



The Role of Social Media in Shaping Hotel Reputation and Customer Loyalty: A Cross-Cultural Analysis

Thawit Somrak, Karnchana Phakpho*, and Suttiman Siammai

Hotel and Tourism Department, Bangkok University International, Bangkok University, Bangkok, Thailand

*Corresponding author, E-mail: karnchana.ph@bu.ac.th

Abstract

The research explores how social media impacts hotel reputation and customer loyalty in Thailand. The objectives focus on investigating the role of social media in forming and altering hotel reputations and analysing the connection between online presence, user-generated content, and public perception. The study also examines the influence of social media on customer loyalty, highlighting the correlation between social media engagement and customer allegiance and considering factors such as reviews, interactions, and promotions. The research also analyses cultural nuances in online behaviour affecting hotel reputation and loyalty, justifying the cross-cultural approach to capturing global social media impact and recognising cultural differences in online behaviour. A mixed methods approach was used for the research study. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were integrated into the research design. Surveys and interviews were conducted to gather data. Purposeful sampling was used to ensure demographic diversity. A Cross-Cultural analysis framework was developed to interpret data across different cultures. Cultural dimensions such as individualism and collectivism were applied in the analysis of the data. The research involved hotels at different levels and geographical contexts, ensuring industry representation. Criteria for participation included a willingness to share social media data. The analysis employed statistical tools like SPSS and qualitative analysis software, and triangulation enhanced research outcomes. The findings underscore the significance of social media in shaping hotel reputation and fostering customer loyalty. The study recommends further research to explore how social media influences cross-cultural perceptions, providing valuable insights for refining social media strategies in the hospitality industry.

Keywords: *Social Media, Hotel Reputation, Customer Loyalty, Cross-Cultural*

1. Introduction

The tourism and hospitality industries are rapidly changing due to technological advancements, with tech-savvy tourists seeking authentic, personalised, and sustainable experiences (Svitla, 2023). The pandemic has catalysed the hotel industry's digitalisation, emphasising integrating innovative technologies such as AI, chatbots, facial recognition, and data analytics for sustainable growth. Web 3.0 holds the potential to transform how individuals and organizations navigate and leverage huge amounts of unstructured data, thus shaping the future landscape of the internet (Cheng and Qiu, 2017). In the hotel and tourism business, Web 3.0 offers specialized and personalized services, catering to specific market segments. Unlike conventional advertising models, platforms like Google Ads within Web 3.0 prioritize personalized advertisements tailored to individual customer needs, reflecting a shift towards more customized and customer-centric advertising strategies. (Albaom et al., 2021).

Digital competencies and skills have become critical for the industry's legislative and regulatory framework, while mobile applications have been increasingly adopted for streamlined operations and efficient customer interactions (Abdrakhmanova, 2022). The hospitality industry is becoming more digitalised and integrated, using travel technology tools such as booking engines, property management systems, and chatbots to streamline operations and improve guest experiences (Kitsios et al., 2023). Despite technology reducing face-to-face interactions, it also enhances staff's ability to provide personalised guest services. The impact of travel technology on the hospitality industry is being extensively studied.

Social media has become increasingly important for hotels, as it can provide benefits such as increased visibility, direct bookings, and improved brand awareness. Effective use of social media can have a significant impact on hotel visibility and reputation, as well as positively influence hotel performance,

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including online review scores and revenue (Issa & Saadon, 2023). Social media is also crucial for brand communication, improving customer engagement, managing brand reputation, and attracting new customers for hospitality businesses. Social media has transformative power in today's society, impacting various aspects such as politics, user behaviour, affective dynamics, and monitoring the spread of infectious diseases (Dzitac, 2023). It significantly influences consumer purchase behaviour and brand loyalty, revolutionising marketing and customer preferences, with social proof and personalisation playing a pivotal role (Dhingra, 2023). Social media marketing has become increasingly crucial for businesses to increase brand recognition and engage with their digital audience (Jamil et al., 2022). In the hospitality industry, social media is now a critical component of digital marketing strategy, impacting brand visibility, reputation, and overall business performance.

2. Literature review

The tourism and hospitality industries have been revolutionized by the emergence of the internet and social media, which have provided a new horizon for the tourism industry. Social media is a powerful tool for outreach, knowledge dissemination, and informing customers of helpful information about offers and newly arrived services. The industry uses social media as an advertising tool to reach potential consumers. The effectiveness of different social media channels needs to be evaluated, and ROI must be measured. The emergence of Web 2.0 technologies has affected accountability relations within organizations, particularly in the travel sector, and user-generated content on platforms like TripAdvisor has shifted the power dynamic. Social media analytics is crucial for understanding consumer experiences and product evaluations in the hospitality and tourism industries (Islam, 2021).

Online platforms such as Over the Top (OTT) platforms, e-banking systems, online secondhand markets, and social media have a significant impact on customer perceptions (Chaudhary, 2023). Online consumer reviews and recommendations on various platforms extensively affect customer decision-making. Social media marketing campaigns incorporating emotional appeals and collaborations with relevant social media influencers can positively impact customer perceptions, brand loyalty, and engagement in the hospitality industry (Malik, 2023). Young consumers prefer online marketing to print media, and marketers must reconsider their marketing strategies and integrate their online presence into their marketing and communications options. Mobile app acceptance significantly impacts e-commerce service delivery, and companies must develop a mobile app that provides personalized services to survive in the e-commerce industry (Khrais & Alghamdi, 2021).

The widespread use of social media has led to an evolution in how technology impacts consumer behaviour. Habiba and Hossain (2023) state that over half of the world's population uses social media platforms. The impact of customer reviews and ratings on these platforms is significant in building trust and credibility for a brand (Mehta, 2023). In the hotel industry, user-generated content, particularly online reviews and user-generated photos, significantly impacts a hotel's reputation (Kapoor, 2022). Hotels can use social media platforms and digital marketing strategies to manage their brand image and increase sales. Moreover, digital marketing strategies significantly impact hotel room occupancy and RevPar. Hotels must focus on review sites and social media to manage their online reputation and respond to negative comments promptly (Ramgade & Kumar, 2021). Finally, suggest that using Web 2.0 and social media technologies improves customer engagement and satisfaction by enhancing interaction between hotels and website users.

Recent studies show that social media engagement is vital to customer loyalty (Nair, 2023). Social media customer brand engagement (CBE) is critical for offline and online loyalty, and it mediates between social media marketing efforts (SMMEs) and brand loyalty. Moreover, reward-based social media engagement in loyalty programs leads to higher loyalty among program members than non-members. In the tourism industry, customer engagement is a critical factor in enhancing brand loyalty, and it is mediated by customer trust and brand attachment. Hospitality and tourism firms use social media platforms like Trivago, Booking.com, and TripAdvisor to promote their brands and connect with customers. Social media engagement includes sharing, contributing, socialising, advocating, and co-creating brand-related content. It transforms consumers into content creators and affects brand-related social media engagement and behavioural brand loyalty. Social media communication has become a dialogue between companies and



customers, putting the customer at the organisation's centre. Social media ratings have an immediate impact on sales, making it critical for hotels to address social media challenges (Yanet & Zanfardini, 2023).

According to recent research by Clara et al. (2022), social media feedback can be a valuable tool for hotels to gain insights into the quality of their services, identify areas for improvement, enhance service quality, and improve customer satisfaction. Moreover, online reviews have become increasingly influential in the hotel industry and can help managers identify competitors, monitor market preferences, ensure service quality, and formulate marketing strategies. Social media data from platforms like TripAdvisor can provide valuable business insights, and hotels can use green efforts to improve customer communication (Gil-Soto et al., 2019).

Litt et al. (2020) found that meaningful social interactions are associated with specific attributes such as assertive community ties, shared activities, synchronous interactions, and planning and memorialising interactions. Technology can enhance the ability to plan, get together in person, or reminisce, ultimately fostering social cohesion and meaningfulness. On the other hand, Yin et al. (2019) emphasise the importance of social commerce in promoting the sustainability of business models and influencing purchase behaviour through user interaction and word-of-mouth communication in social networks. Izogo et al. (2021) note that eWOM-triggered C2C interactions significantly influence customers repurchase intention and engagement in social media, particularly in collectivistic cultures and when sharing negative eWOM. The market value of virtual influencers (VIs) in tourism marketing has doubled, from US\$6.5 billion in 2019 to 13.8 billion in 2021, resulting in increased attention for them. Xie-Carson et al. (2023) point out that the perceived human likeness is an essential component of source credibility for anthropomorphic VIs. Instagram users prefer VIs' touristic posts highlighting tourism attributes rather than self-promotion.

Mele et al. (2021) found that social media platforms like Instagram are popular among marketers for delivering content and engaging with audiences. Instagram is particularly effective for promoting brand awareness and cultural tourism. To design effective international marketing strategies, it is essential to investigate how organizations from different geographical markets communicate online. Additionally, technological advancements have led to the adoption of web-based self-service technology (SST) in the airline industry. However, due to limited cultural orientation, the technology acceptance model (TAM) used to measure factors affecting technology acceptance intention has shown inconsistent results in Western and non-Western countries.

Social media management is essential for hotels to improve their online reputation, create positive word of mouth, and generate revenue (Dhamija & Kaur, 2022). Effective social media communication strategies based on experience cues and emotional bonds with potential customers can enhance hotel performance. Social media analytics, such as sentiment analysis, are valuable tools for monitoring and enhancing online reputation (Orrego et al., 2021). Information access technologies can assist in monitoring tasks and generating reputation reports (Văduva & Tasește, 2023). Ultimately, social media technologies have transformed the hospitality industry's communication process and service delivery, and hoteliers must adapt to changing customer behaviour.

The hotel industry must face various challenges when managing its social media presence. These include effectively using social media platforms for digital marketing and actively seeking customer interaction. Managing online reviews and comments posted on social media platforms is also crucial for positively influencing potential customers and increasing bookings, which can be time-consuming. During times of crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, hotels turn to social media for timely and direct communication with customers, but this requires adapting communication strategies and maintaining a humane attitude (Lousada et al., 2021). Incorporating social media marketing is vital for marketing performance in the hotel industry, and perceived ease of use influences the attitude towards social networking sites that further enhance marketing performance. Social media interactions positively impact coworker guanxi (relationship) and induce workplace fun and stress (Sukhu & Bilgihan, 2023).

3. Objectives and hypotheses

1. Investigate the Role of Social Media in Shaping Hotel Reputation in Thailand.
2. Examine the Influence of Social Media on Customer Loyalty in Thailand.

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3. Analyse of cultural nuances in online behaviours and preferences affecting hotel reputation and loyalty in Thailand.

This study has three hypotheses

1. Hypothesis 1: Social media engagement positively correlates with hotel reputation.
2. Hypothesis 2: Social media engagement positively influences customer loyalty towards the hotel.
3. Hypothesis 3: Cultural differences in online behaviours significantly impact hotel reputation and customer loyalty in Thailand.

4. Materials and Methods

The research employed a mixed methods approach, Sciberras and Dingli (2023), utilised a mixed methods approach to gain a comprehensive understanding of social media usage, perceptions, and loyalty among hotel guests and tourists. Surveys collected quantitative data, while interviews provided qualitative insights. Structured questionnaires were distributed to participants. The questionnaires also included Likert 5 scales and closed-ended questions to capture standardised responses. According to Young and Casey (2018), 30 hotel customers were interviewed in-depth. Moreover, Cobern and Adams (2020) suggested that a sample size of 10-15 participants is often sufficient for qualitative research interviews to achieve data saturation while avoiding generalisation. According to the researchers, open-ended questions should be used to explore hotel service experiences, social media interactions, and factors influencing loyalty. A purposeful sample of 200 guests and tourists across diverse demographics was selected to ensure representativeness (Memon et al., 2020). The sample size can range from 30 to 400, depending on the population size and desired confidence level. A Cross-Cultural Analysis Framework was developed to compare data across different cultures, which involved identifying cultural dimensions relevant to the study, such as individualism-collectivism, and high-low context communication. The framework was applied to interpret survey and interview responses in a cross-cultural context. The study aimed to ensure representation across the industry by selecting hotels at various levels, including budget, mid-range, and luxury hotels, and considering geographical and demographic diversity. Criteria for hotel participation were implemented, and informed consent was obtained from participants. Cultural diversity was also considered. Statistical tools such as SPSS were used for quantitative analysis, such as regression, ANOVA, and the T-test, and qualitative analysis software was used for thematic analysis of interview transcripts. Triangulation was used to validate and strengthen the overall research outcomes by integrating the findings from both quantitative and qualitative analyses.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Results

The research analyses the descriptive statistics of three variables, gender, age, and purpose of travel, based on a sample size of 200 respondents. For the gender variable, the result shows that most respondents identified as male, with a relatively low level of variability. The most common age category for the age variable was between 35 and 44, with moderate variability. For the travel purpose variable, the most common travel purpose was "holidays/vacationing," with a notable degree of variability.

The study shows that social media plays a significant role in hotel bookings (mean value of 4.18). Social media reviews are a significant factor impacting hotel choice (mean value of 4.06), with positive content having a powerful influence on bookings (mean value of 4.35). Participants consider online ratings and reviews (mean value of 4.09) when shaping their perceptions of hotel reputation (mean value of 4.59). The study also found that special promotions or exclusive offers encouraged engagement on social media (mean value of 4.52), while cultural differences impacted engagement with hotels (mean value of 4.64). Overall, the results showed a relatively balanced distribution of responses, with a prevailing positive sentiment among participants.

5.1.1 Gender on Social Media Usage and Hotel Booking (Q1-12)

The study results suggest a generally positive inclination towards the influence of social media on hotel-related decisions and customer loyalty. Participants showed a high level of agreement on most



statements, although some diversity in responses was observed. The findings emphasize the importance of social media in shaping perceptions of hotel reputation, as well as the importance of positive social media experiences in fostering customer loyalty.

Table 1: Multiple Comparisons (Q1-2)

Gender-Social Media Usage and Hotel Booking								
Multiple Comparisons (Q1: Before booking a hotel, I actively seek information on social media platforms.)								
	(J) Family	(J) Family	Mean (I-J)	Difference	Std. Error	Sig	95% Interval	Confidence
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
LSD	Male	Female	.19		.14	.180	-.09	.48
		Prefer not to say	.09		.17	.601	-.25	.44
	Female	Male	-.19		.14	.180	-.48	.09
		Prefer not to say	-.10		.19	.601	-.48	.28
	Prefer not to say	Male	-.09		.17	.601	-.44	.25
		Female	.10		.19	.601	-.28	.48
Multiple Comparisons (Q2: I trust information shared on social media to make informed decisions about hotel bookings.)								
	(J) Family	(J) Family	Mean (I-J)	Difference	Std. Error	Sig	95% Interval	Confidence
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
LSD	Male	Female	.11		.16	.501	-.21	.43
		Prefer not to say	-.10		.20	.623	-.49	.29
	Female	Male	-.11		.16	.501	-.43	.21
		Prefer not to say	-.21		.22	.348	-.64	.23
	Prefer not to say	Male	.10		.20	.623	-.29	.49
		Female	.21		.22	.348	-.23	.64

*Own statistic.

Table 1 summarises the results of the survey questions related to social media usage patterns and trust in social media information for hotel bookings. For Question 1, there was a non-significant mean difference of 0.19 in social media usage between males and females ($p = 0.180$), and non-significant mean differences of 0.09 and -0.10 between males and those who prefer not to say, and between females and those who prefer not to say, respectively. For Question 2, there was a non-significant mean difference of 0.11 in trust in social media information between males and females ($p = 0.501$) and non-significant mean differences of -0.10 and -0.21 between males and those who prefer not to say and between females and those who prefer not to say, respectively. The confidence intervals also reinforced the non-significant nature of the observed variations. Overall, the statistical outcomes suggest a consistent trend across different gender categories for the evaluated survey questions, indicating a uniformity in social media usage and trust in information for



hotel bookings. The impact of social media on hotel selection was evaluated through respondents' agreement with statements Q3 and Q4. For Q3, the mean difference between male and female respondents was 0.06, with a standard error of 0.16 and a p-value of 0.689. The confidence interval (95%) ranges from -0.25 to 0.38. For Q4, the mean difference between male and female respondents was 0.03, with a standard error of 0.13 and a p-value of 0.841. The 95% confidence interval spans from -0.24 to 0.29. These comparisons highlight potential gender-related differences in respondents' perceptions of social media's impact on hotel selection.

Table 2 summarises the results of the survey questions related to perceptions of hotel reputation. The LSD test was conducted to examine mean differences between three groups: male, female, and respondents who preferred not to disclose their gender. For Q5, no statistically significant differences were found between the three groups. For Q6, the mean difference between males and females was -0.16 ($p = 0.08$), between males and respondents who preferred not to say was -0.17 ($p = 0.05$), and between females and respondents who preferred not to say was -0.01 ($p = 0.96$). The study found no significant differences in social media usage patterns and trust in social media information for hotel bookings across different genders. However, there were potential gender-related differences in respondents' perceptions of social media's impact on hotel selection and perceptions of hotel reputation. These findings may help hotel managers and marketers develop targeted social media strategies.

Table 2: Multiple Comparisons (Q5-6)

Perceptions of Hotel Reputation							
Multiple Comparisons (Q5: Social-media plays a crucial role in shaping my perception of a hotel's reputation.)							
	(J) Family	(J) Family	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Interval	Confidence
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
LSD	Male	Female	-.05	.10	.593	-.24	.14
		Prefer not to say	-.06	.12	.619	-.29	.17
	Female	Male	.05	.10	.593	-.14	.24
		Prefer not to say	-.01	.13	.958	-.26	.25
	Prefer not to say	Male	.06	.12	.619	-.17	.29
		Female	.01	.13	.958	-.25	.26
Multiple Comparisons (Q6: I consider online ratings and reviews when forming opinions about a hotel.)							
	(J) Family	(J) Family	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Interval	Confidence
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
LSD	Male	Female	.07	.14	.614	-.20	.34
		Prefer not to say	.01	.17	.941	-.32	.34
	Female	Male	-.07	.14	.614	-.34	.20
		Prefer not to say	-.06	.19	.759	-.43	.31
	Prefer not to say	Male	-.01	.17	.941	-.34	.32
		Female	.06	.19	.759	-.31	.43

*Own statistic.

The results of the impact of social media on customer loyalty were determined through multiple comparisons. Specifically, the focus is on respondents' perceptions of the statement, "Q7: Positive [352]



experiences shared on social media make me more loyal to a hotel." The analysis includes comparisons of loyalty's impact between genders and respondent categories. When comparing the impact of loyalty between genders, the mean difference is 0.15 for male vs. female, 0.20 for male vs. prefer not to say, and 0.06 for female vs. prefer not to say. However, the results of all three comparisons are not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$).

For the comparison of the impact of negative content on social media between genders (Q8), the mean difference is 0.02 for male vs. female, -0.06 for male vs. prefer not to say, and -0.08 for female vs. prefer not to say. Again, the results are not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$) for all three comparisons. Statistical comparisons revealed no significant differences in the mean responses among specified demographic groups for the given survey questions (Q7 and Q8) regarding the impact of positive and negative experiences shared on social media on customer loyalty.

The results of multiple comparisons of LSD for 5 Likert scale questions about factors affecting social media engagement in hotel experiences (Q9: I am more likely to share my hotel experiences on social media when the service exceeds my expectations, and Q10: Special promotions or exclusive offers encourage me to engage with a hotel's social media). The analysis explores the likelihood of sharing hotel experiences concerning gender on social media. The mean difference between males and females is 0.09 ($p=0.591$), and between males and females, prefer not to say, it is -0.35 ($p=0.096$). The mean difference between females and those who prefer not to say is -0.44 ($p=0.059$). The 95% confidence intervals for the mean differences range from -0.25 to 0.43, -0.76 to 0.06, and -0.90 to 0.02, respectively.

This analysis compares the impact of special promotions or exclusive offers on encouraging engagement with a hotel's social media between different gender groups (Q11). The mean difference between males and females is -0.01, with a standard error of 0.12, resulting in a non-significant p-value of 0.903. The mean difference between males and those who prefer not to say is 0.09, with a standard error of 0.15, resulting in a non-significant p-value of 0.521. The mean difference between females and those who prefer not to say is -0.11, with a standard error of 0.16, resulting in a non-significant p-value of 0.504. The 95% confidence intervals are also provided for each comparison. These findings provide nuanced insights into the gender-related variations in social media engagement factors among hotel guests.

The study displayed multiple comparisons for cross-cultural influences related to two specific questions within social media engagement with hotels (Q12). It shows mean differences, standard errors, significance levels, and 95% confidence intervals for different family groups. The Least Significant Difference (LSD) for multiple comparisons between family groups (male, female, or prefer not to say) regarding the impact of cultural differences on social media engagement with hotels. The mean difference between males and females is 0.04, with a standard error of 0.10. The p-value (significance level) is 0.655, indicating that the difference is not statistically significant at the conventional 0.05 threshold. The 95% confidence interval for this comparison ranges from -0.24 to 0.15.

The result shows the LSD for multiple comparisons between family groups regarding their awareness of cultural nuances in online content shared by hotels or guests on social media. The mean difference between females and those who prefer not to say is 0.14, with a standard error of 0.15 and a non-significant p-value of 0.356. The 95% confidence interval for this comparison ranges from -0.16 to 0.44. The figure analyses multiple comparisons of cultural influences on social media engagement with hotels, highlighting potential differences in perceptions.

The study analysed social media usage patterns and trust in social media information for hotel bookings across genders. The results showed no significant difference between genders or those who preferred not to disclose their gender, indicating a uniformity in social media usage and trust in information for hotel bookings. The study conclusively established the impact of social media on hotel selection, with consistent trends observed across all gender categories. The results revealed non-significant mean differences and confidence intervals, providing irrefutable evidence to support this claim. The present analysis delves into the respondents' opinions regarding the influence of social media on a hotel's reputation. The findings revealed no significant differences in perceptions of the impact of social media on hotel reputations between gender categories. Thus, there is a unanimous agreement among the respondents regarding the impact of social media on a hotel's reputation.



5.1.2 Age on Social Media Usage and Hotel Booking (Q1-12)

A study was conducted to evaluate the influence of social media on hotel booking decisions across different age groups. The study involved a statistical analysis of respondents' information-seeking behaviour, trust levels in shared information, the impact of social media reviews on hotel choice, perceptions of hotel reputation, and the impact of social media experiences on customer loyalty. The analysis revealed no significant differences in information-seeking behaviour on social media platforms across different age groups. The study found no statistically significant differences in trust levels between respondents from the same family unit and those from different family units in various age groups. Regarding the influence of social media reviews on hotel choice, the study found no statistically significant differences in the impact of social media reviews on hotel choice among the various age groups. This indicates that social media reviews similarly impact individuals' hotel booking decisions across all age groups.

The study also examined the impact of positive social media content on hotel booking decisions. The results showed that the likelihood of booking a hotel based on positive social media content was significantly higher in the age group of 18-24 (mean difference = -0.74, Sig. = 0.003) compared to the age group of 55. However, there were no statistically significant differences in the impact of positive social media content on hotel booking decisions across the other age groups. The study investigated individuals' perceptions of a hotel's reputation across different age groups. The results showed no statistically significant differences in the mean responses to the survey questions across various age groups. This suggests that age may play a minor role in considering online ratings and reviews when forming opinions about a hotel.

The study also examined the impact of social media experiences on customer loyalty across different age groups. The results showed a statistically significant difference in the impact of positive social media experiences on customer loyalty between the age groups of 25-34 and 55 upward (mean difference = 0.42, Sig. = 0.011). However, the study found a significant difference in the perception of social media influence on loyalty between the age groups of 55 and 25-34 (mean difference = -0.42, Sig. = 0.011). Finally, the study compared the likelihood of sharing positive hotel experiences on social media between individuals aged 18-24 and those in the 25-34 age group. The pairwise comparison analysis found no statistically significant difference in the likelihood of sharing positive hotel experiences on social media between these two age groups.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the statistical analysis provided valuable insights into the nuanced variations in perceptions within the surveyed population regarding the impact of social media on hotel booking decisions. The findings suggest that social media reviews similarly impact individuals' hotel booking decisions across all age groups. The study also highlights the significant impact of positive social media experiences on customer loyalty in the age group of 25-34. However, there is a contrasting perception of social media influence on loyalty between 55 and 25-34. Overall, the study suggests that age may play a minor role in considering online ratings and reviews when forming opinions about a hotel.

This research study aims to investigate the impact of social media on hotel reputation and customer loyalty in the Thai hospitality industry. The research has formulated three interconnected objectives and corresponding hypotheses to achieve this goal. The first objective is to understand how social media influences hotel reputation in Thailand. This involves examining social media engagement, user-generated content, and online presence. Hypothesis 1 supports this objective by proposing a positive correlation between higher social media engagement levels and hotel reputation.

The second objective explores the relationship between social media engagement and customer loyalty towards hotels in Thailand. Hypothesis 2 suggests that social media engagement positively influences customer loyalty. The third objective seeks to investigate how cultural differences impact online behaviours and preferences related to hotel reputation and loyalty in Thailand. It involves examining cultural dimensions such as individualism-collectivism. Hypothesis 3 complements this objective by proposing that cultural differences significantly impact hotel reputation and customer loyalty in Thailand.

The objectives and hypotheses provide a comprehensive framework for investigating the complex dynamics between social media, culture, hotel reputation, and customer loyalty in the Thai hospitality industry. By testing these hypotheses through empirical testing and qualitative analysis, the research aims to



provide valuable insights into the role of social media in shaping hotel reputation and customer loyalty in Thailand.

5.2 Discussion

The study's findings reinforce the literature's assertion that social media is a powerful tool for advertising, outreach, knowledge dissemination, and customer engagement in the tourism and hospitality domains (Leung et al., 2013). The research suggests the need for future studies to analyse the advancement of social media, indicating an awareness of the dynamic nature of this technology and its potential evolution in the industry (Islam, 2021). The importance of evaluating the effectiveness of different social media channels has been previously emphasised, and social media analytics has been acknowledged as crucial in understanding consumer experiences and product evaluations. The study highlights the positive impact of social media marketing campaigns, incorporating emotional appeals, and collaborating with influencers in the hospitality industry (Malik, 2023). It further consolidates the evidence that customer reviews and ratings significantly influence brand reputation and sales. The role of social media in transforming company-customer communication into a dialogue is also acknowledged (Mehta, 2023).

The study acknowledges cross-cultural differences in social media use, aligning with Litt et al. (2020) and Yin et al. (2019), and emphasises the effectiveness of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) in collectivistic cultures. Izogo et al. (2021) and Mele et al. (2021) explore cultural preferences in social media marketing, and the study reinforces their findings on the market value of virtual influencers and their perceived human likeness. Additionally, the study underscores the popularity of Instagram among marketers and its effectiveness in promoting brand awareness and cultural tourism. Integrating social media into hospitality marketing strategies aligns with the literature's recognition of the transformative impact of social media technologies on the hospitality industry (Dhamija & Kaur, 2022). The positive effects of social media marketing on brand awareness, revenue generation, and profitability are also highlighted. The study acknowledges the challenges hotels face in managing their social media presence, echoing the literature on the need to use social media platforms and active customer interaction effectively. Finally, the positive impact of social media interactions on coworker relationships and workplace fun is recognised, as highlighted by Sukhu and Bilgihan (2023).

6. Conclusion

The research thoroughly analysed the relationship between gender and age on social media usage in hotel booking decisions based on a sample of 200 respondents.

Gender Analysis: The survey found that social media significantly influenced the hotel decision-making process for respondents, with positive social media content having a considerable influence on their hotel booking decisions. No significant gender-based differences were found in social media usage and trust for hotel bookings, and there were no statistically significant differences between genders regarding bookings due to positive content or hotel reputation perception. Customer loyalty was also unaffected by gender, as positive social media experiences were found to have no significant gender-related differences. These findings suggest that gender may not play a significant role in how social media reviews, hotel reputation perception, and customer loyalty are affected by social media engagement in the hotel industry.

Age Analysis: According to a study, no significant differences were found based on age regarding seeking information on social media before booking a hotel, and the impact of social media reviews on hotel choice was comparable among all ages (Leung et al., 2013). However, some nuanced variations were observed in the impact of positive content on hotel bookings and awareness of cultural nuances based on age (Islam, 2021). The study identified several gaps that warrant further exploration, such as the need for more research on the impact of social media on customer loyalty.

The study discusses the significant impact of social media on the tourism and hospitality industries, particularly in terms of marketing effectiveness, customer engagement, and brand reputation. Social media analytics can help businesses understand customer experiences and product evaluations, while mobile apps have become crucial in shaping e-commerce service delivery. However, there are still gaps in the research, such as the need for more studies on social media's impact on customer loyalty and retention, the effectiveness



of different social media channels, and the impact of social media on the global tourism industry, particularly in developing countries. Future research could address these gaps and help businesses improve their social media strategies.

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