Hotel Booking Channels: Customer Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

The number of hotel channels—the routes of hotel reservations—has been significantly increasing. Hotels are in a dilemma when deciding which channel to use for their sales operations. This study examined customer perceptions of hotel booking channels to discover which channels hotels may employ for sales distribution. A self-reported survey with purposive sampling was used to gather information on socio-demographic, travel, ethnicity, and personal characteristics. The survey findings were analyzed using multinomial logistic regression (MLR) to investigate the underlying factors (i.e., personal characteristics, travel characteristics, and socio-demographic variables) that had a significant impact on channel choice. Correspondence Analysis (CA) was deployed to generate a perceptual map of the relationship between the 4-category channel choice variables and the eight channel attributes to determine the variables that most affected channel choice. It was discovered that the aim of the trip influences business travellers' likelihood of making direct hotel reservations. Customers generally make their decision on either service or cost when booking hotel. Concerns over internet security become barriers to every online channel, suggesting that hotel management should consider the issue when developing a marketing mix strategy.

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1. Introduction

Every firm has adopted the internet at an incredible rate. The primary motive of rapid adoption is the increase of user exposure at a relatively low cost (Green and Lomanno, 2012). By the end of 2021, the number of internet users has reached more than half of the world's population (Internet World Stats, 2022). The potential internet market is theoretically limitless. The way individuals utilize the internet has evolved since its introduction. Internet users not only search for products but also make online purchases. Companies continue to adopt and utilize the advantages of the internet communication protocol due to the growing assumption that it will benefit their bottom line. It is essential that businesses make themselves visible to the internet market, yet it is debatable whether this is beneficial to the business. Therefore, the innovation has revolutionized how goods and services are delivered to customers (Law *et al.*, 2015; Green and Lomanno, 2012; Schegg *et al.*, 2013).

There is an increase in the prevalence of non-brick-and-mortar distribution channels. It might be an extra type of supplier-direct channel or one with an independent intermediary. Members of the channel formed ties with one another to survive in the market, which resulted in the formation of a complex network of distribution channels (Kracht and Wang, 2010). Retail (Eroglu, 2013; Schoenbachler and Gordon, 2002; Wang *et al.*, 2014), finance (*Black et*

al., 2002), and tourism (Grønflaten, 2009; Kracht and Wang, 2010; Pearce and Schott, 2005) are just a few of the businesses affected.

According to Green and Lomanno (2012), the hotel business has had problems making decisions on channel selection. There are a variety of channels from which to choose because of the intangible nature of hotel products and the development of the internet. The channels range from those operated directly by hotels (e.g., telephone, fax, walk-in, and hotel websites) to those managed by third parties (e.g., online travel agencies, switch, meta-search engines, and Google). Every distribution channel comes with costs and benefits. For example, online travel agencies (Expedia.com, Booking.com, Hotel.com, and Hostelworld), which are growing at an exceptional rate, claim to be attracting an increasing number of customers since their channels frequently provide lower pricing than hotel retail prices. Selecting these channels to reach customers will increase sales for hotels. However, online travel agencies require a significant commission charge, reducing hotels' profit margins. Furthermore, it is stated that suppliers have limited control over their own inventory through the channels. Meanwhile, participating in more direct channels gives greater potential profit margins, as there are no commission fees to reduce the retail price. However, extra effort is required to achieve the potential profit margin. There will always be a need to compete with alternative more powerful intermediate channels. Thus, the dilemma exists when selecting the right sales channel for the hotel. Hotels must evaluate every channel to achieve their business objectives (Green and Lomanno, 2012; Neslin *et al.*, 2006). Studies like those by Pearce and Taniguchi (2008) can be useful because they help put the success of each channel into context when assessing the profitability of a specific channel. However, customers' choices for certain channels should also be considered (Pearce and Schott, 2005; Douglas, 2016). According to Osterwalder and Pigneur (2010), understanding customers is the key to business success. The likelihood of acquiring new customers and keeping the existing ones increases as a company becomes more customer centred.

The field of hospitality or tourism has been extensively studied, including an investigation of customers' perceptions of different channels for hotel booking. Liu *et al.*, 2014, Teng *et al.*, 2020, and Boto-García *et al.*, 2021 observed the factors influencing customers' choice of hotel booking channel in China, Taiwan, and Northern Spanish, respectively. However, different types of hotels require different strategies for different types of customers (Bi *et al.*, 2020), which may also vary depending on the country in which the hotel operates (Ali *et al.*, 2021). Yogyakarta, Indonesia, is a popular tourist destination, particularly among domestic visitors. To be competitive, hotels in Yogyakarta must select the most suitable sales channel. This research intends to examine the customer's perspective in the context of hotel reservations in Yogyakarta, specifically, to understand the primary channels and the most influential factors to select hotel channel. Therefore, this study aimed to fulfil two objectives: *What are the influential factors underlying the selection of hotel channels?* and *What are the most preferred reservation channels?*

The paper is structured into five parts. The first part discusses the motivations, which is followed by theoretical framework in Part 2. Part 3 presents the methodology of survey. Part 4 presents findings, which is then concluded in Part 5.

2. Theoretical Framework

Literature addressing hotel business have existed to understand the customer behaviour in selecting channel during hotel booking. Neslin *et al.* (2006) observed that understanding the customer's channel selection behaviour is necessary for developing a multichannel management strategy. In this case, the researchers were attempting to comprehend how customers choose which booking channels to utilize. Comparing online booking channels (through online travel agency or hotel website) and offline booking channels (through travel agent, traditional direct channel) is the most typical trend from prior studies.

It makes sense given that online channels are becoming more powerful as business continue to use and adopt the advantages of the internet. In such circumstances, researchers are encouraged to investigate how the internet influences new consumer behaviour. These studies were motivated in large part by the question of how traditional pre-existing channels, particularly travel agencies, were able to adapt to the new power of internet ordering (Cheyne *et al.*, 2006; Cheng *et al.*, 2011; Ezeuduji, 2015; Izquerido-Yusta & Martinez-Ruiz, 2011; Lee & Cheng, 2009). The research focuses on creating the underlying explanations for why customers select one channel over another for each of the channels.

A relatively small proportion of literature has focused on hotel providers. Morosan (2005) examined hotel websites in comparison with online travel agencies. It was hypothesised that perceived utility, perceived simplicity of use, and perceived playfulness influence the choice of booking channel between a hotel's website and an online travel agency. Moreover, it was stated that passengers preferred online travel agencies since they were viewed as facilitating the search for the best rate online more effectively. While studies such as Pearce & Schott (2005) and Crnojevac et al. (2010) are not necessary aimed exclusively for hotel, it gives prompt overview of how consumers behave across a broader range of media, from which hotels might inadvertently learn. Ease and simplicity are the most influential factors in customers' selection of one channel over another (Pearce & Schott, 2005). In addition, Crnojevac et al. (2010) found consumers chose specific channel associating with their travel purpose. For example, business travellers are more inclined to select a travel agency over alternative channel.

The most investigated aspect of managing a multichannel is the factors that influence the channel selection of customers. Various researchers have proposed categories to organize knowledge about the factors that influence customer channel selection, for which this study creates a conceptual framework. There are two reasons why this study mentions a multichannel environment. First, multichannel environmental research investigates more than two channels, which is deemed adequate for the number of channels included in this study. Second, customers' channel-selection behaviour in a multichannel environment has been the subject of increasingly extensive research.

Neslin *et al.* (2006) categorized the factors that influence customer channel selection into six major categories: marketing efforts, channel attributes, channel integration, social influence, situational factors, and individual differences. Meanwhile Trenz (2015) classified several factors into four groups: channel determinants, purchase specific, external influences, and individual differences. It is apparent that these two studies highlighted similar factors. However, neither of this two research included factors associated with psychological scores. Other research has stressed the significance of these factors in influencing channel preference, with Konuş *et al.* (2008) merging cost and benefits theories to identify six psychographic factors linked to customer purchase channel selection. For example, a customer selects a channel to save money, which is an economic benefit related to psychographic pricing awareness. Personal qualities have also a role in decision-making, according to Card *et al.* (2003) who employed the Engel, Blackwell, and Miniard (EBM) customer decision process model.

Although there has been some research on customer channel selection, no unified factor for assessment has been established, which is a gap that this research fills. The research framework represented in Figure 1 was developed by incorporating the aforementioned studies. It suggests that socio-demographic, trip characteristic, channel attributes, and personal characteristic are underpinning reason why customers select one of the hotels booking channels.

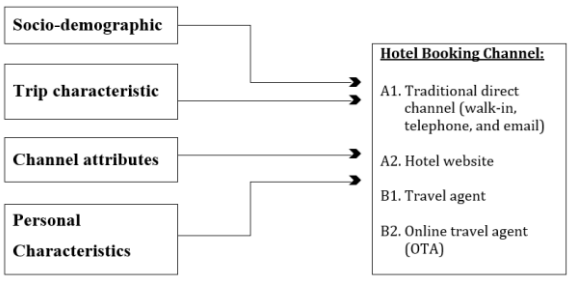


Figure 1. Research framework

2.1 Socio-demographic factors

The influence of demographic on channel choice remains debatable among researchers. It has very little support for its influence on channel selection in a multichannel environment (Trenz, 2015). However, some studies have revealed the association between demographics and the preference towards a certain channel in the tourist business. Cheyne *et al.* (2006) suggested that gender and education level influenced the use of travel agents or the internet. Men and those with a higher education were more likely to use travel agent, while women and those with a lower education were more likely to use internet. Grønflaten (2009) found that younger age was more likely to use the

internet to search for travel information. Furthermore, it was shown that elderly individuals (those older than 59) relied mostly on face-to-face communication. This research involved gender, age, origin of region, occupation, education level, income, and internet experience as socio-demographic indicators.

2.2 Trip characteristics

This factor relates specifically to the time and location of observation, including the product type and social setting. These are referred to as situational factors in a broader multichannel context (Neslin *et al*, 2006; Trenz, 2015). According to Konuş *et al*. (2008), the type of product influences which purchase channel is favoured. In the context of tourism, Grønflaten (2009) mentioned factors such as travel party related to social setting, plays important role deciding whether to choose internet for information purposes. There is greater tendency of using internet-enabled face-to-face interactions while travelling in larger groups, such as on study tours. Furthermore, it is also suggested that the type of accommodation has a significant role in influencing whether the internet of face-to-face interaction is utilized while searching for information. The duration, purpose, accommodation type, traveller party, and reservation time are all related factors that were noted in this study.

2.3 Channel attributes

Channel attributes refer to the perceived quality of specific channels. For example, online booking is considered cheaper than offline booking (Lee and Cheng, 2009). On the two studies conducted by Neslin *et al*. (2006) and Trenz (2015), channel attributes are the most highlighted factor by researchers. The implication is that these factors are important in explaining customers' channel decision. Card *et al*. (2003) argued that channel attributes delineate whether consumers will have positive attitude toward channel. Chiang *et al*. (2006) expressed a similar viewpoint by outlining the link utilizing the transaction cost analysis theory (TCA). For example, one might prefer to purchase through a specific channel because it offers a cheaper price and a broader selection. Some attributes might exclusively associate with certain channel, while being lacking in others. For instance, ease of use and convenience might influence channel selection toward online channels, while risk, privacy, and trust consideration might be a barrier to online channel usage. In the tourism context, Lee and Cheng (2009) discovered that whether cost or service is the most important factor influences booking decision. Customer that are looking for cheaper pricing will use the internet. They will generally select offline if they want services, such as assistance in arranging specific arrangements. This research examined at eight channel attributes: price, discount, speed of transaction, ease of use, broad choice, personal contact, payment method, and reliability.

2.4 Personal characteristics

Personal characteristics were thought to be crucial in determining the customer's channel preference, as was previously noted. The objective of this study guided the selection of personal characteristics from prior research. Konuş *et al*. (2008) mentioned price conciseness, innovation, loyalty, and conformity motivation as personal characteristics that strongly impact customers' channel selection decision. Price conciseness refers to the degree to which consumers prioritize paying low prices, hence a price-conscious consumers prioritize lowering the price paid for an item. Innovativeness is the degree at which a person prefers to try new and different things, whilst Loyalty is the level opposite of this. Motivation to comply is the degree to which consumers need approval from people around them while making purchases.

This study also incorporated findings from Cheng *et al*. (2011) about social interaction, control preference, and convenience. Social interaction is the degree to which customers desire social interaction during travel purchase cycle, which distinguishes online channel users from travel agents. Control preference refers to the degree of control a consumer desire over their travel plans. Moreover, convenience is the degree to which consumers opt to purchase from home and whenever they like. This study also includes the factor proposed by Izquerdo-Yusta and Martinez-Ruiz (2011) about privacy concerns, which refer to the degree to which customers are concerned about internet security and privacy fraud.

3. Methodology

To answer the research questions, a survey was conducted. In-person interview was conducted to collect the survey data of hotel customers, as respondents of the study. An instrument for the survey was developed based upon existing literature and preliminary observations. The methodology for data collection and analysis is detailed as the following.

3.1 Questionnaire design

Questionnaire was designed as measurement tool of variables being studied, which included socio-demographic variables, trip characteristic, perception of channel attributes, and personal characteristic. All four categories are organized into three parts. Part A encompasses general questions on socio-demographic factors, such as birth year, origin, occupancy, gender, and internet experience level. Part B focuses on respondent trip information to Yogyakarta and general channel preference. Length of stay, type of accommodation, trip purpose, and the booking channel were considered. The last question of this part was consisted of several sub-questions and specified to capture individuals' hotel booking channel preference. Respondents were asked to specify channel preference out of four choices: traditional direct channel (telephone, email, and walk-in), hotel website, online travel agency (OTA), and travel agent based on several channel attribute factors. For example, the first sub-questions "How do you book a hotel if you want to get cheap hotel price?" is intended to obtain individual channel perception on channel attribute pricing. There are eight channel attributes in the questionnaire, which was adapted from previous studies: price, discount (special sales, coupon, and rebates), ease of use, speed of transaction, broad choice, personal contact, payment method, and reliability. Part C comprises questions analysing personal characteristic or psychological factors affecting the decision of booking channel selection. The measurements were adapted from various previous studies with the phrasing of booking channel selection modified and then translated to Indonesia. Three factors were adapted from qualitative study by Cheng *et al.* (2011). The coefficient alpha is unavailable as the scales have not yet been determined. It was decided to test the scales in this study since prior research had showed that the factors may distinguish between customer channel selection and booking behaviour.

The coefficient alpha from the previous study, as displayed in Table 1, indicates the reliability of the measurements. The reliability was once again measured using this study's data with exploratory factor analysis (EFA). Four factors were determined to have sufficient reliability based on alpha coefficients larger than 0.5, while two factors cannot provide alpha coefficients due to having just one item after EFA. The response scales for these personal characteristic categories are based on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" scored as 1 to "strongly agree" marked as 7.

Table 1. Measurement items for personal characteristic factors

Measures and Items	*Source*	*α*
Price consciesness		
How important are special sales, promotional rebates, and coupons in your decision making to book hotel?	Chiang *et al.* (2006)	-
When you book hotel, how important is to get the cheapest price?	Konuş *et al.* (2008)	0.70
I compare the prices of various hotels before I make the reservation.	Konuş *et al.* (2008)	0.70
Loyalty		
I prefer to do my booking the way I always do.	Konuş *et al.* (2008)	0.72
I prefer to book the same hotel in the next visit, if I satisfy with previous staying.	Konuş *et al.* (2008)	0.72
Innovativeness		
I enjoy staying in various hotels.	Rohm and Swaminathan (2004)	0.60
I enjoy exploring alternative ways of booking hotel.	Rohm and Swaminathan (2004)	0.60

Measures and Items	*Source*	*α*
Social interaction		
I prefer the way of booking hotel that involves social interaction instead of automatic website booking system.	Cheng *et al.* (2011)	-
Preference of control		
I compare various hotels, such as the location, review, and services, to get the most hotels I want to stay.	Cheng *et al.* (2011)	-
I prefer to manage my booking by myself without someone else to help.	Cheng *et al.* (2011)	-
Motivation to conform		
I feel annoyed if my friends criticize my way of booking hotel (for example, you are called incompetent if booking through travel agent instead of Internet)	Konus *et al.* (2008)	0.64
I follow my friends or family way of booking hotel.	Konus *et al.* (2008)	0.64
Convenience		
It is truly inconvenient if I have to go outside the home or the office to book a hotel.	Cheng *et al.* (2011)	-
I like the convenience of 24/7 service to book a hotel anytime I want.	Cheng *et al.* (2011)	-
Privacy concern		
I am concerned that my credit card will be used in a fraudulent way by website I book my hotel.	Izquerdo-Yusta and Martinez-Ruiz (2011)	0.73
I feel comfortable sending personal information over the internet	Izquerdo-Yusta and Martinez-Ruiz (2011)	0.73
I have as much trust booking through internet as through traditional method (telephone, email, walk-in).	Izquerdo-Yusta and Martinez-Ruiz (2011)	0.73

3.2 Pilot study

Prior to completing the full-scale investigation, the questionnaire was evaluated in two stages of pilot test. The first pilot test was aimed to evaluate the questionnaire's wording, structure, and average completion time. Ten questionnaires were sent. Most respondents related with tourism field to make sure the respondent understands the context of the study. Respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire and provide feedback on whether the questions were easy to understand and whether there is a method to enhance the questionnaire's readability. A respondent suggested that the time frame for the income question should be monthly, with the categories being selected. Another respondent commented on the coding layout of the personal characteristic measurement. The respondents had no significant difficulty to understand and completing the questionnaire. The pilot study also measured the average completion time to see if it is within an acceptable range. This study determined that the completion time is less than 12 minutes. The average completion time was around 13 minutes. A respondent required 16 minutes to complete, while another required only 10 minutes. The revisions were made based on the initial pilot study's result and reviewed by an expert before conducting the final pilot test.

The last stage was conducted to evaluate the practicality of data gathering processes. Participants were asked whether they were interested in participating. Five respondents agreed to participate but quit halfway through the questionnaire because it was too lengthy. In the previous version of the questionnaire, channel attributes were evaluated using a 7-point Likert scale, and each channel's value was determined based on its channel attributes. There were 32 questions about eight channel qualities. The measurement was judged impractical; thus, it was decided to eliminate these questions. Respondents were in a rush and required more than 13 minutes to complete the preceding inquiry in the real world, where they had other tasks in mind to accomplish. By adjusting the measurement of channel property, a change was created. In addition to being evaluated by an expert, the final questionnaire was piloted with 10 genuine respondents in the survey site. The last questionnaire was utilised as the measurement for this investigation because the new survey modification went without a hitch and 10 questionnaires

were determined to include complete responses. The final questionnaire takes an average of 7 to 8 minutes to complete.

3.3 Sample

Sample selection is important since it influences the sample's representativeness of the population. It is crucial for the degree of acceptability that the outcome can be applied to the entire population. There are two distinct sampling methodologies: non-probability and probability sampling methods. Non-probability sampling was employed for this study because random sample would have required access to many hotel visitor lists, which was impractical. Purposive sampling was considered the most practicable method for conducting this study. A sizable population, estimated by more than 4 million people, reside in Yogyakarta. Sampling tests were carried out for bias and error control because the procedure is biased and error prone.

Data for the entire research were collected between November 5 and November 27, 2016. Data was gathered over the duration of three hours. Weekend was chosen as the primary period for data collection since it is thought that this is when tourists are more likely to visit the city, which will result in a larger sample of people who have booked a hotel. Since the goal of the study is to understand how customers select their hotel booking channel, emphasis was placed on those who make their reservations before travelling. The fact that weekdays are less crowded will certainly deter tourists from making accommodation reservations.

Face-to-face intercept interviews complemented with questionnaire were used. First, any potential volunteers were questioned about their interest in taking part. After that, the participants were whittled down by being questioned about whether they were hotel guests or visitors. The researcher was on-site to address any questions that could arise, and the questionnaire was given to participants who indicated they were staying at the hotels. People who weren't staying at the hotel were thanked for their interest but weren't allowed to participate in the survey.

3.4. Data analysis

There were two main sections to the data analysis, i.e., the relationship between channel preference and channel characteristics and the identification of influential factors underlying channel choice (socio-demographic, trip characteristic, personal characteristic). Correspondence analysis was used to examine channel attributes. A contingency table would be produced after compiling the replies for the channel attributes. Based on Hair *et al.* (2009)'s Correspondence Analysis (CA) proposal, analysis was conducted with the goal of creating a perceptual mapping of the link between the 4-category channel selections variable and the 8 channel attributes. Perceptual mapping interpretation would show how a given channel's proximity to a certain channel characteristic. Stronger associations result with closer proximity.

Multinomial Logistic Regression was used to analyse the remaining factors and identify the important factors impacting channel selection. MLR was selected because the dependent variable, i.e., selected hotel booking channel, was categorized as nominal variable. First, data reduction was carried out, and then analysis was performed. To examine the relationship between the sociodemographic and trip characteristics components and the dependent variable, the Chi-square test was used. MLR analysis includes any component with a significant value (p-value 0.05). Exploratory Factor Analysis was used to reduce the number of personal characteristic data sets. The regularity check of all variables was performed to identify incorrectly entered and absent data. Two survey data were eliminated from the data set due to incompletion. Outliers were examined for 17 personal characteristics factor items. 3-sigma standardisation value was used to find a univariate outlier. Several cases were discovered to be out of range. Applying a second check by examining the Mahalanobis distance for multivariate outlier detection. Those cases that are out of range for both univariate and multivariate detection are eliminated, while those that violated just for univariate detection are retained. Following the methodology outlined by Hair *et al.*, (2009), exploratory factor analysis was conducted on 17 personal characteristic components. The Minres residual with Varimax rotation was applied. Very Simple Structure (VSS) and the eigenvalue approach were used to identify the optimal number of components. VSS recommended four factors, whereas eigenvalue suggested six. The six factors were identified for usage. The cut-off value was established at 0.5 to fulfil the normative standards for factor loading.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Sample profile

A total of 103 completed questionnaires were collected. After data screening, three questionnaires were identified as outliers and removed from data set for EFA and further analysis. Table 2 shows the participants' demographic profile regarding their age, origin of region, education, occupation, income level, and internet experience, while Table 3 displays participants' trip information profiles regarding the trip duration, purpose, type of accommodation, travel party, and time of reservation.

Table 2. Profiles of respondents based on socio-demographic variables

Variables	Respondents *(N=103)*	%
Gender		
Male	51	49.51 %
Female	52	51.49 %
Age		
15 – 24	33	32.04 %
25 – 34	45	43.69 %
35 – 44	12	11.65 %
45 – 54	10	9.71 %
Over 55	3	2.91 %
Origin of region		
DKI Jakarta	32	31.07 %
Jawa Timur	26	25.24 %
Jawa Barat	21	20.39 %
Jawa Tengah	7	6.80 %
Banten	2	1.94 %
Other	15	14.56 %
Education level		
Junior High/Senior High	31	30.10 %
Diploma 1/2/3 years	12	11.65 %
Bachelor	55	53.40 %
Master	5	4.85 %
Doctoral	0	0
Occupation		
Student	14	13.59 %
Employee	58	56.31 %
Self-employee	11	10.68 %
Goverment employee	12	11.65 %
Other	8	7.77 %
Income level *(Rupiah)*		
0 – 3 million	32	31.07 %
3.01 – 5 million	32	31.07 %
5.01 – 7 million	17	16.50 %
7.01 – 10 million	13	12.62 %
Over 10 million	9	8.74 %
Internet experience		
0 – 3 years	14	13.59 %
4 – 6 years	35	33.98 %
Over 7 years	54	52.43 %

The percentage of men and women in the sample is about equal. More than 70% of travellers are under the age of 35, which may be classified as youthful travellers. All participants had online experience, as shown by (53%) of

"above 7 years," (33%) of "4 – 6 years," and only 14% of individuals know internet relatively recently (0 – 3 years) compared to the other two categories. This is consistent with the findings of a survey conducted by Horwath HTL/STR (Hotelier Indonesia, 2016), which indicated that the hotel market in Yogyakarta is dominated by young, technologically savvy tourists. Moreover, it was stated that Yogyakarta is a more cost-effective destination than others, such as Bali. Most participants are from provinces close by; all provinces on the island of Java make for 85% of the total, while just 15% are from other islands. Travel distance and transportation accessibility to Yogyakarta may explain the large number of participants from Java Island.

Most participants (88%) stayed for fewer than three nights. The results also indicate that most participants (70%) are visiting Yogyakarta for pleasure, while 24% are there for business. 47% of respondents stayed in a star hotel, while 53% stayed at a non-star hotel. In terms of travel companions, just 15% of respondents reported going alone, while 41% are travelling with one or two companions. A sizeable percentage is also represented by "in other group (i.e., non-family groupings)" which accounts for 24%.

Table 3. Profiles of respondents based on trip characteristic variables

Variables	Respondents *(N=103)*	%
Duration		
0 – 3 nights	91	88.35 %
4 – 14 nights	11	10.68 %
Over 14 nights	1	0.97 %
Purpose		
Leisure	71	68.93 %
Business	25	24.27 %
Visit Friends or Relatives	7	6.80 %
Accomodation		
Star Hotel	48	46.60 %
Non-star Hotel	55	53.40 %
Travel Party		
Alone	15	14.56 %
With One Other	42	40.78 %
Family with children	21	20.39 %
In Other Group	25	24.27 %
Time of reservation		
No reservation	28	27.18 %
Less than a week	40	38.83 %
1 week prior to staying	10	9.71 %
2 – 3 weeks	13	12.62 %
1 month	8	7.77 %
Over 1 month	4	3.88 %

The Chi^2 test was used to compare the sample to other population data in order to determine if the sample was significantly impacted by sampling bias and error. The percentage of male and female visitors to Yogyakarta was reported in figures from Pusat Data dan Informasi Kementrian Pariwisata (2014). Chi^2 analysis produced an unremarkable result ($Chi^2 = 0.174$; $df = 1$; $p = 0.676$). A second categorical variable from Statistics of DI Yogyakarta (2015) may be discovered in the publication (2015). A Chi^2 test was also performed with regard to the distribution of the kind of accommodations, but the results were not statistically significant ($Chi^2 = 0.180$; $df = 1$; $p = 0.670$). In other words, the sample's gender and accommodation type distributions are both representative.

4.2 Effect of channel attributes on channel preferences

This research examined eight channel attributes: pricing, discount (special deals, coupons, and rebates), ease of use, transaction speed, variety, personal contact, payment method, and reliability. Depending on channel

characteristic criteria, respondents were given the option of choosing one of four channels: the conventional direct channels (telephone, email, and walk-in), hotel websites, OTAs (online travel agencies), or travel agents. For instance, the first sub-question, "If you want to obtain a cheap hotel pricing, how do you book the hotel?" designed to determine how each person perceives the price of each channel feature.

A contingency table (Table 4) provided to summarise individual responses to these questions. The rows of the table represent different channels, while the values represent the preferred channel frequencies based on various criteria. Initial visual analysis of the table reveals that "OTA" is favoured by the sample the most, while "Travel Agent" is preferred the least. Several research, like Izquerido-Yusta and Martinez-Ruiz (2011) and Cheng *et al*. (2011), have suggested the same phenomenon: that "OTA" is becoming more popular than traditional travel agents. However, the finding was predicted given that domestic visitors tend to plan their own trips rather than relying on travel agents (Pearce and Schott, 2005). The proportion of groups that prefer to book directly with the hotel is the same for both "Traditional Direct Channel" and "Hotel Website."

Table 4. Channel preference based on channel channel attribute

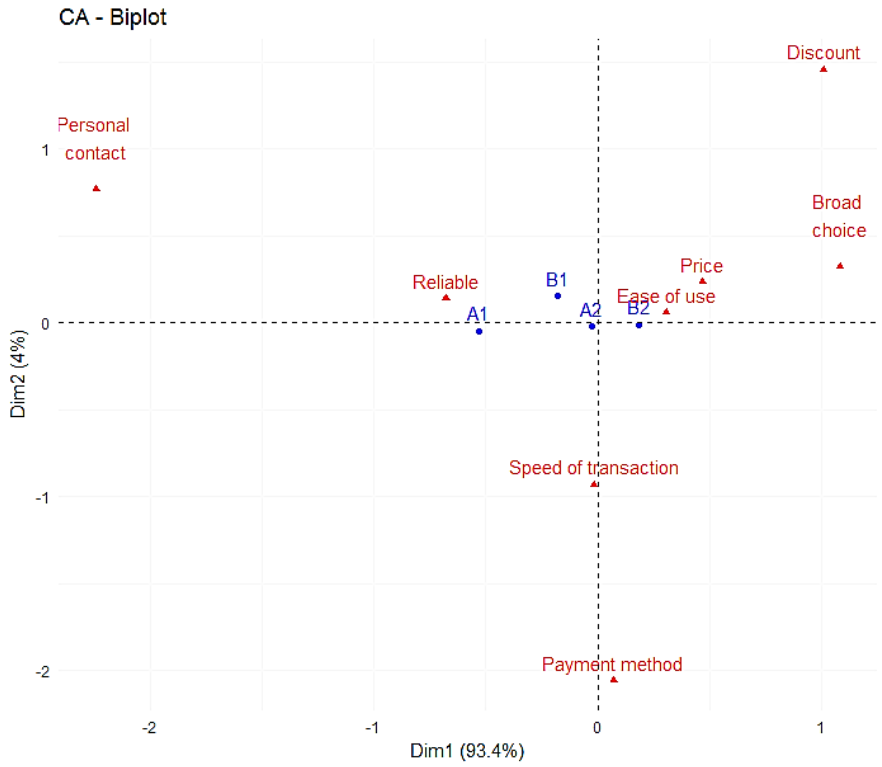
	Traditional Direct Channel	**Hotel website**	**Online Travel Agency**	**Travel Agent**
Ease of use	13	18	62	10
Speed of transaction	17	17	60	9
Price	12	16	65	12
Reliable	22	17	52	12
Discount	7	13	72	11
Broad choice	7	14	73	9
Personal contact	36	15	36	16
Payment method	18	15	64	7
Total	**132**	**124**	**84**	**484**

Further analysis of the contingency table involves evaluating the relationship between channel options and how various channel features are associated with each option. The CA (Correspondence Analysis) approach was utilised to complete the work. The first stage in the interpretation of a correspondence analysis is to determine whether rows and columns are dependent. Generally, dependence is shown by a correlation coefficient greater than 0.20. The correlation coefficient of 0.27 suggests a reliance between rows and columns, hence it is safe to proceed with the study. In addition, the Chi^2 *test* ($Chi^2 = 61$; $df = 21$; $p = 0$) supports it. Checking the contribution of each axis in the computation reveals that the first and second axes account for 93.43% and 4%, respectively, of the inertia, for a total of 97.47%. Through this empirical value, it is advised that all rows and columns be represented graphically using two-dimensional axes.

The coordinates are shown asymmetrically in correspondence analysis. The distance between column points and row points is most easily interpreted when shown asymmetrically. Therefore, column profiles must be shown in row space or vice versa. In a broader sense, this would provide the evaluation of the relationship between channel selections and channel attributes based on the distances shown in the graph. The interpretation of symmetric plots only permits row points or column points, however the relationship between row and column points is incorrect.

Figure 2 reveals that the first axis contrasts the categories "Personal Contact" and "Broad Choice". Furthermore, it rejects the channels "Traditional Direct Channel" and "OTA." This opposition is the most critical element of the

contingency table. This feature includes both extreme and ordinary categories, the latter of which play a more impartial role in the opposition.



A1 : Traditional direct channel A2 : Hotel website B1 : Travel agent B2 : OTA

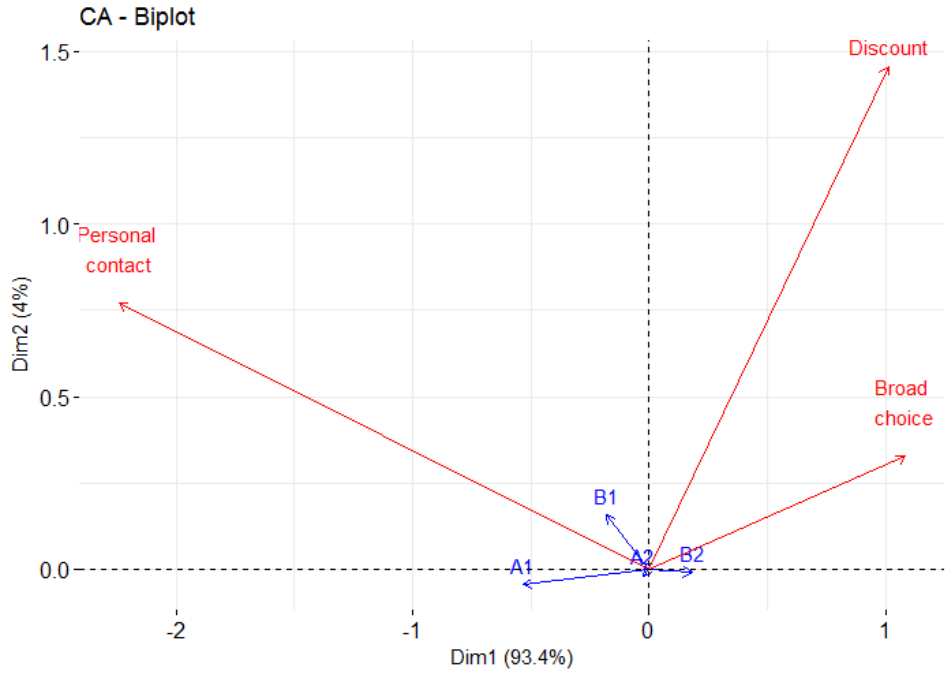
Figure 2. Perceptual mapping between channel preferences and channel attribute

The best correspondence interpretation is generally achieved by interpreting each axis and then evaluating the position of each point. To understand the first axis, first refine the channel properties that contribute little to the axis. According to Bendixen (2003), a threshold contribution is any value larger than the predicted proportion of a category in the case of a completely random distribution. Given that there are eight channel attributes, any contribution larger than 100/8 = 12.5% would be considered significant. When the comprehensive calculation report is examined, the channel attributes "personal contact," "broad choice," and "discount" match the condition. The first axis would be defined by those qualities, with the channel attributes "broad choice" and "discount" indicating positive coordinates and "personal contact" representing negative coordinates. It is also worth noting that interpretation of the second axis would provide less information because it accounts for a relatively small number of individuals (4%). This suggests that interpreting only the first axis would suffice.

The first axis depicts the respondents' attitudes regarding "service quality" and "cost" based on the channel attributes that comprise the axis and the opposition of attributes. "Personal contact" can refer to the mindset of receiving superior service from a real person. On the other hand, "broad choice" and "discount" are associated with a cost-cutting mentality. In the business world, "service" and "cost" are frequently at odds with one another.

This study verifies what Lee and Cheng (2009) discovered, that the booking decision is substantially impacted by whether cost or service is the top priority. Customers who seek reduced costs will choose the Internet. If they need assistance making particular arrangements, for example, they will often pick offline. In the context of this study, the outcome of CA analysis indicates that any channel placed farther to the left in perceptual mapping is preferred due to service quality, but any channel positioned further to the right is picked due to reduced cost. It is important to highlight that this result does not seek to provide psychographic reasons for channel preferences (as it will be discussed in the next section). However, the concept that CA clearly and simply demonstrates properties of the table being studied that are not always visible when viewing the table's data alone would be maintained.

Figure 3 shows what channel attributes could be associated with a specific channel. From left to right, the available channels are: "Traditional direct channel," "Travel agency," "Hotel website," and "OTA." The "Traditional direct channel" and "Travel agent" are more likely to be selected by someone who has a favourable attitude toward service quality since the left side of the chart shows attitude toward service quality. Although it is not required to have a pessimistic attitude on service quality, those who prioritise cost savings are more likely to choose the "OTA" on the right. "Hotel website" is practically at zero, which denotes a profile close to the average profile. This may also be stated in the following way: The respondents who said they preferred "Hotel websites" cannot be separated from the general population, indicating a lack of distinctive characteristics.



A1 : Traditional direct channel
A2 : Hotel website
B1 : Travel agent
B2 : OTA

Figure 3. Perceptual mapping between channel choices and channel attribute after refining

4.3 Effect of personal characteristic, socio-demographics, and trip characteristics on channel choice

Given the nature of channel selections, a categorical variable with four possibilities, multinomial logistic regression (MLR) was selected. However, data preparation must precede the MLR analysis. First, considering the multi-item scale assessment of personal characteristic factors, these items' data should be reduced. EFA was

employed for this purpose. Second, not all socio-demographic and trip characteristics factors are associated with channel selection, thus the *Chi² test* was used to assess the relationship.

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) with a factor loading threshold of 0.5 yielded six personal characteristic factors: price consciousness, loyalty, innovativeness, social interaction, control preference, and privacy concern. Two causes have resulted in the exclusion of two variables: conformity motive and internet convenience. Initially, it was determined that the elements representing the factors had factor loadings below 0.5. Second, eigenvalue recommended that there should be six factors. These six factors were used to reflect an individual's characteristics. Using the summated scales technique of data reduction, composite values of each EFA factor were derived for later analysis. The profiles based on these variables are presented in Table 5. The *Chi²* test was also used to socioeconomic and trip-related factors. Only the intent variable could pass with a meaningful result. The MLR analysis thus included this variable.

Table 5. Profiles of respondents based on continues variables (psychograph variables and age)

	Channel choice for Yogyakarta' trip							
	Travel agent		OTA		Hotel website		Traditional direct channel	
	N = 12		**N = 50**		**N = 6**		**N = 32**	
	Mean	**S.D**	**Mean**	**S.D**	**Mean**	**S.D**	**Mean**	**S.D**
Age	26.83	10.61	29.16	8.65	23.83	5.08	33.00	9.64
Price consciesness	5.65	1.33	5.92	1.14	4.83	1.95	6.03	1.04
Loyalty	5.79	1.05	5.46	1.13	5.92	1.36	5.53	1.48
Innovativeness	5.58	1.20	5.14	1.21	4.25	2.14	4.62	1.40
Social interaction	5.08	1.73	4.08	1.43	3.67	1.86	4.41	1.66
Pref. of control	5.38	1.40	5.78	1.07	5.50	1.67	5.80	1.11
Privacy concern	5.42	1.88	5.08	1.59	3.83	2.04	5.81	1.84

Traditional direct route (telephone, email, and walk-in), hotel website, OTA (Online travel agency), and travel agent are the four possibilities to consider when deciding on the hotel booking channel. The dependent variable was assessed by the actual channel selection made by respondents for Yogyakarta's trip. As the purpose of the research is hotel-side decision-making, direct channel (conventional direct channel and hotel website) was chosen as the category to serve as a baseline. Initially, a study was conducted to identify factors with "traditional direct channel" as the category of reference. In addition, the study discovered factors using "hotel website" as the base category. Here, it is important to provide two baseline categories, since this enables the identification of all hotel direct channel pairings (traditional and website).

The outcome of the MLR analysis is shown in Table 6 and Table 7. Using the $p < 0.05$ standard for statistical significance, the goal of the trip and innovativeness are shown to be statistically significant, although the preference of control is marginally significant ($p < 0.10$) for the selection of travel agency and conventional direct route. Privacy considerations are determined to be marginally important for the selection of OTA over traditional direct channels. The choice between a hotel's website and traditional direct channels demonstrates that age and privacy concerns are only marginally important. It was discovered that innovativeness was significant ($p < 0.05$) for the choice of travel agent and marginally significant ($p < 0.10$) for the choice of online travel agency when the baseline category was changed to hotel website.

4.3.1 Factors affecting customers to book hotel from travel agent over hotel channel

It was discovered that the purpose of the trip has a considerable impact on consumers' choice between travel agent and traditional direct channel. Business travellers are more likely to book their lodging through a travel agent. In contrast, leisure travellers are more likely to book hotels directly with the hotel. Typically, business travels are handled by the firm, whereas pleasure trips are handled by the travellers. This is consistent with the findings of

Crnojevac *et al*. (2010), who discovered that most bookings for business travellers came via travel agents. Most of the time, business travellers are larger groups whose travel plans would be more complicated if coordinated by an individual.

Innovativeness was identified as a crucial factor influencing consumer preference for travel agencies over traditional direct channels and hotel websites. Innovativeness entails a propensity to experiment with novel ideas. In terms of the hotel booking channel, this indicates a willingness to test out new hotels. Less likely are consumers to pick hotel channels over travel agencies, the more their need for distinct routines. This group will compare more than others. Travel agencies provide greater flexibility and options than hotel channels, which may explain the finding. The outcome is also corroborated by the results of the combination of travel agencies and hotel websites. Uniqueness is crucial for hotels to attract these particular demographics.

Table 6. Multinomial logistic regression for channel choice for reference category traditional direct channel

Variables	*B*	*p*	*Odds ratio*
Travel agent vs Traditional direct channel			
Age	-0.060	0.239	
Purpose (Business vs Leisure)	2.402	0.017*	11.06
Purpose (VFR vs Leisure)	-17.32	0.998	
Price consciesness	-0.699	0.126	
Loyalty	0.428	0.324	
Innovativeness	0.919	0.034*	2.50
Social Interaction	0.405	0.178	
Pref. of controls	-0.711	0.092ms	0.49
Privacy concern	-0.072	0.801	
OTA vs Traditional direct channel			
Age	-0.027	0.356	
Purpose (Business vs Leisure)	-0.238	0.699	
Purpose (VFR vs Leisure)	-1.126	0.249	
Price consciesness	-0.083	0.760	
Loyalty	0.071	0.731	
Innovativeness	0.340	0.123	
Social Interaction	-0.108	0.506	
Pref. of controls	-0.096	0.729	
Privacy concern	-0.307	0.069ms	0.73
Hotel website vs Traditional direct channel			
Age	-0.456	0.092ms	0.63
Purpose (Leisure vs Business)	-16.21	0.995	
Purpose (Leisure vs VFR)	-15.60	0.998	
Price consciesness	-0.502	0.334	
Loyalty	0.575	0.364	
Innovativeness	-0.752	0.243	
Social Interaction	-0.013	0.977	

Variables	*B*	*p*	*Odds ratio*
Pref. of controls	0.326	0.642	
Privacy concern	-0.699	0.097[ms]	0.49

Preference for control indicates the desire to plan the trip without delegating responsibilities. The conclusion indicates that a stronger demand for control would favour hotel channels over travel agencies. The chances ratio of 0.49 shows that the traditional direct path is twice as likely to be selected. This might be explained by the fact that travel agents typically provide package tours, which have a regimented itinerary.

Table 7. Multinominal logistic regression for channel choice with reference category hotel website

Variables	*B*	*p*	*Odds ratio*
Travel agent vs Hotel website			
Age	0.039	0.147	
Purpose (Leisure vs Business)	0.018	0.994	
Purpose (Leisure vs VFR)	-1.722	0.999	
Price consciesness	-0.197	0.739	
Loyalty	-0.146	0.839	
Innovativeness	1.670	0.023*	5.3
Social Interaction	0.418	0.432	
Pref. of controls	-1.037	0.432	
Privacy concern	0.627	0.174	
OTA vs Hotel website			
Age	0.428	0.113	
Purpose (Leisure vs Business)	15.97	0.995	
Purpose (Leisure vs VFR)	14.47	0.998	
Price consciesness	0.419	0.379	
Loyalty	-0.503	0.412	
Innovativeness	1.092	0.082[marginal sig.]	2.98
Social Interaction	-0.009	0.837	
Pref. of controls	-0.422	0.530	
Privacy concern	0.392	0.329	

4.3.2 Factors affecting customers to book hotel from OTA over hotel channel

It is discovered that privacy concerns make hotel channels more likely to be picked when OTA is compared to traditional direct channel (marginally significant). The development of any online channel may be hampered by concerns about privacy on the internet, according to several research (Cheng *et al*., 2011; Ezeuduji, 2015; Izquierdo-Yusta & Martinez-Ruiz, 2011; Morosan, 2005). In the broader picture, there may be a problem with internet trust, which can be related to a variety of factors, including the absence of real people in online communication channels. The chances ratio of 0.76 suggests that the usual direct pathway is not very favourable. Despite their worries about internet security, consumers still favour OTA by 0.76. It should be emphasised that hotels shouldn't rely on this issue to increase bookings through hotel channels because it is the unfavourable attitude about other channels that puts hotel channel in advantageous position. Innovativeness is shown to be very moderately important when comparing OTA and hotel websites. One another time, the willingness to try something new favours indirect-channel opportunities over hotel direct routes.

4.3.3 Factors affecting consumers to book hotel from hotel website over traditional direct channel

Online distribution channels are more cost-effective for hotels. Numerous studies have shown that concerns about internet security are impeding the growth of the online channel (Cheng *et al.*, 2011; Ezeuduji, 2015; Izquierdo-Yusta & Martinez-Ruiz, 2011; Morosan, 2005). In keeping with those conclusions, this study also discovered that, when comparing hotels' online and offline channels, privacy concerns were only tangentially significant (traditional one). Customers who are more concerned about internet security are more likely to select offline channels. There should be a lot of work put into easing customers' security worries when hotels are striving to expand their internet direct channel. It is important to build trust that internet transactions are secure.

4.4 Managerial implications

The study's findings include several implications that are relevant to management design strategy. First, the way a channel is viewed may influence which channel customers use to make reservations. Customers will place more emphasis on either service or price. The hotel channel, including its website and more traditional booking methods, must position itself in relation to this dimension and these two factors. For example, a hotel may employ a fiercely competitive salesperson in their traditional channel (i.e., contact centre) to offer consumers top-notch service as they book rooms. Second, it is found that travel agents continue to support visitors travelling for business purposes since they desire less influence over their travel arrangements. The market sector may be handled by establishing direct relationships with corporations, as the firm that arranges an employee's work trip is the customer. Third, differentiating from competing hotels is important to attracting forward-thinking customers. Booking directly through the hotel channel was shown to be influenced by the desire to try something new. The results also indicated that we learn more about what customers consider to be unique. Designing a strategy based on hotel attributes must be considered. Fourth, trust in internet channels remains the greatest barrier to the development of online channels. For a hotel to develop its hotel website and increase bookings through this channel, internet security concerns must be considered. Customers might be enticed to sample the product through introductory price reductions. Even a single purchase made over the Internet would boost customers' trust in the hotel channel.

5. Conclusion

Several factors were found to influence the channel selection of hotel bookings by customers. Through survey-based study, it was determined that socio-demographic, trip, channel, and personal characteristics had an influence on channel selection. Personal contact, a large selection of channels, and a discount, which might be interpreted as service and cost, are the most influential channel attributes in determining consumer channel preference. Traditional direct channels were regarded to provide superior service when reserving a stay, while internet travel agencies were deemed to be the most affordable. Multiple personal characteristics were also revealed to be influential in determining channel preference. Concerns around internet security, for instance, were discovered to be a barrier to any online channel.

Several findings highlighting the factors that inspire customers to book through specific channels have significant implications for hotel management as the basis for marketing mix strategy design. Targets necessitate individualised approaches. For example, hotel online channels should be designed in a manner that allows consumers' internet security concerns. Age was shown to be marginally relevant in the selection of hotel website over hotel offline channel. As a result, it is recommended that advertising of hotel websites be prioritised among younger tourists. Individuals' preference for intermediaries over direct channels is also significantly influenced by the urge to try something new, or innovativeness factor, as it was referred as in this study. Consideration must be given to a plan to improve the hotel's uniqueness.

It is worthy to note that channel attributes correspond to the channel selection. Consumers of hotels in Yogyakarta have some insight on the characteristics of specific channels. For example, certain channels are believed to be more affordable than others. The relationship between channel attributes and consumer perceptions of service quality is an interesting discovery. It was found that customers have a preference for either quality or price, since these two factors are in opposition. Therefore, future research can be directed in this area.

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