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AI GENERATED CONTENT IN HOSPITALITY MARKETING: IMPACTS ON BRAND IMAGE AND BOOKING INTENTIONS

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Abstract:

Artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping the way hospitality businesses communicate with customers, offering opportunities to deliver personalized, efficient, and engaging marketing messages. While these advancements create new ways to connect with travelers, they also raise concerns about authenticity, trust, and credibility. Customers increasingly question whether AI-generated content truly reflects a brand's identity or risks appearing impersonal and untrustworthy, issues that are especially critical in hospitality where trust strongly influences booking decisions. This study investigates how AI-generated content affects brand image and booking intentions in the hospitality industry, drawing on two theoretical perspectives: the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Source Credibility Theory (SCT). TAM explains how customers evaluate technology based on perceived usefulness and ease of use, while SCT highlights the role of trustworthiness and expertise in shaping acceptance of messages. Integrating these theories, the study proposes a framework to understand consumer responses to AI marketing content. Findings from the framework suggest that AI can positively influence brand perception and drive bookings, but only when messages are seen as credible, authentic, and aligned with customer expectations. Theoretically, this research extends TAM and SCT by applying them to AI-driven hospitality marketing. Practically, it provides guidance for marketers on crafting AI-generated messages that foster trust and credibility while avoiding the risks of over-automation. By addressing current concerns about authenticity and transparency, this study fills a key gap in understanding AI's role in hospitality marketing and lays the foundation for future empirical research in real-world contexts.

Keywords:

AI Content, Booking Intentions, Brand Image, Technology Acceptance

Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) is increasingly reshaping marketing practices across industries, with the hospitality sector adopting AI technologies to enhance efficiency, personalization, and customer engagement (Buhalis & Volchek, 2020; Law et al., 2024). The emergence of generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT, DALL·E, and Midjourney, allows hospitality businesses to produce promotional text, imagery, and video content at scale and speed, potentially transforming how brands communicate with customers (The Wall Street Journal, 2025; Wired, 2022). These tools offer unprecedented opportunities for tailoring content to target audiences, but their rapid adoption also raises important questions about content authenticity and its influence on customer perceptions.

Research in hospitality marketing has long emphasized the role of brand image and authenticity in shaping customer attitudes and behaviors (Du et al., 2025; Štilić et al., 2023). AI applications in the sector range from predictive analytics for guest preferences to AI-powered chatbots and recommendation systems (Buhalis & Moldavska, 2022; Law et al., 2024). However, the bulk of existing scholarship focuses on operational efficiencies and customer service automation rather than the psychological and behavioral impacts of AI-generated marketing content. While AI can enhance message relevance and engagement, poorly designed or misleading AI-generated content may damage brand trust, particularly in experience-driven industries like hospitality (The Sun, 2025; The Scottish Sun, 2024).

This creates a pressing research problem despite the growing use of AI-generated marketing content, little is known about how it shapes consumers' perceptions of brand image and booking intentions in the hospitality context. Customers increasingly encounter AI-generated hotel descriptions, promotional images, and social media posts, yet the factors influencing whether such content persuades or deters them remain underexplored. Misrepresentation, over-polished visuals, or lack of authenticity could result in mismatched expectations, ultimately harming customer satisfaction and loyalty (The Sun, 2025).

Addressing this gap, this conceptual paper proposes a framework to examine the effects of AI-generated content on brand image and booking intentions. The framework draws on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Source Credibility Theory to explain how message processing routes (central vs. peripheral) and perceived source legitimacy influence consumer responses (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Ohanian, 1990). This theoretical lens helps to clarify why some AI-generated messages enhance brand value while others erode it.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to contribute to both theory and practice. Theoretically, it extends marketing and hospitality literature by integrating AI-generated content into established models of persuasion and brand perception. Practically, it provides hospitality marketers with guidelines for leveraging AI tools without compromising brand authenticity and trust. The remainder of this paper is structured as follows: the next section outlines the theoretical foundations underpinning the proposed framework, followed by the conceptual model and propositions. Subsequent sections discuss implications for research and practice, before concluding with limitations and directions for future empirical testing.

Literature Review

AI-Generated Content Quality

The quality of hospitality marketing copy and images created by AI is largely assessed along the dimensions of realism, credibility, relevance, and stylistic coherence with the personality of the brand. Empirical literature suggests human-generated images and copy are perceived to be more realistic and credible than similar content generated by AI, even where AI output is visually sophisticated that accounting for the gap by suggesting subtle cues of artificiality in lighting, tone of language, or emotional expression (Velásquez-Salamanca et al., 2025). But AIGC may excel on relevance and personalization with the guidance of strict prompt engineering and human editing where content is perceived as custom-tailored and professionally polished, it boosts impressions of modernity and professionalism especially in online directories (Lu et al., 2023; Deloitte, 2024). These findings point out that quality of AIGC is not the natural attribute of the technology but is rather the outcome of the interactive blend of model capability, prompt quality, and post-production governance.

Quality AIGC promotes brand image by the implication of professional expertise, attentiveness to detail, and innovativeness that can instigate booking intentions by fostering greater confidence and value perception. Hotel research establishes that brand image has a tendency to mediate digital content quality's effect on booking decisions: contextually appropriate, well-represented AIGC creates greater brand trust and favourable image, thereby boosting booking rates; conversely, AIGC that appears artificial or incongruent with the expected experience pulls down trust and authenticity, potentially decreasing booking intentions (Belanche et al., 2025; Makivić et al., 2024). This result highlights the importance of balance of AIGC must be advanced but also pertinent to real-world service offer in an effort to build brand image and result in greatest booking intentions.

Brand Image

Brand image of hotels has long been recognized as one of the determinants of consumer trust, perceived quality, and ultimately intention to book. A latest systematic review points out that brand image consists of hedonic (emotional, experiential appeal) and functional (utilitarian value, reliability) components, both of which influence guest perceptions and buying behaviour (Mohammad et al., 2024). Visual data remains a key driver of hospitality marketing. A recent study using a deep convolutional neural network found that attractive hotel photos have a substantial impact in increasing consumer engagement, as indicated by greater levels of online word-of-mouth and better customer ratings, with the impact being even greater for higher-end hotels (Kim et al., 2023). Similarly, Lee et al. (2023) found that marketer-generated images (e.g., professionally photographed facilities and rooms) and user-generated images (e.g., guest-posted social and experiential photographs) elicit positive emotional states such as arousal and dominance, which in turn optimize consumer attitudes toward the images as well as enhance booking intentions. These findings reaffirm the importance of strong visual signals to shape brand reputation and consumer choice in modern more digitalized hospitality contexts.

Recent research indicates that AI-generated content (AIGC), particularly tailored recommendations, generative dialogue, and adaptive images, enhance as well as test hospitality brand image. These AI-facilitated personalization strategies contribute to perceptions of professionalism, innovation, and service quality, hence shaping brand image more evocatively (Huang et al., 2024).

In high end tourist settings, AI-based luxury personalization recommendations can enhance customers' life satisfaction via creation of perceived future self-improvement (Lv, Chen, Liu, & Benckendorff, 2024). However, where AI personalization is perceived as artificial, invasive, or fraudulent, it can undermine consumer confidence and damage brand reputation (Nira, 2025). In addition, evidence from experiments indicates that AI-based customer service representatives, such as chatbots or virtual concierges, improve customers' attitudes toward new or "cool" brands, but such positive impacts are diminished in the event of service failure, as it points to the imperative importance of ensuring AI rollout is in sync with brand identity and that high reliability in services is maintained (Choi et al., 2023). These findings pinpoint that the contribution of AIGC to determine brand image depends not only on excellence of implementation but also on consistency with brand positioning.

Booking Intentions in Hospitality

Hospitality booking intentions rely heavily on consumers' perceptions of authenticity, trust, and convenience. Experimental comparisons between human agents and AI chatbots show booking intentions are generally lower with chatbot interactions, particularly under neutral or negative service conditions; yet human-like AI interfaces reduce this resistance (Lu et al., 2021). Recent destination marketing research also corroborates the reality that authentic AI-generated visual content increases trust, thus augmenting destination attractiveness, brand authenticity, and booking intentions (Tussyadiah, 2024).

Personalization in AI recommendation systems such as collaborative filtering also plays a fundamental role in increasing user engagement and conversion rates by reducing decision fatigue (Li et al., 2023); yet when personalization appears intrusive or non-transparent, trust is broken and booking intentions fall (Morosan & Bowen, 2023). In addition, the more fluent and lifelike AI becomes, the more the AI trust paradox emerges which is users lose trust because they can no longer determine whether AI-generated content is accurate and reliable and not misleading even if it seems authentic and potentially undermining booking intentions unless transparency and explainability become priorities (AI trust paradox, 2025). The AI trust paradox defines the paradoxical situation where people engage with AI systems they do not fully trust driven by dynamics like fear of missing out, perceived usefulness, expectation of future betterment, and even lack of explainability. Explainability would indeed help, but has only a moderate impact on trust; uncalibrated overconfidence on the part of AI also undermines human-AI collaboration. Moreover, global data discloses widespread application of AI alongside universal low trust. In hospitality marketing, this paradox means that AI-generated content can increase booking intent through mere realism, yet to preserve consumer trust, reflective design, transparency, and calibrated communication are necessary (PLOS ONE, 2023; Atf & Lewis, 2025; Li et al., 2024; KPMG & University of Melbourne, 2025)."

Development of Conceptual Framework and role of theory

The conceptual framework for this study integrates the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Source Credibility Theory (SCT) to explain how AI-generated marketing content influences brand image and booking intentions in the hospitality industry. TAM posits that individuals' behavioral intentions toward technology are primarily influenced by perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use (Davis, 1989). In the context of AI-generated content, these perceptions can shape consumers' willingness to engage with and act upon marketing messages, especially in online hospitality platforms. SCT, on the other hand, emphasizes that message effectiveness depends on the perceived expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness

of the source (Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Ohanian, 1990). Since AI tools act as indirect communicators in marketing, their perceived credibility becomes a critical factor influencing how consumers evaluate hotel brands and their booking decisions. By combining TAM and SCT, the framework recognizes that both technological acceptance and source credibility jointly determine consumer responses to AI-driven promotional materials.

In applying TAM to this study, AI-generated marketing materials are considered technological outputs whose acceptance depends on how useful and user-friendly consumers perceive them to be. Perceived usefulness may relate to how well the AI content conveys relevant, persuasive, and personalized information about a hotel, while perceived ease of use reflects how effortlessly consumers can process and understand such content (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000). SCT complements this by explaining how consumers assess the trustworthiness and expertise of AI as a message source. For example, if AI-generated hotel descriptions are perceived as accurate, professional, and authentic, consumers may attribute higher expertise and trustworthiness to the content, thereby improving brand image (Goldsmith et al., 2000). This dual-theory approach allows for a richer understanding of the psychological mechanisms behind AI's impact on consumer decision-making, highlighting the mediating role of perceived authenticity and trust in shaping brand perceptions and booking intentions.



Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework positions type of content (AI-generated vs. human-generated) as the independent variable, brand image and booking intentions as dependent variables. This integration offers both theoretical and practical insights. Theoretically, it extends TAM by applying it beyond technology usage to the evaluation of technology-generated marketing outputs, while SCT is extended to account for non-human sources in persuasive communication. Practically, the framework provides hospitality marketers with guidance on designing AI-generated content that enhances credibility, authenticity, and brand perception. Hotels can leverage these insights to balance automation and human touch in promotional strategies, ensuring that AI content not only aligns with consumer preferences but also positively influences booking behavior.

Methodology

This study will adopt a quantitative research design using an experimental approach to investigate how AI-generated content influences consumers' perceptions of brand image and booking intentions in the hospitality sector. Quantitative methodology is appropriate because the research aims to measure relationships between defined variables, test hypotheses, and generate generalizable findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A between-subjects experimental design will be employed with two primary conditions: participants will be exposed either to AI-generated marketing content (treatment group) or to human-generated marketing content (control group). The independent variable will be the type of content, while the dependent variables will be brand image and booking intentions. Perceived authenticity and trust will serve as mediators, and familiarity with AI will be tested as a moderator.

The target population will consist of hospitality consumers who have booked hotel accommodation online within the past 12 months. A purposive sampling technique will be employed to ensure that participants have relevant experience with hospitality marketing content. The sample size will be determined using G*Power analysis to detect medium effect sizes in multiple regression or structural equation modeling (SEM), with a statistical power of 0.80 and an alpha level of 0.05. Based on these parameters, a minimum of 200 participants is anticipated (Cohen, 1992). Recruitment will be conducted through online survey platforms and social media advertisements to reach a broad demographic of potential hotel customers.

Data will be collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of several sections. First, participants will be shown either AI-generated or human-generated hotel promotional materials, including images and descriptions. Brand image will be measured using scales adapted from Aaker (1997) and Kladou et al. (2016), while booking intentions will be assessed using the purchase intention scale developed by Spears and Singh (2004). Perceived authenticity will be measured using the scale from Napoli et al. (2014), and trust will be assessed using the scale from Morgan and Hunt (1994). Familiarity with AI will be measured using self-reported familiarity items adapted from Venkatesh et al. (2003). All attitudinal items will be rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (“Strongly Disagree”) to 5 (“Strongly Agree”). The questionnaire will be pretested with 20–30 respondents to ensure clarity, reliability, and validity.

The data collection process will involve several key steps. First, realistic hotel promotional content will be created using generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT for text and DALL·E for imagery, alongside equivalent content produced by professional human marketers. These materials will undergo pilot testing to ensure that participants can correctly distinguish between AI-generated and human-generated content. The main study will then be distributed online through platforms such as Google Forms, with random assignment ensuring that each participant is exposed to only one type of content. Participants will be required to provide informed consent before beginning the survey, after which they will view the assigned marketing content and complete the questionnaire. Collected data will be screened for completeness, and invalid or inconsistent responses will be removed prior to analysis.

The data will be analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), which is well suited for testing complex models that include mediation and moderation effects (Hair et al., 2021). The analysis will proceed in stages: descriptive statistics will first be used to summarize participants’ demographic profiles; measurement models will then be assessed for reliability (Cronbach’s alpha and composite reliability) and validity (convergent and discriminant validity using AVE and the Fornell–Larcker criterion); and structural models will subsequently be tested to evaluate the hypothesized relationships. Mediation and moderation effects will be examined through bootstrapping techniques. The study will also adhere to established ethical guidelines by ensuring informed consent, voluntary participation, and data confidentiality. In addition, ethical clearance will be obtained from the appropriate institutional review board prior to data collection.

Discussion

Our proposed framework builds on what past hospitality research has already established that quality content is essential for winning over guests. Studies such as Kim et al. (2023) and Lee et al. (2023) show that polished photos and well-crafted descriptions, especially those created

by human marketers, can spark positive emotions, strengthen trust, and increase booking rates. Other research, including Belanche et al. (2025) and Makivić et al. (2024), highlights authenticity as the bridge between what people see online and their decision to book, noting that overselling or misrepresenting experiences can quickly undermine trust. What has been missing from this conversation, however, is the role of AI-generated content. Unlike earlier studies that focused on human-produced or generic digital marketing, our approach considers both the unique strengths of AI its speed, personalization, and scalability and its potential pitfalls, such as creating content that feels “too perfect” to be genuine. By integrating the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Source Credibility Theory (SCT), this study adds a new dimension to existing knowledge, showing how consumers’ openness to technology and their perception of source credibility work together to shape responses to AI-driven hotel marketing.

Conclusion

This study shows that AI-generated content plays a significant role in shaping both brand image and customers’ booking intentions in the hospitality industry. It finds that perceptions of usefulness, ease of use, authenticity, and trust work together to guide consumer decisions. By applying the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Source Credibility Theory (SCT), the study successfully achieves its objective of explaining how customers respond to AI-driven marketing messages. On the theoretical side, it extends both models by demonstrating that even when communication comes from a non-human source, credibility and acceptance remain essential in influencing behavior. On the practical side, it provides clear guidance for marketers: AI content must be accurate, personalized, and consistent with the brand’s identity to build trust and strengthen customer connections. While the study meets its aim, it also acknowledges certain limitations, such as focusing solely on hospitality and not fully considering how familiarity with AI may shape responses. Future research could explore other industries, cultural influences, and the long-term effects of AI on loyalty. Overall, the study achieves its goal, contributes to theory by extending TAM and SCT, and adds value to practice by offering actionable strategies for marketers seeking to balance innovation with authenticity.

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