THE INFLUENCE OF GOOGLE SCORE RATINGS AND REVIEWS

ON VIETNAMESE CONSUMERS' ONLINE HOTEL BOOKING

DECISION: A CASE STUDY OF FIVE–STAR HOTELS IN VIETNAM

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This Independent Study Manuscript Presented to

The Graduate School of Bangkok University

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Communication Arts in Global Communication

2019

This Independent Study has been approved by
the Graduate School
Bangkok University

Title: The Influence of Google Score Ratings and Reviews on Vietnamese Consumers'

Online Hotel Booking Decision: A Case Study of Five-star Hotels in Vietnam

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January 15, 2021

Hau, Le. Master of Communication Arts, (January, 2021), Graduate School, Bangkok University.

<u>The Influence of Google Score Ratings and Reviews on Vietnamese Consumers'</u>

<u>Online Hotel Booking Decision: A Case Study of Five–Star Hotels in Vietnam</u>

(87 pp.)

Advisor: Asst. Prof. Ratanasuda Punnahitanond, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

This study investigated whether Google score ratings and Google reviews on four hotel characteristics -- Facilities, Location, Staff, and Service -- influenced Vietnamese consumers' online booking decision for the 5–star hotels in Vietnam. Samples were recruited from Vietnamese consumers in the Northern, Central, and Southern regions who booked the 5–star hotel online after reading Google score ratings and reviews. Online survey was conducted with 300 participants using the self-administered questionnaire. Multiple Regression Analysis was conducted to determine the impact of Google score ratings and reviews on Vietnamese consumers' hotel booking decisions. The analysis results revealed that both Google score ratings and reviews on four hotel characteristics significantly influenced Vietnamese consumers' online booking decision. Interestingly, Google reviews on hotel services had the highest impact, followed by reviews on location. staff, and facilities.

Keywords: Google Reviews, Google Score Ratings, Vietnamese Consumers, Five–star Hotel, Purchasing Decision

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Since I decided to apply for a Master of Communication Arts at Bangkok University, I have received plenty of enthusiastic help that makes me work hard to overcome the cultural barriers and difficulties to complete this program. The time I spent studying at Bangkok University was notable and significant. I have connected to many new friends and relationships. Hence, I am very grateful to my faculty lecturers, friends, and classmates who have accompanied me on this journey.

First of all, I would like to express my sincere thanks to my academic advisor, Assistant Professor Dr. Ratanasuda Punnahitanond, who gave me enthusiastic help and guidance. She gave me a good overview and logical thinking on what I should do the best for my independent study. As an academic advisor, she also put her patience, spent her time fixing my study, even tiny mistakes. Without her guide, I was not confident that my research would be completed well.

Secondly, I would like to express gratitude to my parents, who have unconditionally supported and allowed me to fulfill my dream of completing my overseas master's program. While I was tired and thought of giving up, they were the most important reason for me to restart. Not a single word can describe my gratitude to them. Without them, without my success.

Thirdly, I would like to thank my friends and classmates for their help. My study abroad journey in Thailand would not be memorable without their appearance.

Last but not least, I would love to send my thanks to my close friends' groups in Vietnam, who always believe in my abilities that make me more confident, stronger in my journey.

Mr. Hau Le

January 2021

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of six sections: rationale and problem statement, research questions, objectives of study, scope of study, significance of study, and definition of terms. It aims to give readers an overview, a background understanding of the potential effects of Google ratings and reviews on Vietnamese consumers' decision on reserving five–star hotels.

1.1. Rationale and Problem Statement

Vietnam is a developing country in Southeast Asia. In recent years, Vietnam has developed significantly in all fields of economy, culture, and education. With opening policies from the government, the country attracts a lot of investment from foreign companies and multinational corporations. In 2007, Vietnam became a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), which supports all aspects of Vietnam's economic development, since then. According to EVBN–EU–Vietnam Business Network Vietnam's Nominal Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2018 is estimated to reach 208.1 billion Euro, recording a Year over Year (YOY) growth rate of 6.7%. The country's nominal GDP is forecasted to attain 248.8 billion in 2020 (EU–Vietnam Business Network, 2018).

Besides the development of other fields, Vietnam also possesses a traditional culture and a natural ecosystem, which is being explored for tourism purposes: a 3,260–kilometer length of coastline from the north to the south, together with a rich

rain tropical forest system. Therefore, Vietnam has become a country with tourism potential, attracting investment from foreign companies. They have concentrated on building restaurants, hotels, and tours. On the other hand, in the national development strategy, politicians mentioned tourism and hospitality as an important sector to distribute into the annual Vietnam GDP, which leads to an enhancement of the national economy.

After joining the WTO, tourism sectors and the hospitality industry in Vietnam have got more opportunities to grow up. The number of international tourists choosing Vietnam as a tourist destination is increasing. According to the report of the Vietnam Tourism Administration in the beginning of the year 2019, for the whole year of 2018, Vietnam welcomed 15,497,791 visitors, an increase of 19.9% comparison to 2017. In addition, the standard of living of Vietnamese people has increased, they have a tendency to spend their leisure time and money on traveling. As a result, the hospitality industry received attention from foreign partners and sources which have been supported by practitioners, government agencies in Vietnam. That is the reason why investors have built five–star hotels in famous tourist destinations along the whole country. In Ha Noi, Da Nang City and Ho Chi Minh City, hotel chains owned by multinational corporations or jointly owned with Vietnamese partners at the beginning of establishment include Sheraton, Hilton, Nikko, InterContinental, Grand Plaza, Metropole, etc in recent decades. This has caused high competition in the hotel market. In the future, it is forecasted that competitions in this field become more and more intense. In this situation, these hotels are attempting to build brand image through high ratings and positive reviews in the online environment, on which Google is an effective tool.

In fact, people are surfing the Internet seeking information about what they want, and it has become a helpful invention. Google was launched officially as a search engine for users by Larry Page and Sergey Brin in 1998. So far, most people use this tool for accessing the Internet and figuring out information. Nowadays, consumers often obtain more information, recommendations from role models such as influencers, their friends through word of mouth, posts, refer to the media on making their decisions on choosing which tourist destinations or hotels for their journeys.

Our society is increasingly relying on the aggregated opinions of peers online. Contributions made by users on technological platforms facilitate the interaction between like–minded community members who share shopping interests, thus facilitating the decision–making process (Amblee & Bui, 2011). Before consumers make a purchase in an e–commerce website, they are accustomed to use information in the form of online reviews as a basic to judge whether they purchase. After consumers buy it, they are likely to post their own comments of the commodity on the e–commerce site (Mo, Li & Fan, 2015). Online ratings and reviews become one of the most trusted sources for consumers involved in the making–decision process. After recommendations from friends and family, consumers' ratings–reviews were the second most–trusted source of brand information (Nielsen, 2012). As we are immersing in the digital marketing era, most hotels and resorts are utilizing digital platforms to build their brand image. Google is one of the fastest ways as mentioned above to enhance their image. It is becoming increasingly common for customers who previously used/ booked their services to express their feelings as well as to present their bad/ good experiences by giving ratings or reviews via those digital platforms. This phenomenon has given rise to networked individualism, where technologies like

the Internet and smartphones have totally changed consumer buying behaviors. Marketers also notice the impact of ratings and reviews acting like word of mouth. In other words, potential customers of hotels and resorts tend to read and receive various information from ratings and reviews.

Thus, by observation and previous studies in customer behavior, empirical evidence reveals that consumers have been influenced by the online rating and review. However, researches on the hospitality industry in the Vietnam market are still rare or unofficial. Accordingly, there is still a limited understanding of the interaction between the influence of ratings and reviews on Vietnamese consumers' online booking decision.

1.2. Research Questions

Based on the rationale and problem statement presented above, this study aims to answer the following two research questions.

RQ1: Do Google reviews on hotel characteristics influence Vietnamese consumers' online five–star hotel booking decision?

RQ2: Do Google score ratings influence Vietnamese consumers' online five–star hotel booking decision?

1.3. Objectives of Study

This study was conducted to understand Vietnamese consumers' hotel booking decisions on the Internet. The objectives of this study are listed as following:

1.3.1 To examine whether Google reviews on hotel characteristics influence Vietnamese consumers' online five–star hotel booking decision.

1.3.2 To examine whether Google score ratings influence Vietnamese consumers' online five–star hotel booking decision.

1.4. Scope of Study

This study focuses on the influence of Google hotel ratings and reviews (whether they Vietnamese consumers make a online booking decision after reading Google ratings and reviews). The study involves research in the hospitality industry (five–star hotels) in the Vietnamese market during 2018 and 2020.

1.5. Significance of Study

For businesses: The primary significance of this study is to help businessmen who are investing in the hospitality industry understand the importance of online ratings and reviews on the Internet. These positive eWOM can build a brand reputation, or cause a communication crisis due to low ratings and negative reviews. They may have a significant effect on customer buying decisions. This is a study of five–star hotels in Vietnam, based on the results of the research, the hotel strategists or planners can make use of online ratings and reviews to promote their hotels.

For government offices: This paper also explored deeper the role of eWOM through online ratings and reviews. It helps government offices which are responsible for national economic development to have a better understanding of the role of eWOM in promoting hospitality businesses. They can grasp the potential influences of Google ratings and reviews on Vietnamese consumers' buying behavior.

For scholars and researchers: The study will help them uncover critical areas in communication in the hospitality industry that other researchers have not been able to explore or have found out another aspect of the problems which were mentioned in this paper. Thus, new findings regarding the role of eWOM on Vietnamese tourists, especially in the context of five–star hotels, can be added to the pool of knowledge in marketing communication.

1.6. Definition of Terms

Conceptual definition of the following terms is provided below for readers' clear understanding of this study.

1.6.1 Google

Google is an Internet search engine that becomes the world's most powerful up to present. It has been built upon a search engine algorithm that ranks web pages not only by content and keywords but also by how many other websites are linked to each page. Google is the primary tool to help users find information on the web, besides it is also integrated with other services such as: Froogle, Image Search, Google Groups, Google Answers, Google Maps, Google Toolbar, Blogger, Gmail, AdWords, AdSense.

1.6.2 Google Score Ratings and Reviews

According to the Google Privacy Policy, Terms of Service (2020), Google Score Ratings and Reviews are utilities provided by Google Maps. Users can present their assessment on places they have visited by giving score ratings for their experiences about these places, and they can also leave comments like if it is quiet, lively, or romantic. Google also stated that this tool does not interfere with users'

reviews, Google does not pay reviewers for adding their reviews to Google Maps, and that users' reviews and opinions are completely voluntary.

1.6.2.1 Google Reviews

Google Reviews provide valuable information about their business to both them and their customers. These reviews are users' written comments about their experiences at the particular hotel, which are displayed next to Google's search listing in Maps and Search, and help businesses stand out more on Google search (Google Privacy Policy, 2020). As for hotel reviews on Google, reviewers usually refer to rooms, location, service, and facilities. Google gathers data they can collect from a variety of sources, including links to third parties, and feedback from hotel owners. The machine learning system of Google helps them infer and evaluate hotel attributes. Hotel reviews normally involve four dimensions:

a. Hotel Facilities:

Hotel facilities include everything to serve a particular function in order to satisfy the corresponding needs of customers such as equipment, rooms, swimming pool, design space, utilities, etc. In this study, the author focuses on four elements: hotel decoration, types of room, swimming pool amenities, and fitness amenities.

b. Location:

This term is used to refer to a particular place or position. For the "Location" attribute in a Google review, the user will evaluate nearby sightseeings, surroundings, security, and convenience for customers' commuting in and out.

c. Staff:

The hotel operates smoothly based on the human resources of the hotel. Staff are the persons who directly serve the needs of customers while they are making a reservation at that hotel, supporting information, solving customers' service problems.

d. Services:

This attribute is often associated with hotel facilities. The hotel services include cleaning, health care services, meals, and emergency helps (24–hour reception), etc.

1.6.2.2 Google Score Ratings

Google Score Ratings are all scores for local search results that are rated on a scale from 1 to 5 stars. The meanings of the stars are as follows: 1 star = Hated it, 2 stars = Disliked it, 3 stars = It was okay, 4 stars = Liked it, 5 stars = Loved it. The overall score (star ratings) on Google for the place is calculated from user ratings, which show up with customer reviews, top reviews, and the total number of business reviews ("Google Score Ratings", 2020).

1.6.3 Online Hotel Booking Decision

Online hotel booking decision is an action performed in the process of making a decision to book a hotel. This decision is done in the online environment and mainly has two forms (Yingxiao, Xueyan, Ying & Huanyu, 2016). One is, consumers can directly book through the official website of the hotel. Another type is third–party reservation sites. Using online hotel booking platforms, consumers can openly comment and make comparisons between hotels.

1.6.4 Five–Star Hotels

According to Five Star Alliance (2020), Five–star hotels are properties that give guests the highest degree of luxury through personalized services, a wide variety of amenities and luxurious accommodation. Properties receive five–star standards by providing visitors with accommodation that meets or exceeds even the highest standards of comfort, decor, and luxury. Five Star Alliance also reported, the criteria for evaluating a five–star hotel relate to the three factors: Service, In–Room Amenities, Comfort:

a. Service

- Standalone concierge staff available at least 16 hours a day

- A high staff–to–room ratio ideally above 2.5

- Multilingual staff

- 24–hour reception, room service, valet parking, butler, doorman

- Nightly turndown

- Daily housekeeping that is also available upon request at any time

- Laundry, ironing, dry cleaning, and shoe polishing

- Guest elevators separate from staff elevators

- Luggage storage in which bags are out of guest view

- Fine dining restaurant(s) and a standalone lounge and/ or bar

- Transfers and executive or house car

- Childcare

b. In–Room Amenities

- Electric safe

- Laundry bags

- Full–length mirror with lighting

- Flat–screen TV with international programming

- Stocked mini bar

- Selection of daily newspapers

- Wifi

- At least four types of spa treatments

c. Comfort

- Guest rooms must be plush and inviting

- Pillow menu

- Blackout shades

- Bathrobes, slippers, luxury toiletries, and large fluffy towels

- Poolside daybeds, umbrellas, lotions, ice water, attendants, and food

and beverage service

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Readers can find a review of related literature, findings from previous studies, and relevant theories that support this research in chapter 2 of an Independent Study. This chapter also proposes a conceptual framework to graphically show the hypothesized effects of Google Ratings and Reviews on the online hotel booking decision of Vietnamese consumers.

2.1 Online Ratings and Reviews as a Type of Electric Word of Mouth (EWOM)

Traditional "Word of Mouth" (WOM) is defined as "informal communications directed at other consumers about the ownership, usage, or characteristics of particular goods and services and/or their sellers" (Westbrook, 1987), an oral form of interpersonal non–commercial communication among acquaintances (Cheung & Thadani, 2010). In addition, over the past decades, Arndt (1967) together with Westbook (1987), also agreed that WOM has become a form of informal interpersonal communication, between non–commercial contributors and real–life recipients about the ownership, usage, or characteristics of goods and services.

Since the introduction of the mass media such as newspapers, television, radio, WOM began to appear through these and has been becoming more and more popular. Before that, it existed in the form of exchanging information between individuals, or an individual with a small group of people directly. WOM has grown even more in recent era because of the global economy and technology development and it continues to attract the attention of consumers before they make a purchasing

decision. Therefore, there are also many economic researchers who have conducted research on how WOM affects the sales of restaurants, hotels, or consumer goods. Therefore, researchers in the modern era also make new comments about WOM as follows: WOM is without third–party handling, individuals' processing, and transmitting information on a particular product, brand, manufacturer, or seller. Any two–way interactive communication activity may be reminiscent of any company or individual information being targeted, leading the viewer to get information, alter behaviors, and even influence purchasing behavior (Kotler & Keller, 2012).

WOM is considered to have a strong impact on consumer decision–making. People often consider reviews, opinions, advice from their friends, relatives, or someone who has previously experienced or a traditional travel agency before making a travel plan for them or for their family (Cox, Burgess, Sellitto & Buultjena, 2009).

Electronic word–of–mouth communication (eWOM) is any positive or negative comment about a product or business made accessible to numerous people and/or organizations and distributed across the Internet by potential, current or former customers (Cheung & Thadani, 2010). eWOM has a close relationship with user–generated content (UGC) (Wang & Rodgers, 2011), UGC becomes eWOM when people share content with the online branding community (OBC). Marketers try to apply eWOM to their communications processes and engage consumers UGC (Wang & Rodgers, 2011) because eWOM has a strong influence on consumers' buying decisions.

eWOM communication is defined based on traditional WOM communication. Therefore, it has many common points, but they differ from some respects. If the traditional WOM was the spread of messages only between individuals, since the

advent of the Internet, messages become viral to reach more people if the message was deemed convincing enough or funny (Estrella-Ramón & Ellis-Chadwick, 2017). Researches also showed that, with eWOM, messages expand and spread rapidly because messages are exchanged multidimensional in asynchronous mode (Hung & Li, 2007). Content is discussed by users on various electronic technologies such as forums, newsgroups, blogs, review sites, and social networking sites. That is the reason why traditional WOM became eWOM in the modern era. In addition, the comparison between traditional WOM and eWOM can be seen that the messages spread in the traditional way disappear after speaking, but the messages propagated by eWOM are likely to persist for a while.

Online consumer ratings and reviews as a form of eWOM are experiencing massive growth (Brown, Broderick & Lee, 2007). They provide customer viewpoint, product details and recommendations (Lee, Park & Han, 2008) and are one of the most relied on sources of information for choosing holiday destinations (Murphy, Mascardo & Benckendorff, 2007), and obtain trustworthy and considered credible information as compared to information provided by marketers which might be viewed with scepticism and possible disbelief (Park & Niolau, 2015). Online customer reviews (OCR) becomes an important tool for potential customers before they make an online purchase decision. In the online shopping environment, consumers are not able to directly experience and evaluate products, so they often rely on reviews and recommendations from previous buyers. The aim is to minimize the risks of product quality and the seller's dishonesty (Yaylc & Bayram, 2012) and the Opinion Research Corporation agreed this view and assessed that OCR has been playing an increasingly important role in consumers' buying decisions, up to 61% of

respondents in their research said they consult online reviews before buying a new product or service.

2.2. Positive and Negative Online Reviews

eWOM in general and OCR in particular play an important role in consumer decision–making (Duan, Gu & Whinston, 2008). In the hospitality sector, Ba & Pavlou (2002), had the same opinion, also agreed that online reviews and evaluations of hotels also become an important factor in consumers' hotel booking decisions. Online hotel reviews are considered a decisive factor for hotel bookings and trip planning of consumers. Negative hotel reviews can prevent both their booking and sales (Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009). Positive reviews generate positive attitudes and a possibility for purchase, whereas, negative online opinions affects negatively the purchasing behavior of the customer (Karakaya & Barnes, 2010).

2.2.1 Positive Online Review

Online reviews have a positive and important effect on the intentions of booking hotels. The more positive reviews, the more likely they would be to affect buyers on online hotel bookings (Bulchand–Gidumal, Melián-González & Lopez–Valcarcel, 2013). In their report, Bulchand–Gidumal, et al. (2013) found that, compared with negative reviews, positive reviews of more than 16,680 hotels in 249 tourist destinations accounted for 70% of reviews on TripAdvisor. This shows that online reviews are important in the hospitality industry, and are managed as a strategic communication channel as managers try to increase the rate of positive reviews. Because the more positive feedback tends to be, the more positive the consumer's attitude is, while the negative one has the opposite effect (Ladhari &

Michaud, 2015). Another study of Park, Lee & Han (2007), found that the quality of reviews increases consumers 'buying intention.

2.2.2 Negative Online Review

Negative reviews on a mass level cause a negative attitude towards hotel bookings. However, the single negative comments do not impact the booking intention of the customers (Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009). Besides, Individuals are more likely to be affected by negative information relative to positive information (Jansen, Zhang, Sobel & Chowdury, 2009). Another study by Sparks & Browning (2011) also examined negative information and drew conclusions: Negative information framed before positive information appears to decrease the customer's booking intentions. Positive information given with numerical scores decreases the negative impact and positively impacts consumers on hotel bookings. The favorable comments have a positive impact on hotel ratings and the negative reviews have an unfavorable effect on hotel ratings.

2.3 Related Literature Review and Previous Study

As written in Chapter 1, the online environment has become extremely essential in today's Internet era. Individuals and organizations easily update the information they want in this environment. Many kinds of studies have been conducted to inquire about the impact of online ratings and reviews on consumer buying behavior in all fields. Researchers also try to obtain different research results on this topic to serve businesses with an aim to understand consumer behavior, from which they can offer effective strategies.

The previous findings have also shown the effectiveness of online ratings and reviews, which are thought to be secondary information affecting consumers buying behaviors. Therefore, this research was conducted and developed based on recent empirical research on the influence of online ratings and reviews on consumer behavior.

The ratings and reviews of buyers play a vital role in influencing the purchasing decision of consumers. A relevant study conducted in China by Qiang Ye and team in 2009 on "The impact of online user reviews on hotel room sales" gave the following insights. This study analyzed the data collected from the Ctrip website, which is the largest travel website in China. Quing, Rob & Bin (2009) concentrated on 3,625 reviews for 248 hotels which were uploaded by users from February 2007 to January 2008. At the same time, they developed a fixed effect log–linear regression to evaluate the impact of online reviews on the number of hotel bookings. The finding supports the idea of online ratings and reviews having an impact on consumers' booking results. Positive online reviews can significantly increase the number of bookings in a hotel, and the variance or polarity of WOM for the reviews of a hotel had a negative impact on the number of online sales. Hotels with higher star ratings received more online bookings (Quing, et al., 2009). Positive reviews, description rating, picture reviews, addition reviews, and cumulative reviews are influential factors on consumer purchase behavior. Consumers would make decisions quickly based on online reviews in a short time. (Mo, et al., 2015).

Gavilan, Avello & Martinez (2017) found out the relationship between online ratings and reviews and customer behavior by analyzing the influence of good vs. bad ratings in the first stages of the decision–making process when customers book a

hotel. A full factorial between–subjects design of 2 levels of ratings (good vs. bad) x 2 levels of reviews (high vs. low) in a decision–controlled setting was conducted to test the impact of reviews and the number of reviews on customer reliability. The study also yielded results concerning hotels such that web–users (potential buyers) trust low numerical ratings more than high ratings and tend to shortlist those hotels which have better ratings. Low ratings are trustworthy, regardless of the number of reviews while high ratings are trustworthy only when they are supported by a high number of reviews.

2.4 Related Theories

2.4.1 Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT)

Before consumers make a purchase, they are accustomed to using online reviews information as a basis to judge whether they purchase. After buying it, consumers are likely to post their own comments on the commodity in the e–commerce sites (Mo, et al., 2015). Consumers tend to believe and buy products/ services more based on other consumers' previous experiences. Some authors of previous studies have tried to prove that potential buyers use ratings–reviews as a tool to evaluate products/ services and express their gratification, or content in previous customer ratings–reviews would become reference information for the future customers.

Social proof represents a kind of imitation that is a characteristic response to uncertainty in decision making (Cyert & March, 1963), consumers are more likely to make a buying decision when they have a suggestion from that imitation process. Then, people gain gratification right from the beginning using products/ services.

Looking at the actions of others to find clues as to what constitutes an appropriate action or to accept information obtained from others as evidence about reality, represents a peripheral persuasion route (Cialdini, 1993).

In recent years, researchers have a lot of findings of ratings–reviews' role in communication between consumers. They applied many theories for their studies in the literature. This paper utilizes the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) to explain this phenomenon. "UGT provides a framework for understanding when and how individual media consumers become more or less active and the consequences of that increased or decreased involvement" (West & Turner, 2018). "UGT is a model that takes into consideration the importance of the audience. A theory that is based on the assumption that media consumers are active must delineate what it means by "the active audience." (West & Turner, 2018). The following assumptions from UGT were applied to support the idea in this study. Firstly, the audience is active and his/her media use is goal–oriented. Secondly, people have enough self–awareness of their media use, interests, and motives to be able to provide researchers with an accurate picture of that use. Thirdly, value judgments of media content can only be assessed by the audience.

When making a purchase decision the consumer is in a goal–oriented model that favors an easy information processing approach (Schaik & Ling, 2009). Consumers proactively approach ratings and reviews before choosing their destinations or booking as ratings and reviews are the easiest way for potential buyers to review previous consumers' experiences about the products/ services. Ratings and reviews are a form of electronic word of mouth (eWOM) which has become influential tremendously in recent years. Consumers have chosen to read online

reviews that enable people to obtain trustworthy and credible information as compared to information provided by marketers which might be viewed with skepticism and possible disbelief (Park & Niolau, 2015).

The first and second assumptions indicate that the consumers (or audience mentioned in this theory) have all perceptions about their own media use. It can also infer that providing ratings and reviews on Google is conscious and proactive. (West & Turner, 2018) argued that consumers are cognizant of that activity. Then, information is provided not only to the next consumers but also to the researchers, helping them have an accurate picture of the use that affirms confidence in a positive audience. Therefore, these assumptions were applied to the study to consider consumers' information contribution behavior.

Besides, to explain the third assumption that audiences (consumers) are the only object that assesses the value of media content, Uses and Gratifications Theorists argue that because it is individual audience members who decided to use certain content for certain ends, the value of media content can be assessed only by the audience (West & Turner, 2018). Applying to the topic being researched, it can be understood that consumers are the ones who create ratings and reviews on Google, and also consumers deserve to assess the value of these reviews.

2.4.2 Source Credibility

Online reviews allow users to access detailed information with a high degree of trustworthiness and credibility compared to information provided by advertisers (Park & Niolau, 2015). With the same point of view, Kusumasondjaja, Shanka & Marchegiani (2012) also agreed that reviews are more trustworthy and credible than commercial sources or intermediaries.

Previous studies on the trustworthiness of social media impacting users seeking travel information include Fotis, Buhalis & Rossides (2012). In their report, reviews ordered the 3rd position in the list of most trustworthy sources after relatives and friends. Specifically, the list of trustworthy sources was ranked in order from high down to low as follows: Relatives, friends, reviews from other travelers on social media, official travel websites, travel companies, and advertisements on TV, radio, newspapers. The source of information users reach has been enormous, so when travelers receive a variety of content about their desired location, they build their trust in that content and expect it to be experienced similar to travelers who wrote previous reviews (Narangajavana, Fiol, Tena, Artola & García, 2017).

Customers agree that WOM contact knowledge is more credible to minimize the risk of product purchases, because people's real life experience without a commercial intent is more convincing than media ads (Herr, Kardes & Kim, 1991).

Credibility is interlinked with trustworthiness and is also a major factor in planning and decision making (Dusíková, 2018). All content created by users of the Internet is considered to be highly credible among travelers (Llodra–Riera, Martínez–Ruiz, Jiménez–Zarco & Izquierdo–Yusta, 2015). Travelers do not have any purpose for profit while sharing their reviews (Chung & Buhalis, 2008) and most of them are anonymous so their reviews would be more objective and highly reliable. Thus, online review become a vital reference for travelers to reserve hotels online (Yu, Guo, Zhang & Zhao, 2019). Besides, the credibility of user–generated content is determined by prior experiences of travellers, knowledge, and the author of the reviews. It is important for travelers to perceive high quality content since it is useful and helpful to them (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). There are several other studies that also share views

on the credibility of online reviews. For example, in the study of Yoo and team (2007), they claimed that user–generated content was perceived as more credible than other sources with expertise as a professional website.

A review or post which is considered credible impacts on travellers' decision making process and their expectations are higher (Narangajavana, et al., 2017)

2.5. Knowledge Gap Found from Past Studies

As the purpose was stated on the first part, this study is to find out whether the Google ratings and reviews influence the customer's hotel reservation decision, how the relationship between ratings and reviews and booking is. Ratings and reviews of previous customers (who have used hotel products/ services) have become initial information for new customers (Leads/ potential buyers). New customer booking results seem to be affected by types of reviews (positive, moderate, and negative) given by previous customers. The research was conducted in the fact–based, providing evidence proving the causal relationship between consumer ratings–reviews and their buying behavior. The results obtained after the completion of the study should probably be scrutinized by strategists, hotel marketing managers and can be applied to four–star or five–star hotels that currently have a business strategy in Vietnam about hotel eWOM communication issues on Google platforms.

Theoretical Framework and Research Hypothesis

This study was conducted in the hospitality field and research on five–star hotels in Vietnam about online booking decisions of Vietnamese Consumers. The study also focuses on ratings and reviews on Google search platforms. In terms of the

review system on this platform, four factors in review content (facilities, location, staff, and services) were examined based on three types of reviews (positive reviews, moderate reviews, and negative reviews). Besides, users are also allowed to rate stars for places/ hotels they have visited from one to five stars.

Therefore, by reviewing the relevant literature and empirical observations, this study aims to examine the impact of eWOM in the form of Google score ratings and reviews on Vietnamese consumers' hotel booking behavior. In addition to demographics characteristics related to income level, the study was conducted on Vietnamese customers who have previously or planned to reserve a room at five–star hotels in Vietnam. The study used income as a selection criteria to filter the subjects participating in the survey. Based on these arguments, this study forms the following conceptual model and research hypotheses. The conceptual model presents two independent variables–Google reviews on hotel characteristics and Google score ratings–have causal relationship with one dependent variable, Vietnamese consumers' online hotel booking decision.
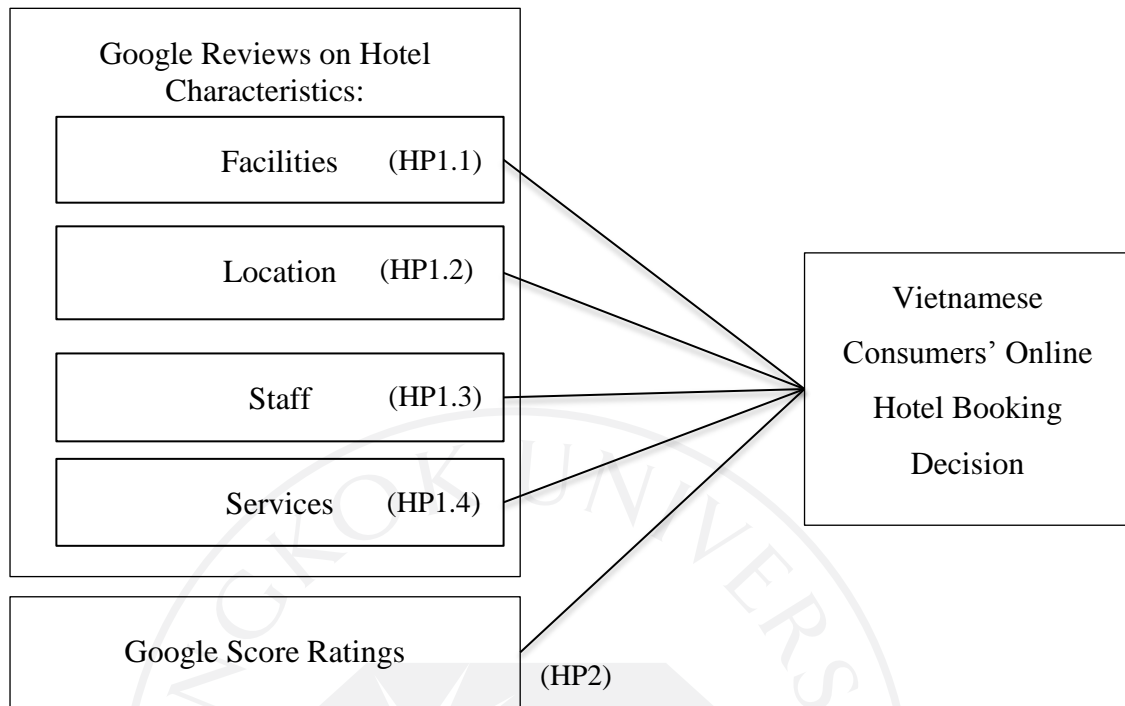
Figure 2.1: Conceptual Frame

2.5.1 Hotel Google Reviews

Score ratings and reviews on Google are considered C2C review systems. There are three types of reviews in this system: Positive, moderate, and negative. This study will look at how the number of score ratings and types of reviews which belong to the hotel field on Google search platform influences the booking behavior of Vietnamese consumers. There are several previous studies on the influence of ratings and reviews on customer behavior in different areas (Mo, et al., 2015; Gavilan, et al., 2017). Accordingly, this study proposes the following research hypotheses:

HP#1: Google reviews on hotel characteristics have an effect on Vietnamese consumers' online hotel booking decision.

HP#1.1: Google reviews on "Facilities of hotel" has an effect on Vietnamese Consumers' online hotel booking decision.

HP#1.2: Google reviews on "Location of hotel" has an effect on Vietnamese Consumers' online hotel booking decision.

HP#1.3: Google reviews on "Staff of hotel" has an effect on Vietnamese Consumers' online hotel booking decision.

HP#1.4: Google reviews on "Services of hotel" has an effect on Vietnamese Consumers' online hotel booking decision.

2.5.2 Google Score Ratings

According to the score ratings regulation on Google, the star of score ratings ranges from 1 to 5: The highest rating is 5 stars and the lowest is 1 star. This rating is not relevant to the star ratings in the hospitality industry standard. With 5 stars, this means customers appreciate the quality of your products or services. On the contrary, 1 star shows poor quality, poor services. Reputation is one of the company's intangible brand assets and is also a factor that attracts attention from consumers. Star ratings help increase customer confidence in each purchase decision (Mo, et al., 2015).

In this study, the second hypothesis related to Google score ratings was proposed as follows:

HP#2: Google score ratings have an effect on Vietnamese Consumers' online hotel booking decision.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter introduces the research methodology to examine the framework and research hypotheses proposed in chapter 2. Content includes research design, population and sample selection, research procedure, research measurement, data analysis, validity and reliability of the Study.

3.1 Research Design

This research was done by the quantitative approach method through two steps of preliminary research and official research. After researching and deducing from the former researches and fundamental models about the variables that affect consumers' buying decisions, a conceptual framework and research hypotheses were formed. Then, a new model research was proposed in this research. Preliminary survey research and official survey research help testing the proposed research model and the research hypotheses based on relationships presented in that model.

This survey was done in the form of an online survey due to many of its advantages in terms of low costs, high speed and reasonable response rate, (Nayak, Narayan, 2019). The survey was presented on Google Forms, then it was sent directly to samples via email, Facebook Messengers, Forum, Facebook Group, etc.

3.2 Population and Sample Selection

    3.2.1 Population

    Hotels in cities, rooms at five−star hotels are most often booked for business trips. Customers are often high−income employees who grasp positions such as managers, directors, etc. in large companies or corporations. Hotels in tourist destinations, the main target customer groups of five−star hotels are usually families, or couples, who have a high income as well. These customer groups are usually aged over 25. Therefore, the target population to answer the survey for this study are Vietnamese citizens aged over 25, who have booked a room at any five−star hotels at least once during the past 2 years.

    According to population statistics, this age group is the main employee in the Vietnamese economy. Since this is a study related to 5−star hotels, luxury and modern, in addition, the respondents at least once had ever rented a room at a 5−star hotel, the age over 25 is a suitable age. At this age, most of people likely to earn their own income and manage it by themselve. Most of the consumers in this group are graduate students, office workers, public employees, business owners, self−employee, etc.

    3.2.2 Samples

    To carry out the research objectives of the topic in terms of the author's conditions and capabilities, convenient sampling was used to draw samples for this study. However, in order to ensure a higher representattion for the samples, the study selected the sample based on age, income. Due to limited time and cost, and the COVID−19 pandemic situation during the data collection, questionnaires were sent to respondents in the North, Central and South of Vietnam via mail, Facebook Messenger,

Zalo. As this paper studies the purchasing decision of Vietnamese consumers, the survey respondents are Vietnamese consumers accounting for 100% in the survey samples.

The larger the sample is, the higher the accuracy is but it is costly and time consuming (Nguyen, 2011). Because of that limitation, the sample size is determined at a minimum but still ensures the research results with representative values. The sample size depends on many factors such as the treatment method, reliability, and analysis technique. The number of samples should be 5 times the number of observed variables (Gorsuch, 1983) and a minimum of 200 samples (Hoelter, 1983). This research model has 6 parameters, according to the standard, each parameter needs 5 observed variables, the number of observed variables is n = 30.

According to Tabachnick & Fidell (1996), to conduct a regression analysis, the sample size must satisfy the following formula:

$$n \geq 8k + 50$$

(n is the sample size, k is the number of variables observed in the model)

This study is done with 25 observed variables. Therefore, this study ensures at least n > = 250.

3.3 Research Procedure

In preliminary research, after forming questionnaires based on previous related studies. The questionnaire was originally designed in English language and

reviewed by experts. Then, in order to reach Vietnamese respondents, the questionnaire was translated into Vietnamese. After that, it was sent out to experts who are working in the hospitality and communications industry in Vietnam to ensure that it is guaranteed the validity of the content and feasibility of the questionnaire.

To verify the clarity of the question, gather feedback on the length and quality of the question, it was further tested in a group of 30 respondents. Based on the results obtained from the pretest, the research adjusted the scale and questionnaire. Test results were preliminarily assessed for the reliability of the scale through Cronbach's Alpha coefficients and made the necessary adjustments to the final questionnaire before being officially conducted. The formal questionnaire for formal quantitative research was formed after the unsatisfactory observed variables are eliminated. Criteria for evaluating observed variables is to eliminate observed variables with low Cronbach's Alpha reliability. Questionnaire was distributed to samples via online platform during October 1st and October 31st, 2020.
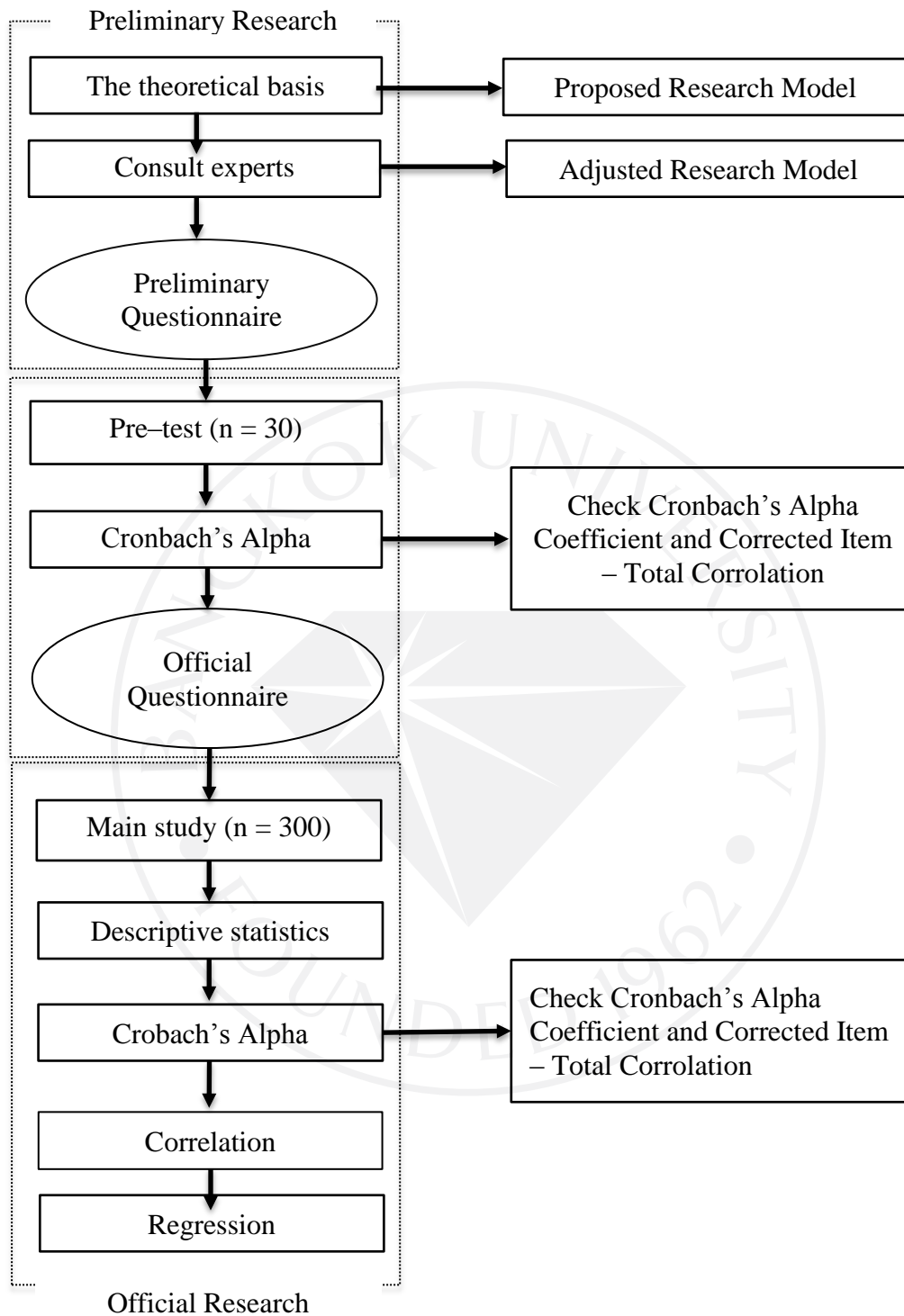
Figure 3.1: Research Procedure

3.4 Research Measurement

This survey research used a self–administered questionnaire as a research tool to collect primary data from the sample of the study, as the theoretical framework which is proposed in chapter 2 and this study uses a quantitative approach. This is a systematically prepared form that includes a set of close–ended questions that were designed on the basis of theory and proven studies to collect responses from respondents. The self–administered questionnaire for this study was designed to include questions aimed to investigate whether ratings and reviews on Google for a five–star hotel have a significant effect on consumers' online hotel booking, and whether each of the four factors in the online reviews individually influences consumers' decision making. Accordingly, the questionnaire was composed of five sections as follows (see coding details of the examined variables in Table 3.1 and Table 3.2).

3.4.1 Screening Questions

The study is aimed at a certain group of people. In particular, people who have viewed hotel ratings and reviews on Google, and have booked a 5–star hotel. The screening questions consisted of three questions regarding past experiences of online hotel booking, and the name of the hotel they booked. They help classify respondents to survey questions. If they do not pass the screening questions, they are not qualified to answer the next questions in the questionnaire. As such, the research can be done exclusively on the target audience.

3.4.2 Demographic Data

Demographic questions in this study are aimed at identifying the characteristics of respondents in terms of age, education, gender, and income. These

questions help the researcher draw an accurate picture of the group of people being studied.

3.4.3 Google Reviews

The measurement of the first independent variable (IV1), Google reviews, include four hotel characteristics, mentioned in the content of Google reviews: 1) Facilities (FA), 2) Location (LO), 3) Staff (ST), 4) Services (SV). For questions on each hotel characteristic, respondents were provided answer choices of a 5–point rating scale with the following 5 points: 1 = Very negative, 2 = Negative, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Positive and 5 = Very positive.

3.4.4 Google Score Ratings

The measurement of the second independent variable (IV2), Google score ratings, consists of four questions asking respondents that related to the five–star hotels they selected in the screening question section based on the 5–point rating scale ranging from 1 to 5 on which 1= Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither disagree nor agree, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly agree.

3.4.5 Consumers' Online Hotel Booking Decision

The dependent variable (DV), Vietnamese consumers' online hotel booking decision, was measured with four questions asking the respondents to select answers based on the 5–point rating scale with the following 5 points: 1= Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither disagree nor agree, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly agree.

Table 3.1: Code Book

	Description		Coding			Indicators
IV1	Google reviews on hotel charact–eristics	Google Reviews on "Facilities of Hotel"	OR	FA	FA1	Design and style
					FA2	Rooms
					FA3	Beds
					FA4	Bathrooms
					FA5	Swimming pool
					FA6	Gym equipment/ Fitness
		Google Reviews on "Location of Hotel"		LO	LO1	The environment and the surrounding landscape
					LO2	Distance from the hotel to the town center.
					LO3	The safety and security
					LO4	Taking taxi/ parking available for private car
		Google Reviews on "Staff of Hotel"		ST	ST1	The staff's service mind
					ST2	Staff's problem–solving
					ST3	Staff's physical appearance
		Google Reviews on "Service of Hotel"		SV	SV1	Hotel dining and dinner
					SV2	Free breakfast
					SV3	The spa/health service
					SV4	Hotels' emergency helps
					SV5	Babysitting/ child care services

(Continued)

Table 3.1 (Continued): Code Book

	Description		Coding	Indicators
IV2	Google Score Ratings	RA	RA1	The Google score ratings of the hotel I booked reflects exactly what I have experienced at that hotel.
			RA2	The Google score ratings of the hotel help me to believe in the quality of the hotel.
			RA3	The Google score ratings of the hotel I booked is reliable.
			RA4	The number of stars the hotel received on Google score ratings is not enough to reflect its quality.
DV	Vietnamese Consumers' Online Hotel Booking Decision	BD	BD1	I definitely booked the hotel after reading its reviews on Google.
			BD2	I decided to book the hotel after reading its reviews on Google.
			BD3	I booked a hotel because it has a high score ratings on Google.
			BD4	I did not make a reservation at the hotel that has the low score ratings on Google.

Table 3.2: Code Book on SPSS

Section 2: Personal Data			
	Respondent Data	Choices	Measures
2.1	Age	None	Scale
2.2	Occupation	1. College/ University Student 2. Government Officer 3. Small Business Owner 4. Large Business Owner 5. Corporate Employee 6. Artist/ Designer/ Working in Creative Field 7. Homemaker 8. Retired 9. Other	Nominal
2.3	Gender	1. Male 2. Female 3. Other	Nominal
2.4	Education Level	1. High School Diploma 2. Vocational Diploma 3. Bachelor's Degree 4. Master's Degree 5. Doctoral Degree	Nominal

(Continued)

Table 3.2 (Continued): Code Book on SPSS

Section 2: Personal Data			
	Respondent data	Choices	Measures
2.5	Monthly Income	1 < 5.000.000VND 2 From 5.000.000VND to <10.000.000VND 3 From 10.000.001VND to <18.000.000VND 4 From 18.000.001VND to <32.000.000VND 5 From 32.000.001VND to <52.000.000VND 6 From 52.000.001VND to <80.000.000VND 7 80.000.000VND and over	Nominal
Section 3.1 Hotel Google Reviews			
FA		Facilities (6 items)	Scales
FA1		Design and Style	5 choices
FA2		Rooms	5 choices
FA3		Beds	5 choices
FA4		Bathrooms	5 choices
FA5		Swimming Pool	5 choices
FA6		Gym Equipment/ Fitness	5 choices

(Continued)

Table 3.2 (Continued): Code Book on SPSS

Section 3.1 Hotel Google Reviews		
LO	Location (4 items)	Scales
LO1	Design and style	5 choices
LO2	Rooms	5 choices
LO3	Beds	5 choices
LO4	Bathrooms	5 choices
ST	Staff (3 items)	Scales
ST1	The staff's service mind	5 choices
ST2	Staff's problem–solving	5 choices
ST3	Staff's physical appearance	5 choices
SV	Services (5 items)	Scales
SV1	Hotel dining and dinner	5 choices
SV2	Free breakfast	5 choices
SV3	The spa/ Health service	5 choices
SV4	Hotels' emergency helps	5 choices
SV5	Babysitting/ Child care services	5 choices

Table 3.2 (Continued): Code Book on SPSS

Section 3.2 Hotel Score Ratings on Google		
RA	Statements (4 items)	Scales
RA1	The Google score ratings of the hotel I booked reflects exactly what I have experienced at that hotel.	5 choices
RA2	The Google score ratings of the hotel help me to believe in the quality of the hotel.	5 choices
RA3	The Google score ratings of the hotel I booked is reliable.	5 choices
RA4	The number of stars the hotel received on Google Ratings is not enough to reflect its quality.	5 choices
Section 3.3 Vietnamese Consumers' online hotel booking decisions		
BD	Statements (4 items)	Scales
BD1	I definitely booked the hotel after reading its reviews on Google.	5 choices
BD2	I decided to book the hotel after reading its reviews on Google.	5 choices
BD3	I booked a hotel because it has high score ratings on Google.	5 choices
BD4	I did not make a reservation at the hotel that has the low score ratings on Google.	5 choices

3.5 Data Analysis

The research used SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software for analyzing quantitative data of this study, which involved four steps:

Step 1: Data Processing

After respondents returned their survey questionnaire, collected data were encoded in the SPSS, and then the encoded data were reviewed. Incorrect data were cleaned before running any statistical analyses.

Step 2: Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistical analyses of the collected data were conducted. Demographic data were described in the form of frequency and percentage where data related to independent and dependent variables were described in the form of mean and standard deviations.

Step 3: Reliability Analysis

Reliability analysis was performed for all rating scales. Each rating scale must have Cronbach Alpha higher than 0.69 such that they could be valid for inferential statistical analyses.

Step 4: Inferential Statistical Analysis: Regression Analysis

Multiple Linear Regression (MLR) represents the relationship between two or more independent variables and one quantitative dependent variable (Nguyen, T. D., & Nguyen, T. T., 2011). To test the proposed causal relationship between two independent variables and one dependent variable, the MLR model was run and tested with 5% for the significance level. The study performed multiple regression according to the Enter method: all variables were included in one time and the related statistical results were considered.

The multiple regression equation for the initial proposed study is as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 * FA + \beta_2 * LO + \beta_3 * ST + \beta_4 * RV + \beta_5 * RA + \varepsilon$$

In which:

+ Y: Booking Decision

+ FA, LO, ST, RV: Google Reviews on Hotel Characteristics

+ RA: Google Score Ratings on Hotel

+ β_0 is a constant

+ β_1, β_2 are the regression coefficients

+ ε is the random error

The regression results are used to analyze:

– Evaluate the suitability of the multivariate regression model through the R–Square index

– Evaluate the model's meaning through F–test

– Test assumptions about the multicollinearity phenomenon (correlation between independent variables) through tolerance value or VIF (Variance Inflation Factor). The coefficient of VIF or Tolerance 0.1 can be said that there is a multi–collinearity phenomenon (Nguyen, T. D., & Nguyen, T. T., 2011).

– Determine the influence of factors affecting consumers' hotel booking decisions through the coefficient β. The larger β, the greater the influence on booking decisions.

3.6 Validity of the Study

This study examines validity of measurement in the questionnaire by using the Index of Item–Objective Congruence (I.O.C) developed by Rovinelli & Hambleton (1977).

Steps to find the content validity:

Step one: The questionnaire was formed and then sent to the advisor for any suggestions for improvement.

Step two: The questionnaire was adjusted based on feedback and recommendations made by the advisor.

Step three: After receiving feedback and recommendations from the advisor, the researcher used the Index of Item–Objective Congruence (IOC) in order to find the content validity. In this step, the questionnaire was sent to three experts who are experts in the field of market research and hospitality (see their profiles below).

Expert's Profile:

The questionnaire was sent to 3 experts to review and evaluate the suitability of the questions for the survey objective. Their profiles are listed as following:

(1) Ms. Tram, Phan Thi Bao (MBA). Quantitative research specialist of Global Research. Lecturer at FPT University.

(2) Ms. Ngoc, Tran Diep Bao. Sales Manager at The Landmark Vietnam. Former: Sales Executive at Radisson Blu Resort Phu Quoc, Vietnam.

(3) Ms. Huyen, Nguyen Thanh. Communication Manager at Radisson Blu Resort Cam Ranh, Vietnam.

Each item in the questionnaire after being evaluated by experts had an IOC of greater than 0.5. In addition, the IOC for the entire questionnaire was 0.671 (greater

than 0.5) (See more in results of Validity in Table 3.3) As a result, there were no items in the questionnaire that needed adjusting or removing. The questionnaire had content relevant to the survey objective. Therefore, the survey questionnaire was conducted on a large–scale field survey.

Table 3.3: Result of Questionnaire Content Validity

Item no.	Expert 1	Expert 2	Expert 3	IOC
1	1	1	1	1.000
2	1	1	1	1.000
3	1	1	1	1.000
4	1	1	1	1.000
5	1	1	1	1.000
6	1	1	1	1.000
7	1	1	1	1.000
8	1	1	1	1.000
9	1	1	1	1.000
10	1	1	1	1.000
11	1	1	1	1.000
12	1	1	1	1.000
13	1	1	1	1.000
14	1	0	1	0.667
15	1	1	1	1.000

(Continued)

Table 3.3 (Continued): Result of Questionnaire Content Validity

Item no.	Expert 1	Expert 2	Expert 3	IOC
16	0	1	1	0.667
17	1	1	0	0.667
18	1	1	1	1.000
19	1	0	1	0.667
20	1	1	1	1.000
21	1	1	1	1.000
22	1	0	1	0.667
23	1	0	1	0.667
24	1	1	1	1.000
25	0	1	1	0.667
26	0	1	1	0.667
27	1	1	1	1.000
28	0	1	1	0.667
29	1	0	1	0.667
30	1	1	1	1.000
31	1	1	1	1.000
32	0	1	1	0.667
33	1	1	1	1.000
34	1	1	1	1.000
35	1	1	1	1.000
Sum	30	30	34	0.671

3.7 Reliability of the Study

Criteria used when evaluating the reliability of the scale include: Cronbach's Alpha's reliability coefficient ranges from 0 to 1. The lower the alpha coefficient of Cronbach is to 1.0, the greater the internal accuracy of the objects in the scale. Cronbach's Alpha is greater 0.9, reliability of the scale is excellent, from 0.8 to 0.9, the reliability is good; from 0.7 to 0.8, the reliability is usually credible and acceptable; from 0.6 to 0.7, the reliability is questionable; from 0.5 to 0.6, the correlation is poor; and if less than 0.5, the confidence in the reliability is low and the findings must be rejected (George & Mallery, 2003). In this study, the researcher chose a scale that has Cronbach's Alpha's reliability of greater than 0.69.

Corrected item–total correlation coefficient: observed variables with a small Corrected item–total correlation (less than 0.4) are considered unreliable measurement, they were excluded and the scale was accepted when Cronbach's Alpha's reliability coefficient meets the requirements.

The study respondents were Vietnamese, so the questionnaire was translated into Vietnamese for the survey. Before the main study, a pre–test was conducted with 30 respondents. The pre–test was conducted by online questionnaires. The researcher checked the reliability of the questionnaire based on the criteria set forth previously, and then adjusted to form the official questionnaire which served the main study.

Table 3.4: Results of Reliability Test (Round 1)

Coding	Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
OR	Google Reviews	0.860	18
– FA	– Facilities	0.690	6
– LO	– Location	0.871	4
– ST	– Staff	0.877	3
– SV	– Service	0.772	5
RA	Google Score Ratings	0.882	4
BD	Booking Decision	0.865	4

Base on table 3.4, in the first round of reliability test, all Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of scales are 0.69 or higher. However, the corrected Item–Total Correlation Coefficients of FA5, FA6, SV2 are lower than 0.4 (see in Table 3.6). Therefore, they needs removing and testing again. After removing those items, the Cronbach Alpha coefficient of each scale is higher than 0.69 (See in Table 3.5). Moreover, all corrected item–total correlation of these items are higher than 0.4 (see detail in Appendix B). Therefore, the scales are reliable for main study.

Table 3.5 : Results of Reliability Test (Round 2)

Coding	Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
OR	Google Reviews on Hotel Characteristics	0.895	15
– FA	– Facilities	0.817	4
– LO	– Location	0.871	4
– ST	– Staff	0.877	3
– SV	– Service	0.853	4
RA	Google Score Ratings	0.882	4
BD	Booking Decision	0.865	4

After two rounds of reliability tests, the researcher revised the questionnaire by eliminating "swimming pool" (FA5) and "gym equipment/ fitness" (FA6) in the Facilities (FA), and "Free Breakfast" (SV2) in the "Services" (SV) out of the questionnaire. Table 3.6 Items were eliminated from the questionnaire. Table 3.7. Adjusted code book after eliminating variables.

Table 3.6: Items were Eliminated from the Questionnaire

Coding	Indicators	Corrected Item–Total Correlation
Facilities		
FA5	Swimming Pool	0.093
FA6	Gym equipment/ Fitness	0.292
Services		
SV2	Free Breakfast	−.006

Table 3.7: Adjusted Code Book after Eliminating Variables

	Description		Coding		Indicators	
IV1	Google reviews on hotel charact–eristics	Google Reviews on "Facilities of Hotel"	OR	FA	FA1	Design and style
					FA2	Rooms
					FA3	Beds
					FA4	Bathrooms
		Google Reviews on "Location of Hotel"		LO	LO1	The environment and the surrounding landscape
					LO2	Distance from the hotel to the town center.
					LO3	The safety and security
					LO4	Taking taxi/ parking available for private car

(Continued)

Table 3.7 (Continued): Adjusted Code Book after Eliminating Variables

		Description		Coding		Indicators
		Google Reviews on "Staff of Hotel"		ST	ST1	The staff's service mind
					ST2	Staff's problem–solving
					ST3	Staff's physical appearance
		Google Reviews on "Services of Hotel"		SV	SV1	Hotel dining and dinner
					SV3	The spa/health service
					SV4	Hotels' emergency helps
					SV5	Babysitting/ child care services
IV2	Google Score Ratings		RA		RA1	The Google score ratings of the hotel I booked reflects exactly what I have experienced at that hotel.
					RA2	The Google score ratings of the hotel help me to believe in the quality of the hotel.
					RA3	The Google score ratings of the hotel I booked is reliable.
					RA4	The number of stars the hotel received on Google Ratings is not enough to reflect its quality.

(Continued)

Table 3.7 (Continued): Adjusted Code Book after Eliminating Variables

	Description		Coding	Indicators
DV	Vietnamese Consumers' Online Hotel Booking Decision	BD	BD1	I definitely booked the hotel after reading its reviews on Google.
			BD2	I decided to book the hotel after reading its reviews on Google.
			BD3	I booked a hotel because it has a high score rating on Google.
			BD4	I did not make a reservation at the hotel that has the low score rating on Google.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This chapter presents data analysis results regarding descriptive statistics of survey respondents and examined variables based on the conceptual framework, together with results of hypothesis testing.

4.1 Results of Descriptive Statistics on Survey Respondents

Table 4.1: Samples' Demographic Characteristics

Variable	Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Age	22–30 years old	69	23.0
	31–40 years old	103	34.3
	41–50 years old	95	31.7
	over 50 years old	33	11.0
	Total	300	100.0
Gender	Male	174	58.0
	Female	126	42.0
	Total	300	100.0

(Continued)

Table 4.1 (Continued): Samples' Demographic Characteristics

Variable	Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Educational Level	Bachelor's Degree	259	86.3
	Master's Degree	36	12.0
	Doctoral Degree	5	1.7
	Total	300	100.0
Occupation	Government Officer	43	14.3
	Small Business Owner	83	27.7
	Large Business Owner	84	28.0
	Corporate Employee	49	16.3
	Artist/ Designer/ Working in Creative field	22	7.3
	Others	19	6.3
	Total	300	100.0
Monthly Income	10,000,000–18,000,000VND	43	14.3
	18,000,001–32,000,000VND	92	30.7
	32,000,001–52,000,000VND	115	38.3
	52,000,001–80,000,000VND	36	12.0
	Over 80,000,000VND	14	4.7
	Total	300	100.0

The online survey was conducted between October 1 and October 31, 2020. More than 300 respondents answered the questionnaires; however, after filtering invalid questionnaires, 300 valid questionnaires were analyzed by SPSS in this study.

Table 4.1 showed frequency and percentage of respondents based on their demographic characteristics. As for gender, there are more male (58%) than female (42%) respondents. In terms of age, respondents' age range is from 22 to 50. The majority of the respondents are 31–40 years old (34.3%), followed by 41–50 years old (31.7%), 22–30 years old (23.0%), and over 50–year–old (11%) respectively.

As for occupation, the majority of the respondents are large business owner (28.6%), followed by small business owner (27.7%), corporate employee (16.3%), government officer (14.3%), artist/ designer/ working in Creative field (7.3%), and others (6.3%), respectively.

In terms of monthly income, the majority of respondents have monthly income from 32,000,001 to 52,000,000VND (38.3%), followed by from 18,000,001 to 32,000,000VND (30.7%), from 10,000,000 to 18,000,000VND (14.3%), from 52,000,001 to 80,000,000VND (12%), and over 80,000,000VND (4.7%) respectively.

In terms of educational level, most respondents in this study are Bachelor's degree holder (86.3%), followed by Master's degree holder (12%), and Doctoral degree holder (1.7%).

4.2 Results of Descriptive Statistics on Examined Variables

As written in chapter 3, the scales with Cronbach's Alpha coefficient (higher than 0.69) were tested to conclude whether the measurement scales are reliable and to what extent the items are related. Table 4.2 shows results of descriptive characteristics on the examined variables, and the reliability of their measurement.

Table 4.2: Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Test of Examined Variables

Scales	Mean	S.D.	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Google reviews on hotel characteristics				
Facilities (FA)	3.917	0.4989	4	0.851
Location (LO)	3.382	0.5653	4	0.853
Staff (ST)	3.770	0.5621	3	0.793
Services (SV)	4.043	0.5626	4	0.836
Google score ratings (RA)	3.932	0.5090	4	0.815
Booking Decision (BD)	3.982	0.5744	4	0.810

Based on the above table, it was found that the observed variables' mean values are above 3.0, and the standard deviation is less than 1.0. Besides, all scales have the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients over 0.7 and can be considered appropriate (George & Mallery, 2003). These scales are appropriate for this study. It proved that the scales are reliable and can be used in the next steps.

Among six variables, "Services" has the highest mean (X = 4.043), followed by Booking Decision (X = 3.982), Hotel Score Ratings on Google (X = 3.932), Facilities (X = 3.917), Staff (X = 3.770), and Location (X = 3.382) respectively.

4.3 Results of Hypothesis Testing

4.3.1 Pearson's Correlation Analysis

Pearson's Correlation and Multiple Regression Analysis were used to test the proposed research hypotheses.

Table 4.3: Results of Pearson's Correlation Analysis

		FA	LO	ST	SV	RA	BD
FA	Pearson Correlation	1	.073	.210**	.244**	.361**	.387**
	Sig. (2–tailed)		.207	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	300	300	300	300	300	300
LO	Pearson Correlation	.073	1	.166**	.163**	.116*	.356**
	Sig. (2–tailed)	.207		.004	.005	.045	.000
	N	300	300	300	300	300	300
ST	Pearson Correlation	.210**	.166**	1	.261**	.344**	.435**
	Sig. (2–tailed)	.000	.004		.000	.000	.000
	N	300	300	300	300	300	300
SV	Pearson Correlation	.244**	.163**	.261**	1	.355**	.718**
	Sig. (2–tailed)	.000	.005	.000		.000	.000
	N	300	300	300	300	300	300
RA	Pearson Correlation	.361**	.116*	.344**	.355**	1	.467**
	Sig. (2–tailed)	.000	.045	.000	.000		.000
	N	300	300	300	300	300	300
BD	Pearson Correlation	.387**	.356**	.435**	.718**	.467**	1
	Sig. (2–tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	300	300	300	300	300	300

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2–tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2–tailed).

Table 4.3 shows the results of Pearson's Correlation Analysis between five independent variables and one dependent variable. Two critical indicators for data analysis are correlation coefficient (r) and statistically significant level (p value).

Firstly, it can be seen that correlation coefficient was positive with the correlation of five independent variables (FA, LO, ST, SV and RA) and one dependent variable (BD). That means concluding that as each independent variable increases, so does the dependent factor (BD). Secondly, Pearson's correlation level between predictors (independent variables) and dependent variable (BD) ranged from 0.3 to 0.5 (Cohen, 1988). It is proved that they are positively and moderately correlated. It can be seen that the Sig. 2–tailed between each independent and dependent variable is 0.000 (less than 0.05), which means that the correlation results are statistically significant. Besides, it is enough conditions to make a regression analysis.

4.3.2 Multiple Regression Analysis

Table 4.4: Results of Multiple Regression Analysis

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	−.977	.223		−4.383	.000		
	FA	.176	.042	.153	4.199	.000	.849	1.178
	LO	.214	.035	.210	6.135	.000	.956	1.046
	ST	.183	.037	.179	4.905	.000	.843	1.187
	SV	.565	.038	.554	15.045	.000	.830	1.205
	RA	.145	.044	.129	3.319	.001	.745	1.342
Adjusted R^2: 0.664								
Durbin–Watson: 1.794								
ANOVA[a] (sig.): 0.000								
Dependent Variable: Booking Decision (BD)								

From Table 4.4, the adjusted R² (Adjusted R–square) is 0.664 ($p < 0.001$).

This statistic means that 66.4% of the booking decision (BD) change can be explained

by five independent, conditional–responsive variables. In this test, the Durbin–Watson

coefficient is 1.794, which is in the acceptance zone. Therefore, there is no

relationship between the residuals.

ANOVA sig (F) = 0.000, which is less than 0.05; Therefore, there is a linear

relationship between each independent variable and the dependent variable; that is,

the independent variables can explain the dependent variable (BD) variation.

The VIF magnification coefficients of FA, LO, ST, SV and RA, are less than 10, so the multicollinearity phenomenon does not occur (Hoang & Chu, 2008). Therefore, the relationship between the independent variables does not affect the multiple linear regression model's interpretations.

With all results, it can be seen that the regression model is consistent and statistically significant. We have a regression model with unstandardized beta coefficients (Iacobucci & Chirchill, 2015):

$$BD = -0.977 + 0.176\ FA + 0.214\ LO + 0.183\ ST + 0.565\ SV + 0.145\ RA$$

Based on the above equation, the beta value of services (SV) is the most considerable, accounting for 0.565. In other words, if the services (SV) is increased by 1 unit, the booking decision (BD) will be increased by 0.565 units. Hence, services (SV) has the most decisive influence on booking decision (BD). Therefore, HP#1.4 (Google reviews on "Services of hotel" has an effect on Vietnamese Consumers' online hotel booking decision.) is accepted.

Besides, the beta value of location (LO) is 0.214. As long as other factors remain unchanged when the location (LO) dimension is increased/decreased by 1 unit, the booking decision (BD) will be increased/ decreased by 0.214 units. Therefore, HP#1.2 (Google reviews on "Location of hotel" has an effect on Vietnamese Consumers' online hotel booking decision) is supported.

Services (ST) has the beta value of 0.183, which means all other factors do not change, Services (ST) is increased/decreased by 1 unit, booking decision (BD) will be increased/decreased by 0.183 unit; therefore, the HP#1.3 (Google reviews on

"Staff of hotel" has an effect on Vietnamese Consumers' online hotel booking decision.) is also supported.

Facilities (FA) has the beta value of 0.176, which means all other factors remain constant, Facilities (FA) is increased/decreased by 1 unit, and booking decision (BD) is increased/decreased by a 0.176 unit. Accordingly, the HP#1.1 (Google reviews on "Facilities of hotel" has an effect on Vietnamese Consumers' online hotel booking decision) is also supported.

In conclusion, it can be concluded that HP#1 (Google reviews on hotel characteristics have an effect on Vietnamese consumers' online hotel booking decision) is accepted.

The last hypothesis, HP#2 (Google score ratings have an effect on Vietnamese consumers' online hotel booking decision), it was found that hotel ratings (RA) has the beta value of 0.145, which means all other factors do not change, hotel score ratings on Google (RA) is increased/decreased by 1 unit, then booking decision (BD) is increased/decreased by 0.145 unit; therefore, the HP#2 is also supported. The results of hypothesis testing were summarized in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Results of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Description	Result
HP#1	Google reviews on hotel characteristics have an effect on Vietnamese consumers' online hotel booking decision.	Accepted
HP#1.1	Google reviews on "Facilities of hotel" have an effect on Vietnamese Consumers' online hotel booking decision.	Accepted
HP#1.2	Google reviews on "Location of hotel" have an effect on Vietnamese Consumers' online hotel booking decision.	Accepted
HP#1.3	Google reviews on "Staff of hotel" have an effect on Vietnamese Consumers' online hotel booking decision.	Accepted
HP#1.4	Google reviews on "Services of hotel" have an effect on Vietnamese Consumers' online hotel booking decision.	Accepted
HP#2	Google score ratings have an effect on Vietnamese consumers' online hotel booking decision	Accepted

4.4. Summary of Key Findings

The purpose of the study is to test the correlation between Google reviews on hotel characteristics and Google score ratings that affect Vietnamese consumers' decision to book a 5–star hotel. The researcher had come up with the hypotheses about the relationships between Google reviews on hotel characteristics, Google score ratings, and consumers' booking decision. Two main independent variables were offered in the study: 1) the Google reviews on hotel characteristics and 2) Google score ratings. Besides, there are four hotel characteristics on Google reviews: 1) Facilities, 2) Location, 3) Staff, and 4) Services. After studying the research models

of the previous studies, and consulting with experts, and doing the pretest on 30 participants, the scale was adjusted to 23 indicators divided into one independent variable with four dimensions, including Google reviews on hotel facilities, Google reviews on hotel location, Google reviews on hotel staff, Google reviews on hotel services, and one dependent variable, Google score ratings.

Using the SPSS as statistical tools, the data analyzed include the respondents' demographic characteristics, consumer behavior, reliability test of scales, and hypothesis testing by Multiple Regression Analysis. The results of this study meet the research objectives that the author proposed such that two groups of factors related to Google reviews on hotel characteristics (FA, LO, ST and SV) and Google score ratings (i.e., RA) significantly influenced Vietnamese Consumers' Online Hotel Booking Decision (BD). The order of impact of those factors from strong to weak is: reviews on service (SV), reviews on staff (ST), reviews on location (LO), reviews on facilities (FA), and Google score ratings (RA).

These findings were discussed, and recommendations for various stakeholders were provided for development of effective business strategy in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSIONS

This chapter provides discussions of research findings including discussions relating to previous studies, applied theories, and the researcher's expectations. Besides, it also points out the limitations of the research and offers recommendations for further research and practical applications of the research.

5.1 Discussions

5.1.1 Discussions Based on the Relevant Theories

5.1.1.1 The Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT)

According to the Uses of Gratification Theory (UGT), individuals use media for four basic purposes: Surveillance, personal identity, personal relationships, and diversion. With the support of modern technology devices, consumers can access communication and information more easily, so they tend to look for useful and objective information that suits their needs and their preferences. They also tend to travel freely and are willing to plan their travels, and renting a hotel room during their travels is inevitable. In addition, to avoid the risks in the booking process, consumers are likely to carefully consider previous consumers' hotel reviews. Reviews shared on the Google platform are those that meet the information needs of Vietnamese consumers. Thus, findings of this study reinforced the core assumption of the UGT by showing that consumers take an active role in media users in terms of information seeking.

5.1.1.2 Source Credibility

Based on the theory regarding source credibility, three characteristics of sources– physical attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise–influence persuasive communication (Hovland, Janis & Kelley, 1953; Ohanian, 1990). Potential consumers generally trust product reviews more than the commercial information given by the product producers or brands. Relatives, friends, and other individuals with relevant expertise are considered trustworthy and/or expert communicators, product reviews by these sources become trustful information for consumers when making purchase decisions. As a consequence, hotels take advantage of positive customer reviews to convey to their target audience what they desire their customers to have their first impression on their hotel via social media. It can be seen as a form of enhancing hotel branding through reviews from customers.

5.1.2 Discussions Based on the Past Studies

As presented in chapter 4, all the proposed research hypotheses were supported by findings of this study. This confirmed Hotel characteristics on Google Reviews (i.e., Facilities, Location, Staff, Service) and hotel Google score ratings that influence Vietnamese consumers' decisions on 5–star hotel booking. The trend of influencing the factors of research on the booking decision of Vietnamese consumers was positive because the beta coefficients of the independent variables in the regression equation had values greater than 0. Thus, When these factors increase, the Vietnamese consumers' booking decisions also increase. Experimental research has provided evidence of the impact of Google reviews on consumers' decisions (Gavilan, et al., 2017; Mo, et al., 2015; Danish, Hafeez, Ali, Shahid & Nadeem, 2019).

This study results are consistent with some previous studies. In the study of general consumer online shopping behavior, Mo, et al. (2015) found that positive reviews have a positive effect, neutral reviews have no impact, and negative reviews have a negative impact on the purchasing behavior of consumers. However, in the hospitality sector, the findings of this study not only support another finding by Danish, et al. (2019) such that positive online reviews influence consumer booking intentions, but also rejects that negative online reviews affects consumer decision. Another study by Gavilan, et al. (2017) concluded that web users trust lower numeral ratings than high ratings, and for the hotel industry, web users tend to choose hotels with better ratings.

In the above studies, reviews and ratings are one of the factors in their conceptual model and researchers considered whether or not they have an impact on consumer decision making. As for this study, considering reviews and ratings as the two main factors in the proposed research model, dimensions of those factors mentioned by the reviewer in their Google reviews influencing customers' booking decisions were further examined. Therefore, this study not only strengthens the previous research results, but also reveals new findings regarding content of product reviews regarding characteristics of the 5–star hotel that have a significant impact on Vietnamese consumers' hotel booking. Those hotel reviews include facilities, service, location, and staff.

5.1.3 Discussions Based on Researcher's Expectations

The research results have met the researcher's expectation that the author set out. The study was expected to find out that consumer reviews and hotel ratings will influence Vietnamese consumers when they were exposed to consumer reviews and

hotel ratings on Google. It was beyond expectations as findings showed that content of consumer reviews regarding the four main hotel characteristics–Facilities, Location, Staff, and Service–significantly influenced Vietnamese consumers' booking decisions.

Surprisingly, Google reviews on Service and Staff are the two most influencing factors, proving that Vietnamese consumers are more concerned with intangibles factors (Services, Staff) than tangible factors (Facilities, Location) of the hotel. This is a useful finding for managers to pay more attention to investing in hotel–based human and services factors rather than over–focussing on building hotel facilities. This is because when using the hotel, consumers would contact and communicate with humans (staff) first. This is also a role of communication, interpersonal communication is considered to be more important than any other media. Especially in the current context with the adoption of new digital technology and communication, the advent of social networking sites increases this impact. Google's role in the modern life of Vietnamese people is extremely important, it also increases the interaction between users, creates a community, and forms new behaviors among Vietnamese consumers. It becomes a habit of potential consumers to read Google hotel reviews and/or Google score ratings before making booking decisions in their travel plan.

5.2 Limitations

In the research process, although trying to invest in research, focusing on reviewing and researching the influencing factors of Google score ratings and reviews on the booking decisions of Vietnamese consumers, this study has some limitations in

terms of time and research subjects. As for time, our study time was short as the study is part of the graduate study. As for research participants, it is challenging in reaching the samples who are busy and belong to high–class customers. Therefore, it was quite difficult for the data collector to get this group in person. Another limitation is that the questionnaire was designed on Google Form so that the researcher did not grasp the respondents' emotional nuances but depended entirely on the respondents' responses.

Besides, due to the researcher's limited resources, it is not possible to survey a larger number of samples. Although international sources are extensive, almost no relevant research has been examined Vietnamese consumers and Google score ratings and Google reviews in the hospitality industry.

5.3 Recommendation for Further Application

The birth and development of Google in Vietnam is also the most used search engine in this market. Besides, Google also developed other gadgets such as Google Maps and Google Hotel, allowing users to review and rate hotels' scores. Many similar previous studies have researched the effects of Google reviews on Consumers' purchasing decisions. However, there is a small number of official research on its impact on Vietnamese consumers' booking decisions.

With the current investment in tourism in Vietnam, the hospitality industry in Vietnam has also attracted much investment from domestic and foreign corporations. Besides, an advent of many new technology, application, and modernization in electronic devices such as laptops, tablets, or smartphones allow Vietnamese consumers to have quick access to information provided on available search engines.

In the following decades, Google is still identified as an almost irreplaceable search engine in the Vietnamese market.

With the rise of hotels in Vietnam today, managers have also focused on promoting their hotels on digital platforms, such as social networks, including the Google search engine. As mentioned earlier, Google reviews on hotels are a more useful and persuasive word of mouth tool among consumers. Businesses need to be aware of the importance of Google reviews. It is necessary to develop a clear and smart strategy and utilize these gadgets effectively for their marketing or brand communication.

During the booking process, consumers tend to consider hotel reviews from various trustworthy sources as reference information such as their friends, relatives, or reviews on Google before making the final decision. Web users are also very interested in the featured reviews, focusing on the reviews that show up first, and then they will form an idea of the hotel, the quality of the hotel, and the expected experience. Therefore, a recommendation to Google is to prioritize full reviews that cover the full range of hotel properties that are allowed to be displayed first. This helps web users to quickly shape their impression with the hotel before making a booking decision. With modern engineering and technology, creating this attribute is easy.

In addition, it is necessary to understand which hotel characteristics in Google reviews affect Vietnamese consumers' booking decisions. From there, the communications administrators need to listen and respond to their customers' problems. This helps prevent future communication crises for their businesses while improving the hotel service quality, which will in turn attract consumers.

In summary, the research topic "The influence of Google score ratings and reviews on Vietnamese consumers' online hotel booking decision: A case study of five–star hotels in Vietnam" has contributed to a new, more trendy, and detailed result, especially one of the few studies done in the Vietnam market and the hospitality industry. Therefore, this will be a valuable reference source for communication and hospitality students, together with hotel owners or managers in their strategy development to win over Vietnamese Consumers.

5.4 Recommendation for Future Research

The study could be done for a longer time to reach a higher number of samples in the future. Besides, Google and several third–party websites provide consumer reviews and star ratings like Booking.com, Agoda, etc. It would be interesting to study hotel ratings and reviews on third–party websites that affect Vietnamese consumers' booking decisions. In addition, textual analysis of consumers' responses to hotel reviews on social media in the form of eWOM will yield additional insightful findings on why particular reviews are persuasive.

As mentioned before, the tourism market in Vietnam is enormous, and it is attracting not only domestic visitors but also millions of foreign tourists annually. Therefore, a similar study on foreigners' behaviors when they travel to Vietnam is essential. The next study should be considered what review content will influence these groups when deciding to reserve a hotel in Vietnam.

Social networks in Vietnam have been developed strongly, and there seems to be no sign of recession in the next decade or so; Facebook is still the most used social network in Vietnam. More than 66 million Facebook users in Vietnam in

January 2020 accounted for 67.5 percent of the total population *("Facebook users in Viet Nam"*, 2020). However, local companies have developed similar social networks such as Zalo, Lotus. It is more and more popular for Vietnamese consumers to discuss their trips, rate hotels they booked together, and share social network experiences. Accordingly, social media is still an essential channel to implement hotel branding campaigns. Future study that investigates how Vietnamese consumers are affected in booking decisions when looking at reviews of 5–star hotels on various platforms of social media is strongly recommended.
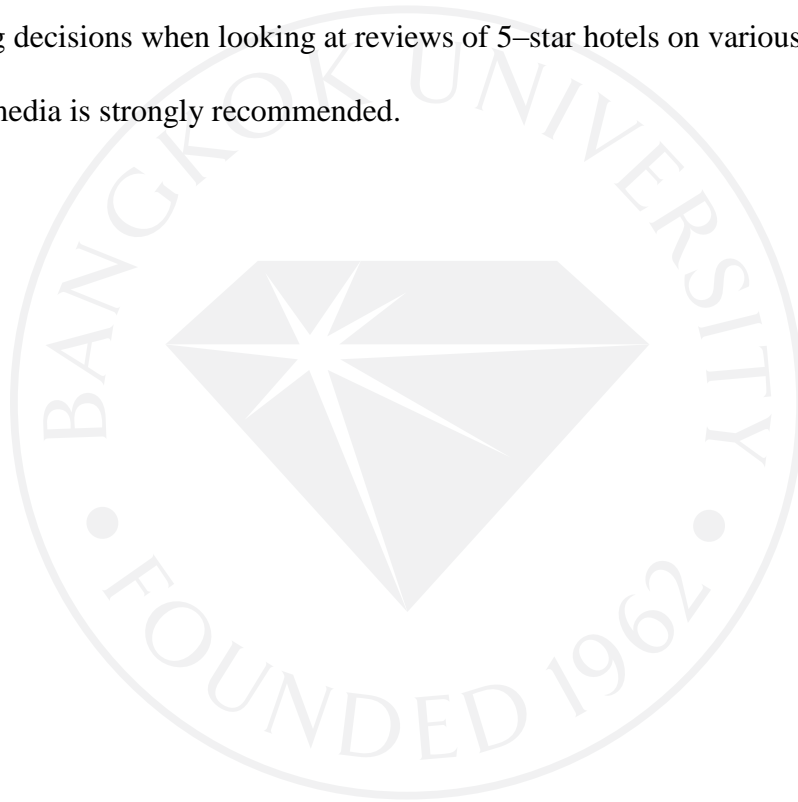
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  27–36.

APPENDIX A

Questionnaire Evaluation (Form for Experts)
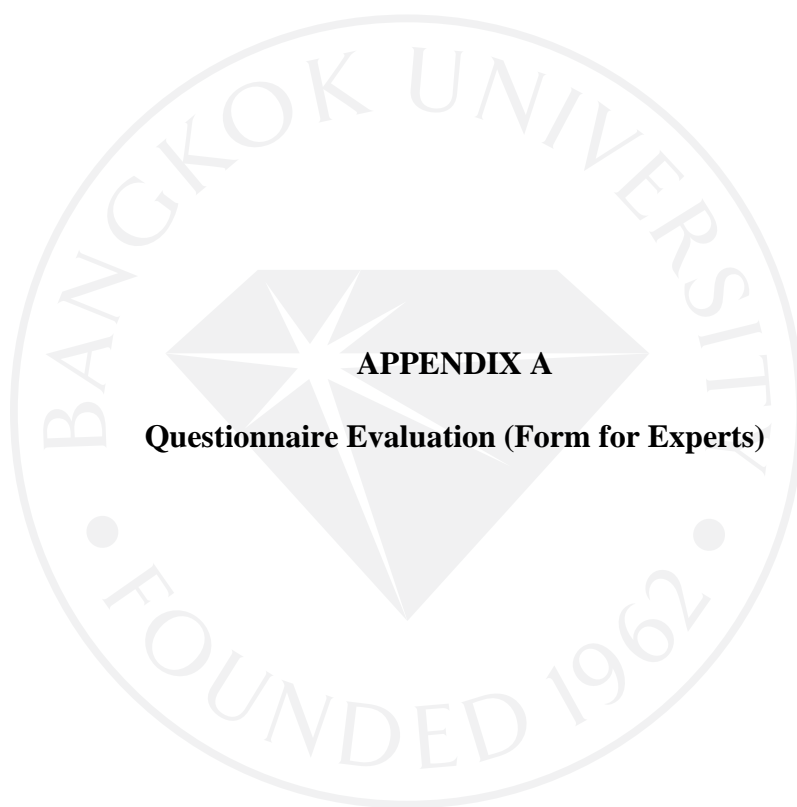
Appendix A: Questionnaire Evaluation (Form for Experts)

QUESTIONNAIRE EVALUATION
(Form for experts)

Dear Ms/ Mr…..,

My name is Hau Le. Currently, I am a graduate student, Master of Communication Arts in Global Communication at Bangkok University, Thailand. I am researching Google ratings and reviews on Vietnamese consumers' online hotel booking.

Below are the questions used to conduct a survey of Vietnamese consumers' behavior. Before surveying consumers with an official questionnaire, the survey should be checked the relevance of the questions with survey objectives. Therefore, I look forward to receiving your judgment for the survey questions. Please spend 5 to 10 minutes evaluating the questions by scoring the questions in the box.

Before evalutating questions in the questionnaire, some definitions related to my study are provided as follows:

1. **Google Ratings and Reviews** are utility provided by Google Maps. Users can present their assessment on places they have visited by giving star rating scores for their experiences about these places, and they can also leave comments like if it is quiet, lively, or romantic.

2. **Google Reviews** provide valuable information about their business to both them and their customers. These reviews are users' written comments about their experiences at the particular hotel, which are displayed next to Google's search listing in Maps and Search, and help businesses stand out more on Google search. As for hotel reviews on Google, reviewers usually refer to rooms, location, service, and facilities.

3. **Google score ratings** is all scores for local search results are rated on a scale from 1 to 5 stars. The meanings of the stars are as follows: 1 star = Hated it, 2 stars = Disliked it, 3 stars = It was okay, 4 stars = Liked it, 5 stars = Loved it. The overall score (star ratings) on Google for the place is calculated from user ratings, which show up with customer reviews, top reviews, and the total number of business reviews.

4. **Online hotel booking decision** is an action performed in the process of making a decision to book a hotel. This decision is done in the online environment and mainly has two forms. One is, consumers can directly book through the official website of the hotel. Another type is third-party reservation sites. Using online hotel booking platforms, consumers can openly comment and make comparisons between hotels.

Your evaluation contributes to the success of my study.
Sincerely thank you for your help!

Appendix A: Questionnaire Evaluation (Form for Experts)

Section 1: SCREENING QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS	+1 Certain that the item is congruent with its definition	0 Not sure if the item is congruent with its definition	-1 Not certain that the item is congruent with its definition
Item 1: **Q1: During the past 2 years, which hotel below have you booked?** *(You can select MORE THAN ONE answer)* ☐1. InterContinental Hanoi Lanmark 72 ☐2. Lotte Hotel Hanoi ☐3. Sofitel Legend Metropole Hanoi ☐4. JW Marriott Hotel Hanoi ☐5. Sheraton Hanoi Hotel ☐6. Danang Golden Bay ☐7. Hilton Danang ☐8. Grand Mercure Danang ☐9. Muong Thanh Luxury Danang Hotel ☐10. Novotel Danang Premier Han River ☐11. Radisson Blu Resort Cam Ranh ☐12. The Rverie Hotel ☐13. Le Meridien ☐14. Park Hyatt Saigon ☐15. Other (Please specify):			
Item 2: **Q2: Have you read Google ratings and reviews of five- star hotels?** ☐Yes. ☐No. *(If "Yes", Next Question, | If "No", Stop here Thank you!)*			
Item 3: **Q3: Did you book a five-star hotel room after reading its reviews during the past 2 years?** ☐Yes. ☐No. *(If "Yes", Next Question, | If "No", Stop here Thank you!)*			

(Continued)

Appendix A: Questionnaire Evaluation (Form for Experts)

	+1	0	-1
❑ From 52.000.000VND to <80.000.000VND ❑ 80.000.000VND and over			

Section 3: MAIN QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS	+1 Certain that the item is congruent with its definition	0 Not sure if the item is congruent with its definition	-1 Not certain that the item is congruent with its definition
Item 9: **Q9: Please select ONLY ONE HOTEL you read its ratings and reviews on Google and then booked the most recent during the past 2 years.** ❑1. InterContinental Hanoi Lanmark 72 ❑2. Lotte Hotel Hanoi ❑3. Sofitel Legend Metropole Hanoi ❑4. JW Marriott Hotel Hanoi ❑5. Sheraton Hanoi Hotel ❑6. Danang Golden Bay ❑7. Hilton Danang ❑8. Grand Mercure Danang ❑9. Muong Thanh Luxury Danang Hotel ❑10. Novotel Danang Premier Han River ❑11. Radisson Blu Resort Cam Ranh ❑12. The Rverie Hotel ❑13. Le Meridien ❑14. Park Hyatt Saigon ❑15. Other (Please specify):	……….		

[From Q10 to Q27] Please indicate how the 5-star hotel reviews you selected in Q9 are reviewed by Google by choosing from 5 answer choices
(1 = very negative, 2 = negative, 3 = neutral, 4 = positive, and 5 = very positive)
Item 10 – 27

	Hotel Characteristics	Valence of Review					+1	0	1
	"Facilities" in Hotel Reviews on Google	1	2	3	4	5			
Q10	Design and style	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑			

Appendix A: Questionnaire Evaluation (Form for Experts)

|		1	2	3	4	5	+1	0	-1
Q11	Rooms	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐			
Q12	Beds	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐			
Q13	Bathrooms	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐			
Q14	Swimming pool	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐			
Q15	Gym equipment/ Fitness	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐			
"Location" in Hotel Reviews on Google		**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	+1	0	-1
Q16	The environment and the surrounding landscape	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐			
Q17	Distance from the hotel to the town center.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐			
Q18	The safety and security	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐			
Q19	Taking taxi/ parking available for private car	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐			
"Staff" in Hotel Reviews on Google		1	2	3	4	5	+1	0	-1
Q20	Staff's service mind	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐			
Q21	Staff's problem-solving	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐			
Q22	Staff's physical appearance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐			
"Services" in Hotel Reviews on Google		**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	+1	0	-1
Q23	Hotel dining and dinner	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐			
Q24	Free breakfast	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐			
Q25	The spa/health service	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐			
Q26	Hotels' emergency helps	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐			
Q27	Babysitting/child care services	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐			

Appendix A: Questionnaire Evaluation (Form for Experts)

[From Q28 to Q35] Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements
(1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree)
Item 28 – 35

	Hotel star ratings on Google	Level of Agreement					+1	0	-1
		1	2	3	4	5			
Q28	The Google Rating score of the hotel I booked reflects exactly what I have experienced at that hotel.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐			
Q29	The hotel's rating score on Google helps me to believe in the quality of the hotel.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐			
Q30	The Google Rating score of the hotel I booked is reliable.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐			
Q31	The number of stars the hotel received on Google Ratings is not enough to reflect its quality.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐			
Vietnamese Consumers' Online Hotel Booking		1	2	3	4	5	+1	0	-1
Q32	I definitely booked the hotel after reading its reviews on Google.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐			
Q33	I decided to book the hotel after reading its reviews on Google.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐			
Q34	I booked a hotel because it has a high rating score on Google.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐			
Q35	I did not make a reservation at the hotel that has the low rating score on Google.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐			

APPENDIX B

Results of Reliability Test in Detail
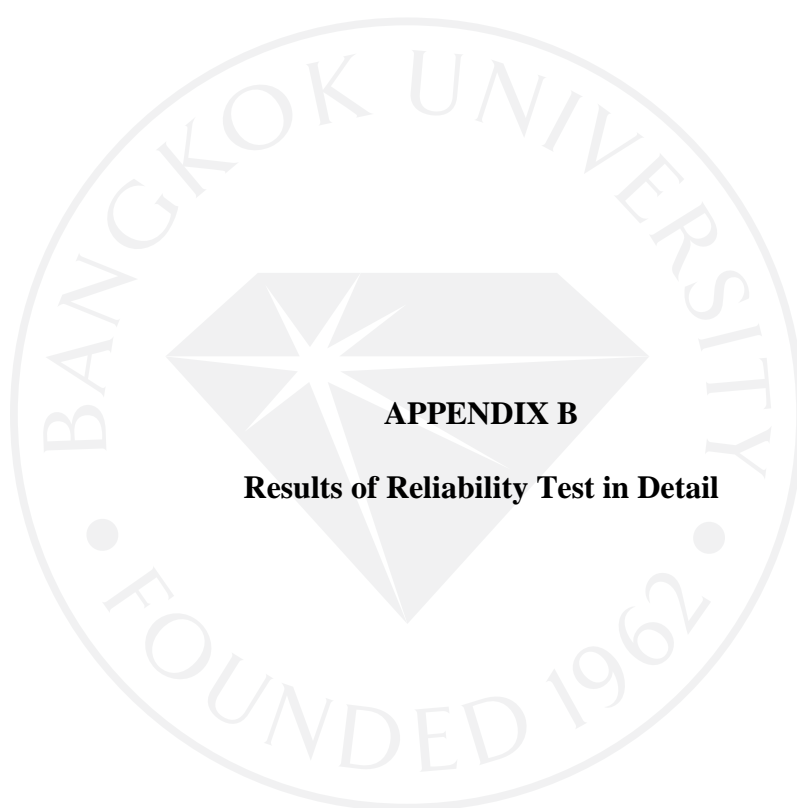
Appendix B: Results of Reliability Test in Detail

Reability Test of OR (Online Reviews)	Cronbach's Alpha	.895	No. of Items	15
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
FA1	51.83	35.385	.669	.884
FA2	51.67	36.782	.609	.887
FA3	51.80	36.993	.514	.890
FA4	51.80	36.028	.654	.885
LO1	51.70	35.734	.672	.884
LO2	51.70	36.286	.593	.887
LO3	51.73	35.168	.672	.884
LO4	51.90	34.645	.757	.880
ST1	51.90	36.714	.484	.891
ST2	51.87	37.085	.402	.895
ST3	51.87	36.809	.435	.894
SV1	51.63	35.137	.617	.886
SV3	51.67	37.954	.376	.895
SV4	51.63	35.413	.543	.889
SV5	51.83	35.661	.580	.877

Appendix B: Results of Reliability Test in Detail

Reability test of FA (Facilities)	Crobach's Alpha	.817	No. of items	4
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
FA1	11.13	2.051	.701	.740
FA2	10.97	2.447	.632	.775
FA3	11.10	2.438	.546	.812
FA4	11.10	2.231	.685	.748

Reability test of LO (Location)	Crobach's Alpha	.871	N of items	4
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
LO1	11.07	3.099	.672	.856
LO2	11.07	3.168	.633	.870
LO3	11.10	2.714	.781	.812
LO4	11.27	2.685	.820	.795

Appendix B: Results of Reliability Test in Detail

Reability Test of ST (Staff)	Crobach's Alpha	.877	No. of Items	3
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
ST1	7.20	1.821	.738	.848
ST2	7.17	1.661	.776	.814
ST3	7.17	1.661	.776	.814

Reability Test of LO (Location)	Crobach's Alpha	.853	N of items	4
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
SV1	11.27	3.444	.630	.840
SV3	11.30	3.872	.626	.841
SV4	11.27	2.823	.864	.732
SV5	11.47	3.430	.677	.819

(Continued)

Appendix B: Results of Reliability Test in Detail

Reability Test of RA (Google score ratings)	Crobach's Alpha	.882	N of items	4
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
RA1	10.90	2.990	.671	.879
RA2	10.77	2.461	.782	.846
RA3	11.27	3.375	.787	.847
RA4	11.27	3.099	.832	.822

Reability Test of BD (Booking Decision)	Crobach's Alpha	.865	N of items	4
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
BD1	11.50	2.879	.704	.834
BD2	11.63	3.137	.644	.857
BD3	11.33	2.437	.795	.794
BD4	11.53	2.464	.744	.819

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