (2003). Can we trust self-reports of driving? Effects of impression management on driver behaviour questionnaire responses. *Transportation Research Part F: Traffic Psychology and Behaviour*, 6(2), 97-107.
- Lam, T., & Han, M. X. (2005). A study of outsourcing strategy: a case involving the hotel industry in Shanghai, China. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 24(1), 41-56.
- Lam, T., Cho, V., & Qu, H. (2007). A study of hotel employee behavioral intentions towards adoption of information technology. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 26(1), 49-65.

Lankford, S. V., & Howard, D. R. (1994). Developing a tourism impact attitude scale.

Annals of Tourism Research, 21(1), 121-139.

Larzelere, R. E., & Huston, T. L. (1980). The dyadic trust scale: Toward understanding

interpersonal trust in close relationships. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 42(3),

595-604.

Law, R., & Bai, B. (2008). How do the preferences of online buyers and browsers differ

on the design and content of travel websites? *International Journal of*

Contemporary Hospitality Management, 20(4), 388-400.

Law, R., & Cheung, C. (2006). A study of the perceived importance of the overall website

quality of different classes of hotels. *International Journal of Hospitality*

Management, 25(3), 525-531.

Law, R., & Hsu, C. H. C. (2006). Importance of hotel website dimensions and attributes:

perceptions of online browsers and online purchasers. *Journal of Hospitality &*

Tourism Research, 30(3), 295-312.

Law, R., & Liang, K. (2005). A multi-criteria decision making approach to compare and

contrast the websites of China-based and US-based hotels. *FIU Hospitality Review*,

23(1), 64-82.

- Law, R., Qi, S. S., & Buhalis, D. (2010). Progress in tourism management: A review of website evaluation in tourism research. *Tourism Management, 31*(3), 297-313.
- Law, R., & van der Veen R. (2008). The popularity of prestigious hospitality journals: A Google Scholar approach. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 20*(2), 113-125.
- Lee, J. D. (1998). Trust in automation: designing for appropriate reliance. *Human Factors: The Journal of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society, 46*(1), 50-80.
- Lee, P. (2002). Behavioral model of online purchasers in E-commerce environment. *Electronic Commerce Research, 2*(1/2), 75-85.
- Lee, H., Au, N., & Law, R. (2013). Presentation Formats of Policy Statements on Hotel Websites and Privacy Concerns A Multimedia Learning Theory Perspective. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research, 37*(4), 470-489.
- Lee, J. S., & Back, K. J. (2008). Attendee-based brand equity. *Tourism Management, 29*(2), 331-344.
- Lee, K. C., Kang, I., & McKnight, D. H. (2007). Transfer from offline trust to key online perceptions: an empirical study. *IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management, 54*(4), 729-741.

- Lee, M. K. O., & Turban, E. (2001). A trust model for consumer Internet shopping. *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, 6(1), 75-91.
- Lee, W., Xiong, L., & Hu, C. (2012). The effect of Facebook users' arousal and valence on intention to go to the festival: Applying an extension of the technology acceptance model. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 31(3), 819-827.
- Leeman, D., & Reynolds, D. (2012). Trust and outsourcing: do perceptions of trust influence the retention of outsourcing providers in the hospitality industry. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 31(2), 601-608.
- Legris, P., Ingham, J., & Collerette, P. (2003). Why do people use information technology? A critical review of the technology acceptance model. *Information & management*, 40(3), 191-204.
- Leung, D, Lee, H. A., & Law, R. (2011). The impact of culture on hotel ratings: analysis of star-rated hotels in China. *Journal of China Tourism Research*, 7(3), 243-262.
- Lewicki, R. J., & Bunker, B. B. (1995). Trust in relationships: a model of development and decline. In B. B. Bunker & J. Z. (Eds.), *Conflict, cooperation, and justice: essays inspired by the work of Morton Deutsch* (pp.133-173). San Francisco, USA: Jossey-Bass.

Lewis, D., & Weigert, A. (1985). Trust as a social reality. *Social Forces*, 63(4), 967-985.

Lewicki, R. J., & Bunker, B. B. (1995). Trust in relationships: A model of development and decline. In B. B. Bunker & J. Z. Rubin (Eds), *Conflict, cooperation, and justice: Essays inspired by the work of Morton Deutsch* (pp. 133-173). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Li, H. & Suomi, R. (2008). Internet adoption in tourism industry in China. In M. Oya, R. Uda, & R. Yasunobu (Eds.). *IFIP International Federation for Information: Vol. 286. Towards Sustainable Society on Ubiquitous Networks* (pp. 197-208). Boston, USA: Springer.

Li, L., Tse, E. C. Y., & Xie, L. (2007). Hotel general manager profile in China: a case of Guangdong province. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 19(4), 263-274.

Lim, N. (2003). Consumers' perceived risk: sources versus consequences. *Electronic Commerce Research and Application*, 2(3), 216-228.

Liu, Z. Q., & Liu, J. C. (1993). Assessment of the hotel rating system in China. *Tourism Management*, 4(6), 440-452.

Lollar, C. (1990). The hotel rating game. *Travel and Leisure*, 20(7), 64-67.

- Loomis, J. (2003). Travel cost demand model based river recreation benefit estimates with on-site and household surveys: comparative results and a correction procedure. *Water Resources Research*, 39(4), 1105.
- Loureiro, S. M. C., & González, F. J. M. (2008). The importance of quality, satisfaction, trust, and image in relation to rural tourist loyalty. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 25(2), 117-136.
- Lovell, G. (2009). Can I trust you? An exploration of the role of trust in hospitality service settings. *Tourism and Hospitality Planning & Development*, 6(2), 145-157.
- Luhmann, N. (1979). *Trust and Power*. Chichester: Wiley.
- Ma, J. X., Buhalis, D., & Song, H. Y., (2003). ICTs and Internet adoption in China's tourism industry. *International Journal of Information Management*, 23(6), 451-467.
- MacCallum, R. C., & Tucker, L. R. (1991). Representing sources of error in the common-factor model – implications for theory and practice. *Psychological Bulletin*, 109(3), 502-511.
- MacCrimmon, K. R., & Wehrung, D. A. (1990). Characteristics of risk taking executives. *Management Science*, 36(4), 422-435.
- Macintosh, G. (2002). Building trust and satisfaction in travel counselor/client relationships. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 12(4), 59-73.

- Mahon, J. F. (2002). Corporate reputation research agenda using strategy and stakeholder literature. *Business & Society*, 41(4), 415-445.
- Mak, B. (2008). The future of the state-owned hotels in China: stay or go? *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 27(3), 355-367.
- MacKay, K. J., & Michael Campbell, J. (2004). An examination of residents' support for hunting as a tourism product. *Tourism Management*, 25(4), 443-452.
- Mayer, R. C., Davis, J. H., & Schoorman, F. D. (1995). An integration model of organizational trust. *Academy of Management Review*, 20(3), 709-734.
- Myers, M. (2000). Qualitative research and the generalizability question: Standing firm with Proteus. *The Qualitative Report*, 4(3/4), 1-9.
- McCole, P. (2002). The role of trust for electronic for electronic commerce in services. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 14(2), 81-87.
- McKnight, D. H., & Chervany, N. L. (2002). What trust means in e-commerce customer relationships: an interdisciplinary conceptual typology. *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, 6(2), 35-59.
- McKnight, D. H., Choudhury, V., & Kacmar, C. (2002). Developing and validating trust measures for e-commerce: an integrative typology. *Information Systems Research*, 13(3), 334-359.

- Mcknight, D. H., Cumming, L. L., & Chervany, N. L. (1998). Initial trust formation in new organizational relationships. *Academy of Management Review*, 23(3), 473-490.
- Menon, N. M., Konana, P., & Browne, G. J. (1999). Understanding trustworthiness beliefs in electronic brokerage usage. In P. De & J. I. DeGross (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 20th International Conference on Information Systems* (pp.552-555). Atlanta: Omnipress.
- Medina-Muñoz, D. R., García-Falcón, J. M., & Medina-Muñoz, R. D. (2002). Hotels and travel agents: building the valuable connection. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 43(3), 46-52.
- Miao, L., Adler, H., & Xu, X. (2011). A stakeholder approach to expatriate management: Perceptions of hotel expatriate managers in China. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 30(3), 530-541.
- Misztal, B. A. (1996). *Trust in modern societies: the search for the base of social order*. New York: Polity Press.
- Mishra, A. K. (1996). *Organizational response to crisis: the centrality of trust*. Accessed on September 23, 2013 via <http://195.130.87.21:8080/dspace/bitstream/123456789/105/1/Organizational%20responses%20to%20crisis%20Mishra.pdf>.

- Moorman, C., Deshpande, R., & Zaltman, G. (1993). Factors affecting trust in market research relationships. *The Journal of Marketing*, 57(1), 81-101.
- Moorman, C., Zaltman, G., & Deshpande, R. (1992). Relationships between providers and users of market research: the dynamics of trust within and between organizations. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 29(3), 314-328.
- Morgan, R. M., & Hunt, S. D. (1994). The commitment-trust theory of relationship marketing. *Journal of Marketing*, 58(3), 20-38.
- Morosan, C. (2012). Theoretical and Empirical Considerations of Guests' Perceptions of Biometric Systems in Hotels Extending the Technology Acceptance Model. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 36(1), 52-84.
- Morosan, C., & Jeong, M. (2008). Users' perceptions of two types of hotel reservation Web sites. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 27(2), 284-292.
- Morrison, A. M., Taylor, J. S., Morrison, A. J., & Morrison, A. D. (1999). Marketing small hotels on the World Wide Web. *Information Technologies & Tourism*, 2(2), 97-113.
- Muir, B. M., & Moray, N. (1996). Trust in automation. Part II. Experimental studies of trust and human intervention in a process control simulation. *Ergonomics*, 39(3), 429-460.

- Mukherjee, A., & Nath, P. (2007). Role of electronic trust in online retailing: a re-examination of the commitment-trust theory. *European Journal of Marketing*, 41(9), 1173-1202.
- Nachmias, C., & Nachmias, D. (1992). *Research methods in the social sciences* (1st Ed.). London: Edward Arnold.
- Narangajavana, Y., & Hu, B. (2008). The relationship between the hotel rating system, service quality improvement, and hotel performance changes: a canonical analysis of hotels in Thailand. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 9(1), 34-56.
- Narver, J. C., & S. F. Slater (1990). The effect of a market orientation on business profitability. *Journal of Marketing*, 54(4), 20-35.
- Nebel, E. C., Braunlich, C. G., & Zhang, Y. (1994). Hotel food and beverage directors' career paths in American luxury hotels. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 6(6), 3-10.
- Netemeyer, R. G., Bearden, W. O., & Sharma, S. (2003). *Scaling Procedures*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Nicholson, C. Y., Compeau, L. D., & Sethi, R. (2001). The role of interpersonal liking in building trust in long-term channel relationships. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 29(1), 3-15.
- Nielsen, J. (1999). *The Top Ten Web Design Mistakes of 1999*. Retrieved on December 3, 2011, from <http://www.useit.com/alertbox/990530.html>.
- Nielsen, J. (2000). *Designing Web Usability*. Indianapolis: New Riders Publishing.
- Nunnally, J. C. (1994). *Psychometric Theory* (3rd Eds.). Bernstein, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- O'Connor, P., & Frew, A. J. (2002). The future of hotel electronic distribution: expert and industry perspectives. *Cornell Hotel and Administration Quarterly*, 43(3), 33-45.
- Öğüt, H., & Onur Taş, B. K. (2012). The influence of internet customer reviews on the online sales and prices in hotel industry. *The Service Industries Journal*, 32(2), 197-214.
- Oh, H. (2002). Transaction evaluation and relationship intentions. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 26(3), 278-305.
- Ok, C., Back, K. J., & Shanklin, C. W. (2005). Modeling roles of service recovery strategy: A relationship-focused view. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 29(4), 484-507.

- Opdenakker, R. (2006). Advantages and disadvantages of four interview techniques in qualitative research. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 7(4), available at <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/175/391>.
- Ortega, D. L., Wang, H. H., Olynk, N. J., Wu, L., & Bai, J. (2012). Chinese consumers' demand for food safety attributes: a push for government and industry regulations. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 94(2), 489-495.
- Oxford Dictionary Pro (2012). Retrieved on February 25, 2012 from <http://english.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/trust;jsessionid=0BC42AC51AAFE93510B44B86DC2D1AFD>.
- Pan, G. (2003). A theoretical framework of business network relationships associated with the Chinese outbound tourism market to Australia. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 14(2), 87-104.
- Parets, R. T. (2002). Getting the word out: profiting from small Internet marketing isn't just for the big boys. *Lodging Magazine*, August, 37-38.
- Park, C. (2002). A content analysis of travel agency web-sites in Korea. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 7(1), 11-18.

- Pavlou, P. A. (2003). Consumer acceptance of electronic commerce: integrating trust and risk with the technology acceptance model. *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, 7(3), 69-103.
- Pavlou, P. A., & Gefen, D. (2004). Building effective online marketplaces with institution-based trust. *Information Systems Research*, 15(1), 37-59.
- Penny, K. I. (1996). Appropriate critical values when testing for a single multivariate outlier by using the Mahalanobis distance. *Applied Statistics*, 45(1), 73-81.
- Petrick, J. F., Morais, D. D., & Norman, W. C. (2001). An examination of the determinants of entertainment vacationers' intentions to revisit. *Journal of Travel Research*, 40(1), 41-48.
- PhoCusWright (2012). *TripAdvisor is Not the Only Place for Reviews: U.S. and European Destination Selectors Weigh In*. Retrieved on May 16, 2012, from [//www.phocuswright.com/research_updates/tripadvisor-is-not-the-only-place-for-reviews-us-and-european-destination-selectors-weigh-in](http://www.phocuswright.com/research_updates/tripadvisor-is-not-the-only-place-for-reviews-us-and-european-destination-selectors-weigh-in).
- Pine, R., (2002). China's hotel industry: serving a massive market. *The Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 43(3), 57-73.
- Pine, R., & Phillips, P. (2005). Performance comparisons of hotels in China. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 24(1), 57-73.

- Pine, R., & Qi, P. (2004). Barriers to hotel chain development in China. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 16(1), 37-44.
- Pine, R., Zhang, H. Q & Qi, P. S. (2000). The challenges and opportunities of franchising in China's hotel industry. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 12(5), 300-307.
- Pitcher, T. J. (2002). *Recreational fisheries*. Oxford, London: Blackwell Science Ltd.
- Poddar, A., Donthu, N. & Wei, Y. (2009). Web site customer orientation, web site quality, and purchase intentions: the role of web site personality. *Journal of Business Research*, 62(4), 441-450.
- Polonsky, M. J., & Waller, D. S. (2010). *Designing and managing a research project: a business student's guide*, California: SAGE Publications.
- Purdue, R. R. (2001). Internet site evaluations: the influence of behavioral experience, existing images, and selected website characteristics. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 11(2/3), 21-38.
- Putnam, R. D. (1995). Bowling alone: America's declining social capital. *Journal of Democracy*, 6(1), 3-10.

- Pyke, D., Robb, D., & Farley, J. (2000). Manufacturing and supply chain management in China: a survey of state-, collective-, and privately-owned enterprises. *European Management Journal*, 18(6), 577-589.
- Quelch, J. A., & Klein, L. R. (1996). The Internet and international marketing. *Sloan Management Review*, 37(3), 60-75.
- Reichheld, F. F., & Schefter, P. (2000). E-loyalty: your secret weapon on the web. *Harvard Business Review*, 78(4), 105-113.
- Reisinger, Y., & Turner, L. (1999). Structural equation modeling with Lisrel: application in tourism. *Tourism Management*, 20(1), 71-88.
- Revinat (2012). *How to drive customers to book direct*. Retrieved on July 26, 2012 from <http://blog.revinat.com/2012/06/how-to-drive-customers-to-book-direct.html>.
- Riley, R. (1996). Revealing socially constructed knowledge through quasi-structured interviews and grounded theory analysis. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*, 5(1/2), 21-40.
- Rosenfeld, P., Booth-Kewley, S., & Edwards, J. E. (1993). Computer-Administered Surveys in Organizational Settings Alternatives, Advantages, and Applications. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 36(4), 485-511.

- Rotter, J. B. (1967). A new scale for the measurement of interpersonal trust. *Journal of Personality*, 35(4), 651-665.
- Rousseau, D. M., Sitkin, S. B., Burt, R. S., & Camerer, C. (1998). Not so different after all: a cross-discipline view of trust. *Academy of Management Review*, 23(3), 393-404.
- Ryan, C., & Gu, H. M. (2007). Perceptions of Chinese hotels. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 48(4):380-391.
- Ryu, K., & Jang, S. S. (2006). Intention to experience local cuisine in a travel destination: The modified theory of reasoned action. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 30(4), 507-516.
- Sako, M., & Helper, S. (1998). Determinants of trust in supplier relations: evidence from the automotive industry in Japan and the United States. *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 34(3), 387-417.
- Saunders, H.A. & Renaghan, L.M. (1992). Southeast Asia: a new model for hotel development. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 33(16), 16-23.

- Schleyer, T., & Forrest, J. L. (2000). Methods for the design and administration of web-based surveys. *Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association*, 7(4), 416-425.
- Schlosser, A. E., White, T. B., & Lloyd, S. M. (2006). Convincing web site visitors into buyers: how web site investment increases consumer trusting beliefs and online purchase intentions. *Journal of Marketing*, 70(2), 133-148.
- Schmidt, S., Cantalops, A. S., & dos Santos, C. P. (2008). The characteristics of hotel websites and their implications for website effectiveness. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 27(4), 504-516.
- Schurr, P., & Ozanne, J. L. (1985). Influences on exchange processes: buyers' preconceptions of a seller's trustworthiness and bargaining toughness. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 11(4), 939-953.
- Segars, A. H. (1997). Assessing the unidimensionality of measurement: a paradigm and illustration within the context of information systems research. *Omega*, 25(1), 107-121.
- Sekaran, U. (2003). *Research Methods for Business (4th Ed.)*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.

- Seppänen, R., Blomqvist, K., & Sundqvist, S. (2007). Measuring inter-organizational trust—A critical review of the empirical research in 1990–2003. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 36(2), 249-265.
- Shang, K. C., & Marlow, P. B. (2005). Logistics capability and performance in Taiwan's major manufacturing firms. *Transportation Research Part E: Logistics and Transportation Review*, 41(3), 217-234.
- Shankar, V., Urban, G. L. & Sultan, F. (2002). Online trust: a stakeholder perspective, concepts, implications, and future direction. *Journal of Strategic Information Systems*, 11(3-4): 325-344.
- Shao, J. & Gretzel, U. (2010). Looking does not automatically lead to booking: analysis of clickstreams on a Chinese travel agency website. In U. Gretzel, R. Law, & M. Fuchs (Eds.). *Information and Communication Technologies, 2010* (pp. 197-208). Lugano, Switzerland: Springer.
- Shelat, B., & Egger, F. N. (2002). What makes people trust online gambling sites? *Proceedings of the Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems CHI 2002* (pp. 852-853). Minneapolis, MN: ACM Press.

- Sheth, J. N., & Parvatiyar, A. (1995). Relationship marketing in consumer markets: antecedents and consequences. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 23(4), 255-271.
- Shook, C. L., Ketchen, D. J., Hult, G. T. M., & Kacmar, K. M. (2004). An assessment of the use of structural equation modeling in strategic management research. *Strategic Management Journal*, 25(4), 397-404.
- Short, H., & Keasey, K. (1999). Managerial ownership and the performance of firms: evidence from the UK. *Journal of Corporate Finance*, 5(1), 79-101.
- Sin, L. Y. M., Tse, A. C. B., Chan, H., Heung, V. C. S., & Yim, F. H. K. (2006). The effects of relationship marketing orientation on business performance in the hotel industry. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 34(4), 407-426.
- Singh, J., & Sirdeshmukh, D. (2000). Agency and trust mechanisms in consumer satisfaction and loyalty judgments. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 28(1), 150-167.
- Sirakaya, E., Tse, V., & Sonmez, S. (2002). Understanding residents' support for tourism development in the central region of Ghana. *Journal of Travel Research*, 41(1), 57-67.

- Sirdeshmukh, D., Singh, J., & Sabol, B. (2002). Consumer trust, value, and loyalty in relational exchanges. *Journal of Marketing*, 66(1), 15-37.
- Simmel, G. (1978). *The Philosophy of Money*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Sitkin, S. B., & Roth, N. L. (1993). Explaining the limited effectiveness of legalistic “remedies” for trust/distrust. *Organizational Science*, 4(3), 367-392.
- Sparks, B. A. & Browning, V. (2011). The impact of online reviews on hotel booking intentions and perceptions of trust. *Tourism Management*, 32(6), 1310-1323.
- Statistic Brain (2013). Internet travel hotel booking statistics. Accessed on March 23, 2014 from <http://www.statisticbrain.com/internet-travel-hotel-booking-statistics/>.
- Steiger, J. H. (1990a). Some additional thoughts on components, factors, and factor-indeterminacy. *Multivariate Behavioral Research*, 25(1), 41-45.
- Steiger, J. H. (1990b). Structural model evaluation and modification: an interval estimation approach. *Multivariate Behavioral Research*, 25(2), 173-180.
- Steinfeld, E. S. (1998). *Forging reform in China: the fate of state-owned industry*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Stewart, K. J. (1999). Transference as a means of building trust in world wide web sites. In P. De & J. I. DeGross (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 20th International Conference on Information Systems* (pp.459-464). Atlanta, USA: Omnipress.

- Su, C. S., & Sun, L. H. (2007). Taiwan's hotel rating system. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 48(2), 392-401.
- Sui, J. J., & Baloglu, S. (2003). The role of emotional commitment in relationship marketing: An empirical investigation of a loyalty model for casinos. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 27(4), 470-489.
- Sun, L. Y., Aryee, S., & Law, K. S. (2007). High-performance human resource practices, citizenship behavior, and organizational performance: a relational perspective. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50(3), 558-577.
- Svensson, G. (2001). Perceived trust towards suppliers and customers in supply chains of the Swedish automotive industry. *International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management*, 13(9), 647-662.
- Tan, Y. H., & Thoen, W. (2001). Toward a generic model of trust for electronic commerce. *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, 5(2), 61-74.
- Tabachnick, B. G., Fidell, L. S., & Osterlind, S. J. (2001). *Using Multivariate Statistics* (4th Eds.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Tang, F. F., Xi, Y. P., Chen, G. M. & Wang, R. (2006). Ownership, corporate governance, and management in the state-owned hotels in the People's Republic of China. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 47(2), 181-192.

- Thom, D. H., Hall, M. A., & Pawlson, L. G. (2004). Measuring patients' trust in physicians when assessing quality of care. *Health Affairs*, 23(4), 124-132.
- Tisdell, C. (1990). Separation of ownership and management, markets, their failure and efficiency: possible implications for China's economic reforms. *Asian Economies*, June, 41-55.
- Ting, P. H., Kuo, C. F., & Li, C. M. (2012). What does hotel website content say about a property-an evaluation of upscale hotels in Taiwan and China. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 29(4), 369-384.
- Tisdell, C., & Wen, J., (1991). Foreign tourism as an element in PR China's economic development strategy. *Tourism Management*, 12(1), 55-67.
- Travel Blackboard (2012). *China the world's third largest tourism market*. Accessed on June 18, 2012, from <http://www.etravelblackboard.com/article/127067/china-the-worlds-third-largest-tourism-market>.
- Travel China Guide (2013). *China Tourism Statistics in 2013*. Accessed on February 20, 2014 from <http://www.travelchinaguide.com/tourism/>.
- Tse, T. S. (2013). The Marketing Role of the Internet in Launching a Hotel: The Case of Hotel Icon. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 22(8), 895-908.

- Tzokas, N., & Saren, M. (2004). Competitive advantage, knowledge and relationship marketing: where, what and how? *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 19(2), 124-135.
- Urban, G. L., Sultan, F., & Qualls, W. J. (2000). Placing trust at the center of your internet strategy. *Sloan Management Review*, 42(1), 39-48.
- Uslaner, E. M. (2004). Trust online, trust offline. *Communications of the ACM*, 47(4), 28-29.
- Van der Heijden, H., Verhagen, T., & Creems, M. (2003). Understanding online purchase intention: contribution from technology and trust perspective. *European Journal of Information System*, 12(1), 41-48.
- Velicer, W. F. & Jackson, D. N. (1990). Component analysis versus common factor-analysis- some further observations. *Multivariate Behavioral Research*, 25(1), 97-114.
- Venkatesh, V., & Davis, F. D. (2000). A theoretical extension of the technology acceptance model: four longitudinal field studies. *Management Science*, 46(2), 186-204.
- Verhagen, T., Meents, S., & Tan, Y. (2006). *European Journal of Information Systems*, 15(6), 542-555.

- Wakefield, R. J., Stocks, M. H., & Wilder, W. M. (2004). The role of web site characteristics in initial trust formation. *Journal of Computer Information Systems*, 45(1), 94-103.
- Wan, D. M., & Hu, J. W. (1998). The development of Chinese national hotel groups and market competition. Paper presented at the Seminar on Theories and Practices of Conglomerated in Chinese Hotels, Beijing.
- Wang, C., & Ahmed, P. K. (2004). The development and validation of the organizational innovativeness construct using confirmatory factor analysis. *European Journal of Innovation Management*, 7(4), 303-313.
- Wang, F. C., Hung, W. T., & Shang, J. K. (2006). Measuring the cost efficiency of international tourist hotels in Taiwan. *Tourism Economics*, 12(1), 65-85.
- Wang, L., Law, R., Hung, K., & Guillet, B. D. (2014). Consumer trust in tourism and hospitality: A review of the literature. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 21, 1-9.
- Wang, Y. D., & Emurian, H. A. (2005). An overview of online trust: concepts, elements, and implications. *Computer in Human Behavior*, 21(1), 105-125.

- Wang, C. L., Siu, N. Y.M., & Barnes, B. R. (2008). The significance of trust and renqing in the long-term orientation of Chinese business-to-business relationships. *Industrial Marketing Management, 37*(7), 819-824.
- Waters, W. H. (2007). Google Scholar: Coverage of a multidisciplinary field. *Information Processing and Management, 43*(4), 1121-1132.
- Wanous, J. P., & Reichers, A. E. (1996). Estimating the reliability of a single-item measure. *Psychological Reports, 78*(2), 631-634.
- Webb, E., Campbell, D. T., Schwartz, R. D., & Sechrest, L. (1966). *Unobtrusive measures: non-reactive research in the social sciences*. Chicago: Rand McNally College Publishing Company.
- Wei, S., Ruys, H. F., Van Hoof, H. B., & Combrink, T. E. (2001). Uses of the internet in the global hotel industry. *Journal of Business Research, 54*(3), 235-241.
- Wen, I. (2009). Factors affecting the online travel buying decision: a review. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 21*(6), 752-765.
- Wen, I. (2012). An empirical study of an online travel purchase intention model. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, 29*(1), 18-39.
- Wiedenfels, G. (2009). *Trust of potential buyers in new entrepreneurial ventures*. Gabler, Wiesbaden: GWV Faceverlage GmbH.

Williamson, O. E. (1985). *The economic Institutions of Capitalism*. New York: Free Press.

Woeber, K., & Gretzel, U. (2000). Tourism managers' adoption of marketing decision support systems. *Journal of Travel Research*, 39(2), 172-181.

Wong, Y. H. (1998). The dynamics of guanxi in China. *Singapore Management Review*, 20(2), 25-42.

Wong, L. P. (2008). Focus group discussion: a tool for health and medical research. *Singapore Medical Journal*, 49(3), 256-60.

Wong, J., & Law, R. (2005). Analyzing the intention to purchase on hotel websites: a study of travelers to Hong Kong. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 24(3), 311-329.

Wray, K. B. (2005). Rethinking scientific specialization. *Social studies of science*, 35(1), 151-164.

Wright, K. B. (2005). Researching Internet-based populations: Advantages and disadvantages of online survey research, online questionnaire authoring software packages, and web survey services. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 10 (3), doi: 10.1111/j.1083-6101.2005.tb00259.x.

Wrightsmann, L. S. (1991). Interpersonal trust and attitudes toward human nature. In J. P.

Robinson, P. R. Shaver, & L. S. Wrightsmann (Eds.), *Measures of personality and social psychological attitudes*. (pp.373-412). San Diego: Academic Press.

Wruck, K. H. (1989). Equity ownership concentration and firm value: Evidence from private equity financings. *Journal of Financial Economics*, 23(1), 3-28.

WTO & IH & RA (2004). The join WTO & IH & RA study on hotel classification.

Accessed on January 14, 2010 at

http://www.rea.ru/hotel/TourMaterials/WTO/wtoihra_hcstudy.pdf.

Wu, J. (2011). Empirical research on trust in online transaction platforms and influencing factors on purchasing behavior. (*Doctoral dissertation*). Accessed on January 24, 2012 at www.cnki.com.

Wu, L., & Yang, H. (2012). The establishment, content change and prospect of star rating system in Chinese hospitality. *Tourism Forum*, 5(4), 41-46.

Xiao, Q., O'Neill, J. W., & Wang, H. Y. (2008). International hotel development: a study of potential franchisees in China. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 27(3), 325-336.

- Ye, Q., Law, R., Gu, B., & Chen, W. (2011). The influence of user-generated content on traveler behavior: an empirical investigation on the effects of e-word-of-mouth to hotel online booking. *Computer in Human Behavior*, 27(2), 634-639.
- Ye, F., & Li, Y. N. (2009). Group multi-attribute decision model to partner selection in the formation of virtual enterprise under incomplete information. *Expert Systems with Applications*, 36(5), 9350-9357.
- Yin, M., & Zhao, S. Z. (2006). Research on a dynamic model of trust building within regional tourism alliances: evidence from China. *Chinese Economy*, 39(6), 5-18.
- Yoon, S. J. (2002). The antecedents and consequences of trust in online-purchase decisions. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 16(2), 47-63.
- Yu, L. (1992). Seeing stars: China's hotel-rating system. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 33(5), 24-27.
- Yu, B. B., & Egri, C. P. (2005). Human resource management practices and affective organizational commitment: a comparison of Chinese employees in a state-owned enterprise and a joint venture. *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources*, 43(3), 332-360.
- Yu, L., & Huimin, G. (2005). Hotel reform in China a SWOT analysis. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 46(2), 153-169.

Yukl, G., & Van Fleet, D. D. (1992). Theory and research on leadership in organizations.

In M. D. Dunnette & L. M. Hough (Eds.), *Handbook of Organizational Psychology*

(pp. 147-197). Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.

Yun, G. W., & Trumbo, C. W. (2000). Comparative Response to a Survey Executed by

Post, E-mail, & Web Form. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 6(1),

doi: 10.1111/j.1083-6101.2000.tb00112.x.

Zafiropoulos, C., & Vrana, V. (2006). A framework for the evaluation of hotel websites:

the case of Greece. *Information Technology & Tourism*, 8(3/4), 239-254.

Zaheer, A., McEvilly, B. & Perrone, V. (1998). *Organization Science*, 9(2), 141-159.

Zeithaml, V. A., Bitner, M. J., & Gremler, D. D. (2006). *Services marketing: integrating*

customer focus across the firm (4th Eds.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Zeithaml, V. A., Berry, L., & Parasuraman, A. (1996). *The behavioral consequences of*

service quality. *Journal of Marketing*, 60(2), 31-46.

Zillifro, T., & Morais, D. B. (2004). Building customer trust and relationship commitment

to a nature-based tourism provider: the role of information investments. *Journal of*

Hospitality & Leisure Marketing, 11(2/3), 159-172.

Zhao, J. (1989). Overprovision in Chinese hotels. *Tourism Management*, 10(1), 63-66.

- Zhang, H. Q., & Wu, E. (2004). Human resources issues facing the hotel and travel industry in China. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 16(7), 424-428.
- Zhang, X. Q. (2003). Actively push the process of China's hotel industry development. In H. Y. Lu (Eds.). *Blue book of China's hotel group development*. Tourism Press, Beijing: China.
- Zhang, Z., Ye, Q., Law, R., & Li, Y. (2010). The impact of e-word-of-mouth on the online popularity of restaurants: a comparison of consumer reviews and editor reviews. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 29(4), 694-700.
- Zhi, Y. C., Wang, P., & Turban, E. (1997). Management support systems of state-owned enterprises in China. *International Journal of Information Management*, 17(4), 271-285.
- Zhou, L. (2005). *Empirical research on online trust issues of Chinese online users (Doctoral dissertation)*. Retrieved from China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI). (Accessed on January 2012).
- Zhou, M., & Tian, D. (2010). An integrated model of influential antecedents of online shopping initial trust: empirical evidence in a low-trust environment. *International Consumer Marketing*, 22(2), 147-167.

Zhu, D. S., O'Neal, G. S., Lee, Z. C., & Chen, Y. H. (2009). The effect of trust and perceived risk on consumers' online purchase intention. *Proceedings of Computer Science and Engineering 2009 International Conference* (pp. 771-776), Vancouver, BC: IEEE.

Zikmund, N. G. (1994). *Business Research Methods*. New York: The Dryden Press.

Zillifro, T., & Morais, D. B. (2004). Building customer trust and relationship commitment to a nature-based tourism provider: the role of information investments. *Journal of Hospitality & Leisure Marketing*, 11(2/3), 159-172.

Zucker, L. G. (1986). Production of trust: institutional sources of economic structure, 1840-1920. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 8, 53-111.