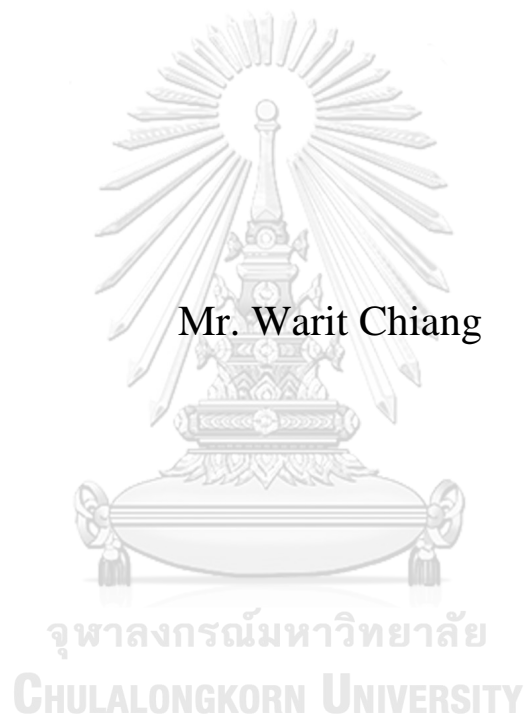# CONSUMERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS HUMAN AND AI CUSTOMER SERVICE BY booking.com

Mr. Warit Chiang

An Independent Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts (Communication Arts) in Strategic Communication Management
FACULTY OF COMMUNICATION ARTS
Chulalongkorn University
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ทัศนคติของผู้บริโภคต่อการบริการลูกค้าด้วยมนุษย์และปัญญาประดิษฐ์ของบุ๊คกิงดอคอม

นายวริทธิ์ เจียง

Independent Study Title	CONSUMERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS HUMAN AND AI CUSTOMER SERVICE BY booking.com
By	Mr. Warit Chiang
Field of Study	Strategic Communication Management
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Accepted by the FACULTY OF COMMUNICATION ARTS, Chulalongkorn University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Master of Arts (Communication Arts)

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จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย
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วริทธิ์ เจียง : ทัศนคติของผู้บริโภคต่อการบริการลูกค้าด้วยมนุษย์และปัญญาประดิษฐ์ของบุ๊คกิงดอคอม. (CONSUMERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS HUMAN AND AI CUSTOMER SERVICE BY booking.com) อ.ที่ปรึกษาหลัก : ผศ. ดร.ธีรดา จงกลรัตนาภรณ์

จุดประสงค์ของการศึกษานี้คือเพื่อพิจารณาว่าผู้บริโภคมีทัศนคติอย่างไรต่อตัวแทนฝ่ายบริการลูกค้าที่เป็นมนุษย์และปัญญาประดิษฐ์ของ Booking.com ลักษณะของการศึกษาเป็นแบบคุณภาพ โดยใช้การสัมภาษณ์เชิงลึกทางออนไลน์ รวบรวมข้อมูลของผู้เข้าร่วม 10 คน ผู้เข้าร่วมได้รับการคัดเลือกโดยใช้วิธีการสุ่มตัวอย่างก้อนหิมะ และใช้เกณฑ์การคัดเลือกเพื่อให้แน่ใจว่าผู้เข้าร่วมมีความหลากหลาย ผู้เข้าร่วมมีอายุระหว่าง 18 ถึง 68 ปี เคยมีประสบการณ์บริการลูกค้าทั้งด้วยมนุษย์และปัญญาประดิษฐ์จาก Booking.com และทราบถึงความแตกต่างระหว่างบริการลูกค้าด้วยปัญญาประดิษฐ์และมนุษย์ การศึกษานี้ใช้แนวทางการสัมภาษณ์เป็นเครื่องมือในการวิเคราะห์ โมเดล ASCI ถูกนำมาใช้เพื่อตรวจสอบการรับรู้ของลูกค้าที่มีต่อการบริการลูกค้าของ Booking.com กรอบแนวคิดของการศึกษานี้ได้มาจากองค์ประกอบสามส่วนของโมเดล ASCI ได้แก่ คุณภาพที่รับรู้ คุณค่าที่รับรู้ และความพึงพอใจของลูกค้า ผลการวิจัยพบว่าผู้เข้าร่วมมองว่าการบริการลูกค้าด้วยมนุษย์ของ Booking.com มีความเสถียรและน่าพึงพอใจมากกว่า เนื่องจากเจ้าหน้าที่ที่ผ่านการฝึกอบรมมาเป็นอย่างดีสามารถจัดการกับคำถามที่ซับซ้อนมากขึ้นและระบุอารมณ์ของลูกค้าเพื่อมอบคุณภาพการบริการที่เหนือชั้น ฝ่ายบริการลูกค้าปัญญาประดิษฐ์ให้การตอบสนองที่รวดเร็วต่อการสอบถามของลูกค้าและจัดการปัญหาที่ตรงไปตรงมา ผู้ตอบแบบสอบถามส่วนใหญ่พอใจกับเวลาตอบสนองที่รวดเร็วของเครื่องมือปัญญาประดิษฐ์ แต่ไม่สามารถแก้ปัญหาที่ซับซ้อนหรือรับรู้อารมณ์ของลูกค้าได้ สิ่งนี้ทำให้ผู้เข้าร่วมเชื่อว่าเป็นเพียงเครื่องมือในการช่วยเหลือตัวแทนของมนุษย์และไม่สามารถแทนที่ได้ ผู้เข้าร่วมให้คะแนนการบริการลูกค้าของมนุษย์ของ Bookin.com ว่าเหนือกว่ามาก สิ่งเดียวที่ต้องเปลี่ยนคือวิธีการเข้าหาพวกเขา ซึ่งทำให้ Booking.com ตัดสินใจเปลี่ยนแปลง

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cherish all of our shared memories and look forward to the amazing things we will encounter in the future. I consider myself extremely fortunate to have met you all.

Warit Chiang

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Significance of the Study

Customer service is one of the key element for Online Travel Agents (OTA) to influence the customers 'behavior. (Talwar, Dhir, Kaur, & Mäntymäki, 2020) It has shown, in particular, to influence customer behavior from a psychological standpoint. The study of the psychological forces that drive customers to do certain things and act in certain ways is an important aspect of consumer behavior. Perception is a major component of these psychological forces.(Reed, 2002) For instance, how a consumer perceives a specific element or value of a brand or company will influence their purchasing decision. Furthermore, the perception of a person can influence that persons 'attitude toward something.(Icfai Business School. n.d.) As a result, understanding the customer's attitude toward a brands 'customer service is critical.

Online Travel Agents (OTAs) are third party booking websites, such as Booking.com, Expedia, Traveloka, Agoda and Trip.com. They provide passengers with a searchable directory of travel suppliers, including flight, accommodation, ticket and others. They also allow customers to book their trip plans straight from their websites. (Feinstein, 2018) OTAs have evolved into digital marketplaces that provide direct access to a wide range of travel products to both B2B and B2C customers. (Walker, 2022) The majority of OTAs still opt to use human customer service because human beings can add personalized service (Ariffin, 2013),

service quality (Choi et al., 2020), sincere interactions (Shin and Jeong, 2020), and experience enrichment (Chan and Tung, 2019) to their service delivery.

On the other hand, technological advancement is searching for more efficient ways to meet customer needs and to relieve the pressure of handling customer requests for service agents. In 2015, conversational bots, computer programs that enable a conversation via text, have become one of the hottest technology topics among travel agency industry. (Rose, 2016) Using live chat interfaces to provide real-time customer care in e-commerce contexts is becoming increasingly common. Customer can obtain the information, such as product details, or seeking for assistance, such as solving technical problems by using these chat services. The real-time nature of chat services can transform customer service to a two-way conversation with significant effects on WOM intentions, trust, satisfaction, and repurchase. (Mero 2018). Along with the development of technological advances in artificial intelligence (AI), human chat service agents are gradually replaced by conversational software agents (CAs) such as chatbots. Chatbot refers to the systems designed to communicate with human users by means of natural language.(e.g., Gnewuch et al. 2017; Pavlikova et al. 2003; Pfeuffer et al. 2019a) However, robots are difficult to mimic the personalized service (Ariffin, 2013), service quality (Choi et al., 2020), sincere interactions (Shin and Jeong, 2020), and gaining experience enrichment (Chan and Tung, 2019), that humans brought into their service delivery. The previous research indicates that CAs should be designed as anthropomorphically (i.e., human-like) in order to create a sense of social presence (e.g., Rafaeli and Noy 2005;

Zhang et al. 2012) through including forms of human communication (e.g., Derrick et al. 2011; Elkins et al. 2012).

Booking.com is the first online travel agent (OTA) to develop its own conversational human-like AI chatbot, which it intends to use in customer service. Booking.com, one of the world's largest online travel retailers, announced the extension of the test version of its new service and support chatbot in 2017. Booking assistant could handle 30% of those customer enquiries automatically in less than 5 minutes.(Restanis, 2017) Natural language processing technology is used by the Booking Assistant to recognize the questions that customers ask most frequently. These questions cover a wide range of subjects, including payment, transportation, arrival and departure times, date changes, cancellation requests, parking details, requests for extra beds, requests for pet policies, availability of Wi-Fi and the internet, as well as a variety of greetings and thank-you notes. "For us, artificial intelligence is not about replacing human interaction, but is instead a vehicle to facilitate an even more personalized, instantaneously gratifying and frictionless travel experience for consumers," said James Waters, global director of customer service at Booking.com.(Breaking Travel News., 2017) Hence, the researcher can understand that Booking.com. see its Artificial Intelligence booking assistant as an add-ons to its human customer service. Because AI booking assistant could provide prompt response to customer inquiries and effectually relieve the pressure of handling customer requests for human service agents.

It has already been four years since the first hog of COVID-19 outbreak brought a tremendous impact on the worldwide travel business. Some countries that rely heavily on tourism have been hit particularly hard. For example, hundreds of travel agencies in Thailand faced to close their doors as a result of the outbreak.(Sritama, 2021) In 2022, the easing of the travel restriction in Thailand was gradually imposed following the slow down of Covid-19 spreading and these online travel agencies were expected to rebound. (Tanakasempipat, 2022) The outbreak pushing many online travel agencies kept looking for a more cost-effective way to fulfill the daily duty of customer service. Booking.com being the pioneer of using conversation AI chatbot as a part of its customer service could be a role model for other peers in the industry. Hence, the answer to the question "What are consumers' attitudes toward human and AI customer service at Booking.com?" could be a valuable reference for OTAs considering using AI chatbots as part of their customer service. This study aims to explore the consumers 'attitudes towards Booking.com's human and AI customer service. And also to study customers' perspective on the similarity and difference between human and AI customer service of Booking.com. There are four sections in this essay. An overview of the tricomponent attitude model and customer value perception is provided in the first section. The methodology is covered in the second section, and the findings from the focus group discussions are covered in the third section. The fourth section starts off by going over the findings before moving on to the study's implications and limitations.

1.2 Research Objective

1.   To explore the consumers ʼattitudes towards Booking.com's human customer service.

2.   To explore the consumers ʼattitudes toward AI booking assistant as a customer service of Booking.com.

3.   To explore the customers' attitudes on the similarity and difference between human and AI customer service of Booking.com.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What are the consumer's attitudes towards Booking.com's human customer service?

2. What are the consumer's attitudes towards AI booking assistant as a customer service of Booking.com?

3. What are the customers ʼperspective on the similarity and difference between human and AI customer service of Booking.com?

1.4 Scope of the Study

To collect data for the empirical study, primary research was conducted. The study is qualitative and follows an exploratory research design. To meet the research objectives, data were collected from eight participants through a focus group discussion using a method of purposive sampling (Johnson & Christensen, 2004).

Participants are 25-39-year-old Booking.com existing customers.(Bowering, 2018). A selection criterion was implemented to ensure that participants were eligible to participate in the study. Using the Zoom Cloud Meeting platform, the researcher conducted an online focus

group discussion to collect data. The focus group discussion took place on October 8, 2021.

1.5 Operational Definitions

Customer Service

Customer service is the interaction between a consumer making a purchase and a representative of the business selling the product. The majority of retailers view this direct interaction as a crucial aspect of ensuring buyer satisfaction and encouraging repeat business (Good Customer Service Matters, 2022). This study identifies Booking.com's customer service as a crucial tool for maintaining and fostering strong relationships with customers.

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is the degree to which a company's products, services, and overall customer experience meet, below or exceed customer expectations. (Franklin, 2022)

Human Customer Service

Human Customer Service is customer service provided by humans to humans. The human touch in human customer service refers to the respect, flexibility, and empathy desired by customers. Technology is effective, but it frequently falls short on all of these subtle service fronts.(Reed, 2021)

AI Customer Service

AI Customer Service of Booking.com refers to a conversational chatbot supported by artificial intelligence agent and natural language processing technology that enables instantaneous responses to text inquiries from customers in a human-like tone. These inquiries include payment, transportation, arrival and departure times, date changes, cancellation requests, parking details, requests for extra beds, pet policies, Wi-Fi availability, and greetings and thank-you notes. （Restanis, 2017)

Online Travel Agent

OTAs let users book vacations online. Booking, HRS, and Expedia offer hotel reviews, travel tips, and package holidays. OTAs are often tour operators. Hotels can register to reach potential guests. Room availability and prices must be listed. When a hotel or tourism-related business books through an online travel agency, they pay a commission. Online travel agencies are an important distribution channel for tourism businesses. (Definition OTA - Online Travel Agency | Glossary | additive.eu, n.d.)

Booking.com

The headquarters of the online travel agency Booking.com are located in Amsterdam. Booking.com now books approximately 1.5 million room nights per day in over 150,000 destinations. With over 29 million reported listings worldwide, including over 6.5 million homes, apartments, and other accommodation types. The most distinguishing characteristic of Booking.com is that it provides customer service in more than 40 languages and dialects around the clock. (Our Story, n.d.)

Travel agent consumer

    The consumer of travel agent refers to those who utilized travel agents to purchase travel services or products. In this study, this term refers to customers who booked flights, hotels, travel destinations, and other products and services through online travel agencies.

Attitude

    A learned disposition to behave consistently favorably or unfavorably toward a given object constitutes an attitude (e.g., a product category, a brand, a service, an advertisement, a Web site, or a retail establishment). (Schiffman et al., 2010) According to Arnould, Price, and Zinkhan (2002:459), an attitude is "a summary of consumer thoughts, feelings, and actions."
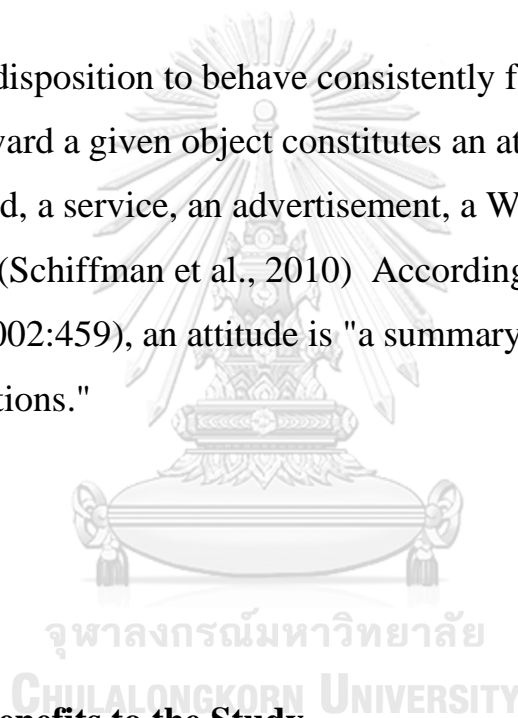
1.6 Expected Benefits to the Study

    It is anticipated that the findings of this study will contribute to the academic body of knowledge regarding the attitudes of consumers of online travel agencies toward the human and artificial intelligence customer service of Booking.com. In addition, the study is expected to provide researchers with the data on the similarity and difference of customer attitudes toward AI and human customer service in the online travel agent industry.

Regarding AI customer service, it is anticipated that the findings of this study will aid the online travel agent industry in the development of its customer service model. In addition, it is anticipated that the study will shed light on the potential impact of AI customer service on consumers' attitudes of travel agents.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study aims to explore consumers' attitude on Booking.com's artificial intelligence and human customer service. To advance, the researcher must first comprehend the explored variables. Consequently, the purpose of this chapter is to comprehend the various concepts associated with the study. The chapter is divided into four concepts: the first relates to attitude and perceived value, the second to customer service, the third to customer satisfaction and ACSI model, the fourth to human-being and artificial intelligence communication , and the fifth to online travel agents.

2.1 Customer Attitude and Customer Perceived Value

Perceived value is the result of a customer's comparison of what they see as the benefits and what they see as the costs. (Zeithaml, 1988; McDougall and Levesque, 2000). In other words, perceived value is the difference between the benefits customers receive and the costs they anticipate for various options (Kotler, 2000). From this definition, the researcher can see that it is a vague and personal idea. (Woodruff, 1997). According to studies, one company's perceived value and the quality of its services are closely related. Service quality drives customer perceived value (Hapsari, Clemes, & Dean, 2016). When customers receive better service for less money, time, and energy, they may perceive it as high-quality. Moreover, customer perceived value affects customer satisfaction and behavioral intent (McDougall & Levesque, 2000).

According to numerous reports in the literature, perceived value may impact customer attitude. (Swait and Sweeney, 2000)

Definition of Attitude

A learned disposition to respond consistently favorably or negatively to an object is referred to as an attitude. Since attitudes are learned, information and experiences affect them. (Wilkie, 1994). In accordance with the postulations of the Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980), consumer purchase behavior is influenced by consumer attitude. According to this theory, behavior is determined by intentions, which are influenced by subjective norms and attitudes. The empirical support for the relationship between attitude and behavioral intentions has been the subject of extensive research. (Kim and Hunter, 1993; Berger et al., 1994).

Tricomponent Attitude Model

In an effort to comprehend the relationship between consumer attitudes and consumer purchasing behavior, psychologists have developed models and theories that capture the underlying dimensions of attitudes (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2004:256). Attitude models explain how a consumer processes information in order to make decisions. (Arnould et al., 2002:459) The Tri-component attitude model is the fundamental consumer attitude model.(Blythe, 2008:146-147; Assael, 2004:216-218; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2004:260; Arnould et al., 2002:462-464; Solomon, 2002:200; Verbeke, 2000:526; Conner & Armitage, 1998:1429). The Tri-component attitude model proposes that attitudes consist of three major

components: cognition, affect, and conation. (Assael, 2004:216;
Schiffman & Kanuk, 2004:256; Solomon, 2002:200).

Figure 2.1 Tricomponent Attitude Model
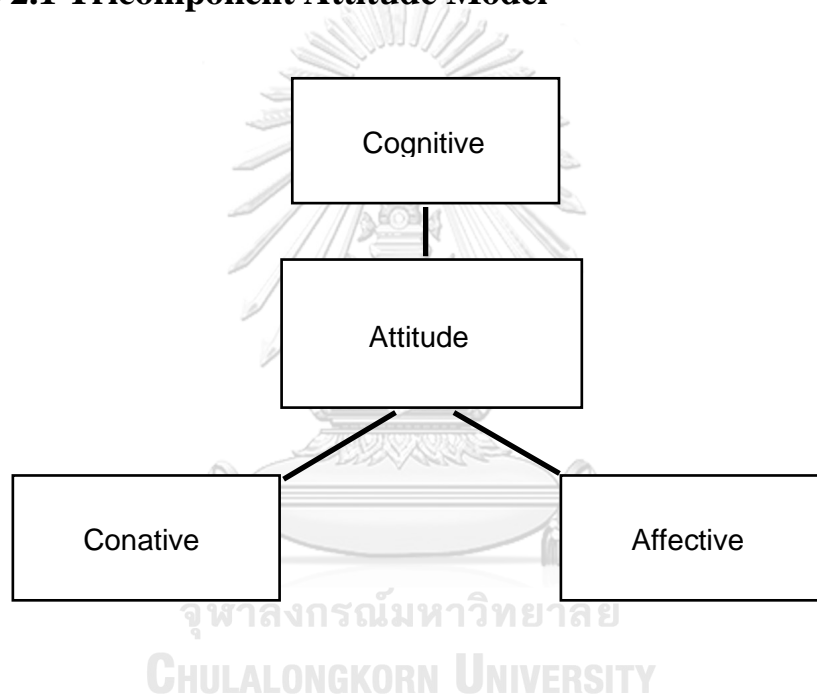
Source: Rosenberg, M. J., & Hovland, C. I. (1960). Cognitive, affective, and behavioral
components of attitudes. In M. Rosenberg, C. Hovland, W. Mcguire, R. Abelson, & J.
Brehm(Eds.), Attitude organization and change (pp.1-14). New Haven, CT: Yale University
Press.

The first component is the cognition component. Cognitions are
knowledge and perceptions that are acquired by a combination of direct
experience with the attitude object and related information from various
sources. And this previous knowledge and perceptions commonly take

the form of beliefs. Moreover, the consumer believes that the attitude object possesses various attributes and that specific behavior will lead to specific outcomes. (Schiffman et al., 2010) The second component is the affective Component which consists of the consumer's emotions or feelings. For example, affect-laden experiences manifest themselves as emotionally charged states (such as happiness or sadness). These states may enhance positive or negative experiences for the consumer. And the later recollections of such experiences may impact what comes to mind and how the individual acts. A recent research suggests that "positive and negative forms of affect operate differently and that their direct and indirect effects on attitudes are influenced by brand familiarity." (Schiffman et al., 2010). The last component of the attitude is conative component. Conation is concerned with the likelihood or tendency that an individual will undertake a specific action or behave in a particular way with regard to the attitude object. It may include the actual behavior itself. In addition, the conative component is frequently treated as an expression of the consumer's intention to buy from the marketing and consumer research perspective. (Schiffman et al., 2010)

The tricomponent attitude provides a set of attributes for evaluating the customer attitude of human and AI Booking.com customer service representatives. Based on the findings of this study, researchers may be able to determine the customer attitude, perceived value and perspective of two types of Booking.com customer service, as well as their similarities and differences.

2.2 Customer Service

Customer service is the assistance you provide to your customers —
both before and after they purchase and use your products or services —
in order to make their interactions with your brand simple and
pleasurable. However, customer service extends beyond resolving a
customer's issues and closing tickets. Today, customer service entails
providing proactive and instant support on the channel of the customer's
choice, including phone, email, text, chat, and more(What Is Customer
Service?, n.d.). Recent research indicates that customer expectations
regarding the service and product quality of travel agents have influenced
the India travel agency market. Due to it can have a substantial impact on
customer perceived value. (Dutta, Chauhan & Chauhan, 2017.)
Moreover, the researchers observed that the customer's complaint does
not necessarily have an impact on loyalty (Dutta, Chauhan & Chauhan,
2017.). This may indicate that if a travel agent is able to provide service
that exceeds customer expectations, including prompt handling of
customer complaints and problem-solving, the customer's attitude toward
the company may improve.

Customer Service in travel and hospitality industry

In the travel and hospitality industry, there are some best practices
for customer service that maybe able to impact customer perceived value
and their attitude. In addition to price, one of the most important factors
for customers when selecting a travel and hospitality partner is the
amount of time they can save planning, researching, and booking their
trip. 62% of consumers are willing to pay more for a simple experience,
and 61% would recommend a brand with a clear proposition that saves

them time, according to research. Second, satisfied service providers are those who are able to be proactive with customer communication, inquiries, and resolutions. In addition, when customers reach out for assistance, tour operators must resolve their issues as quickly and satisfactorily as possible. According to Hiver's Customer Service Benchmark Survey Report – 2021, nearly fifty percent of companies guarantee a resolution time of less than six hours. (Sehgal, 2022) Aside from how effectively customer service works, there are other aspects of service delivery that can make the customer's experience better. For example, the human customer service can add personalized characteristics to the service. The personnel could utilize their professional expertise and personal approach to create trust and problem-solving conversations with customers.(Ariffin, 2013) (Shin and Jeong, 2020) Which may enhance the service quality perceived by customers. (Choi et al., 2020)

Recent research by Saju Eapen Thomas(2020) evaluated the relationship between customer attitude and satisfaction using the tripartite model of attitude. The outcome indicated that cultivating a positive brand attitude will aid in increasing customer satisfaction. And the brand's belief is associated with proficient and warm - hearted employees, as well as a pleasant and inviting atmosphere. These beliefs must be cultivated by training and motivating employees to provide superior customer service. Providing exceptional customer service is paramount to building brand loyalty (Miels, 2022) and has proven to relate with with consumers ' attitudes towards a brand and its customer service.

In conclusion, the tricomponent Attitude Model that Rosenberg and Hanland (1960a) developed offers an analytical framework for explaining the dimensions of the customer service of a brand evaluated by the customer perceived value and attitude. This idea was applied in this research project in order to gain a more in-depth comprehension of how customers at Booking.com view the company's human and AI customer service representatives.

2.3 Customer Satisfaction and ASCI Model
Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction can be defined as the extent to which a company's products, services, and overall customer experience either meet, fall short of, or exceed the expectations of its customers. (Franklin, 2022) According to Sumarwan (2003), customer satisfaction is a comparison between customers' pre-purchase expectations and what they got from the products. A business's goal is to satisfy customers. Customer satisfaction can lead to a harmonious relationship between the company and consumers, repeat purchases, customer loyalty, and profitable word-of-mouth.

ASCI Model

Dr. Claes Fornell, director of the National Quality Research Center, developed the ACSI Model in 1994. It's a University of Michigan research unit working with the American Society for Quality and Customer Feedback Insights Group (Fornell et al. 1996). The ACSI was based on the Swedish Customer Satisfaction Barometer (SCSB), which measured consumer satisfaction in Sweden (Fornell, 1992). The ACSI

applies to macro and microeconomics. As the model measures customer satisfaction based on actual experiences, it's used to measure product and service quality at the organization and industry levels. It can help marketing reach more consumers. ACSI measures latent customer satisfaction using multiple indicators. The result is a latent variable score or index that's comparable across firms, industries, sectors, and nations. Second, as a measure of customer satisfaction, ACSI must be both retrospective and prospective. ACSI is embedded in the system of cause and effect relationships, making it the centerpiece in a chain of relationships from the antecedents of overall customer satisfaction (expectations, perceived quality, and value) to the consequences (voice and loyalty). This system or model's primary goal is to explain customer loyalty. This design captures the served market's backward- and forward-looking evaluation of ACSI's offering.(Fornell et al., 1996).

However, the purpose of this study is to explore the similarity and difference of the customer's attitude toward human and AI customer service on Booking.com. Which will not test the relationship between variables. This study will only use the components of the ASCA Model as the components of customer service in order to explore the customer attitude towards different Booking.com customer services.
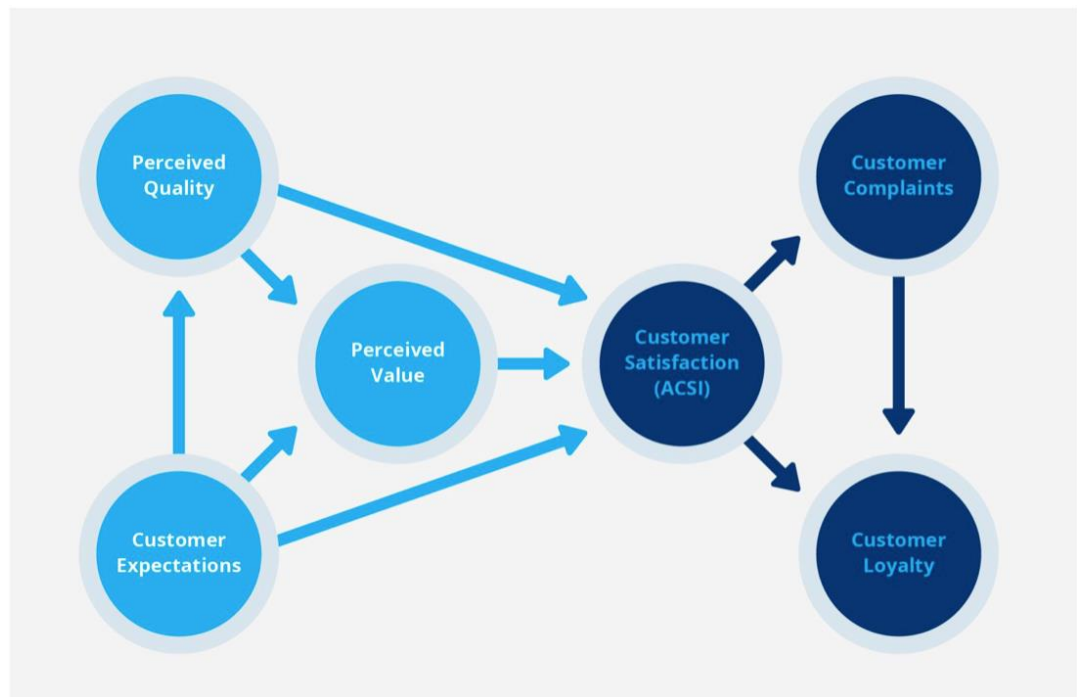
Figure 2.3 ASCI Model

Source: The American Customer Satisfaction Index. (2022, April 12). The Science of Customer Satisfaction. Retrieved September 23, 2022, from https://www.theacsi.org/company/the-science-of-customer-satisfaction/

Customer Expectation

It is now generally acknowledged that exceeding customer expectations is crucial to customer satisfaction, delight, and loyalty (Kotler, 2000). Therefore, it is crucial for marketers to attempt to ascertain in advance what their customers' expectations are, as failure to meet or exceed them could result in dissatisfaction and defection.

Perceived Quality

Perceived quality is a customer's recent evaluation of a company's products or services. Quality is measured by customization and

reliability, or how well a product or service meets the customer's needs (The American Customer Satisfaction Index, 2022).

Customer Complaints

Customer complaints are measured as a percentage of respondents who have complained directly to a company within a specified time frame. More satisfied customers are less likely to complain (The American Customer Satisfaction Index, 2022).

Customer Loyalty

Customer loyalty is the customer's likelihood to repurchase from the same supplier in the future and to purchase a company's products or services at various price points (price tolerance). Customer loyalty is the model's key to profitability (The American Customer Satisfaction Index, 2022).

2.4 Human being and Artificial Intelligence Communication

A human customer service representative is able to listen to the problem as described by the customer, consider the issue's context, and come up with an appropriate solution. Human customer service representatives can empathize with and be sensitive to the emotions of customers(Jacobson, 2022). According to the contactcompany official website, there are at least 3 important benefits of human customer service. First, it can mitigate customer frustration.CGS found in a 2018 study that, beyond simple customer service, the majority of consumers still prefer human agents over chatbots. In addition, more than half of all UK respondents over the age of 25 were concerned that companies were moving too quickly to "chatbot-only" customer service, making it more difficult to speak with human representatives when necessary. When
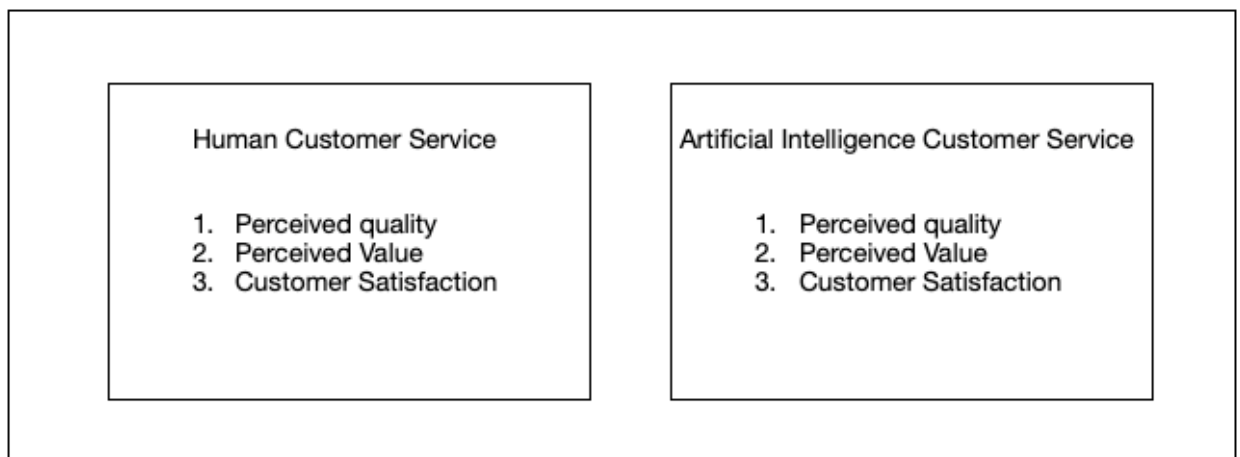
customers desire/need to speak with a person but are unable to do so, this can cause significant frustration. Second, it can build reliability. Even though technology has advanced significantly over the past decade, it is still not 100 percent reliable. There may be unscheduled downtime or technical issues or obstacles with the questions asked of the chatbots or automated solutions. Last, it could provide qualitative feedback. Customer Service Agents can collect qualitative data that may not have been as accessible or easily filtered with AI solutions alone; AI delivers more quantitative data. This qualitative data may contain important customer information and actionable, measurable feedback that can be used to proactively improve the customer journey and experience and attract and retain customers. (3 Important Benefits of Human Customer Service, 2020)

AI customer service, on the other hand, can manage large volumes of data, reduce average handling time (AHT), provide proactive support, and track performance more easily. In addition, it could collect quantitative data and help a business predict future trends and the operation status of the business. And the most important point is it could help a company to cut the operation cost of customer service. (Jirik, 2022) In conclusion, the AI customer service can be power full tools in handling most smaller tasks on its own, but it's still important to give customers access to human customer service agents to address those more emotional or complex issues. Which this conclusion is the same as Booking.com policy to their self-service customer service and human customer service.

2.5 Online Travel Agent (OTA)

A web-based marketplace that enables consumers to research and book travel products and services directly with travel suppliers is known as an online travel agency (OTA). Every day, millions of vacationers and business travelers utilize online travel agencies for trip planning. OTAs provide customers with access to information about travel destinations, services, and products that would be difficult to obtain independently. Additionally, OTAs provide their business partners with market intelligence and tools for targeting travelers, securing and processing reservations, communicating with guests, and managing reviews.(What's an Online Travel Agency (OTA) & Why Do You Need One? | Expedia Group, n.d.)

Human Customer Service	Artificial Intelligence Customer Service
1. Perceived quality 2. Perceived Value 3. Customer Satisfaction	1. Perceived quality 2. Perceived Value 3. Customer Satisfaction

2.6 Conceptual Framework - Customer Service of Booking.com

This conceptual framework consider the Tricomponent Model and ASCI Model to generate the component of customer service. A business can satisfy its customers if it can offer excellent customer service. A business can stand out from the competition by prioritizing customer

service. It might attract repeat customers and build a solid reputation through positive word of mouth.(Holt, 2017) In a 2017 study, Dutta, Chauhan, and Chauhan used the ACSI model to analyze how perceived quality and value relate to one another and how that affects customers' satisfaction and loyalty while using Indian online travel agencies. The findings indicated that customer expectations are crucial in the Indian online travel market because they have a significant influence on perceived value and quality. On the other hand, the three components of the Tricomponent Model, cognition, conation, and affect, can be utilized to speculate the result of the finding. However, because this is a exploratory study, the speculations about the findings require additional research to be confirmed.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study used an exploratory research design. This study aims to determine how Booking.com users feel about human and artificial intelligence customer service. In-depth interviews allow for the collection of detailed data from participants in a more relaxed atmosphere. People may feel more comfortable having a conversation with you about their program as opposed to filling out a survey. To get detailed, rich data from an interviewee, the interviewer must make them comfortable and appear interested. They must also avoid yes/no and leading questions, use appropriate body language, and keep their opinions in check. Small samples and non-random sampling methods make generalizations about in-depth interview results difficult. In-depth interviews provide valuable program data, especially when combined with other methods. When interviewees have similar stories, themes, issues, and topics, a sufficient sample size has been reached.(Boyce & Neale, 2006) This chapter discusses the study sample and its selection, the research tools used, the steps taken at each stage, the manner in which data was collected and analyzed, and the validity and reliability of the study.

3.1 Research Sample and Sampling Method

Ten people in total will be chosen to participate in the in-depth interview. To ensure the data's complexity, the ten participants will be all male and female, of a wide age range, and of any nationality. To ensure that all participants are eligible to participate in the in - depth interview the study will be qualitative in nature and use the purposive research

sampling technique. Ten participants for the in-depth interview will be chosen using a technique of exponential Non-Discriminative Snowball Sampling. The researcher will select participants based on his or her knowledge of the social circle. In exponential Non-Discriminative Snowball Sampling method, the first subject recruited provides multiple referrals. Each new referral then provides additional data for referral, and so on, until the sample has a sufficient number of subjects. ("Snowball Sampling: Definition, Method, Advantages and Disadvantages | QuestionPro") In addition, the researcher will ask potential participants screening questions to ensure they meet the criteria for an in-depth interview. The potential participants will be selected in the ged range of 18 - 64 years old. According to investigation conducted by similarweb toward Booking.com, this age group accounts for 92.86 percent of Booking.com customers. Only 7.14 percent of Booking.com's customers fall within the age range of 65 and older. This group will not be included in this study because it has the smallest proportion and it is difficult to reach interviewees in this age range. Furthermore, participants must be aware that Booking assistant is AI chatbot of Booking.com. Therefore, potential participants must meet the selection criteria as follows.

1. Participants must be between the ages of 18-64 years old, both male and female with any nationality.
2. Participants must be the customer of Booking.com.
3. Participants must be aware Booking assistant is AI chatbot of Booking.com
4. Participants must have experience with the human customer service and AI customer service of Booking.com

The in-depth interview will be conducted via the Zoom Cloud Meeting platform. Answers will be recorded and later interpreted into findings. Data were noted and recorded for the researcher's further interpretation. (Dilshad & Latif, 2013). Data were immediately analyzed following the session to ensure that the researcher could recall the information obtained. (Malhotra, 2019). The participant's views and perspectives were faithfully and clearly transcribed, ensuring validity in terms of true value. The collected data was free of bias based on opinion and experience. The researcher's reliability was assessed in terms of his or her ability to be trusted, and his or her decisions lacked any bias or subjectivity. (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3.2 Research Instrument

The study's research instrument was a discussion guideline (see Appendix A). The discussion guide consisted of sets of questions based on existing works of literature pertaining to the conceptual framework for Booking.com customer service, including customer perceived quality, perceived value, customer satisfaction. The guideline was divided into four sections, the second, third and four sections have addressed different variable relating to customers' attitudes of Booking.com's customer service.

The first section is the general questions. This part will collect the demographic information and break the ice with the participant.

The second section addressed consumers' perceptions of the quality of human and AI customer service on Booking.com. As noted in the literature review, this study examines perceived quality from a cognitive

perspective (Schiffman et al., 2010). Therefore, the questions pertained to an overall evaluation of the function of Booking.com's customer service. The findings for consumers 'attitude towards Booking.com's human and artificial intelligence customer service are reported in this section of the study. The three dimensions explored towards Booking.com's human and artificial intelligence customer service pertained to the effectiveness dimension, ease dimension and emotion dimension. (How The 3 Dimensions of Customer Experience Serve Government Agencies, n.d.) The effectiveness dimension was discussed in reference to the speed of the customer service providing a valid solution to customer, ease dimension pertained to the customer's perceived experience. Emotion dimension explored how the customer come away with the positive feeling they expect. Findings were obtained through thematic analysis post in-depth interview, the findings under each value are outlined as follows. In 4.2, researcher discussed the customer's perceived quality of Booking.com's human customer service and artificial intelligence customer service. Perceived quality refers to the tangible part of customer service when discussing the quality of customer service. For instance, what the customer sees, hears, smells, and touches can enhance or diminish their experience with the object. (Brenda, 2015) Or the physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials. (Klokkenga, 2022) Hence, researcher only elaborated 1 dimensions, effectiveness in this section.

The third section examines the customer perceived value of the human and AI customer service of Booking.com from a cognitive perspective (literature review) (Schiffman et al., 2010). The questions evaluated customer emotional part of attitude toward Booking.com's

customer service overall. Dutta, Chauhan, and Chauhan provided the study's questions (2017). Alterations were made in order to accommodate the nature of the study's setting. When discussing the value of customer service, perceived value refers to the perceived emotional aspect of customer service. For example, how the customer feels when interacting with customer service. (Brenda, 2015) The knowledge and courtesy of employees, as well as their ability to convey trust and confidence, constitute assurance. Additionally, empathy is the firm's attentive, individualized care for each customer. (Klokkenga, 2022c) In this section, the researcher only elaborated on two themes: assurance and empathy.

The fourth section explored the level of satisfaction that customers have with Booking.com's human and AI customer service representatives. According to the previous research and the literature, this study investigates how service quality is cognitively perceived (Schiffman et al., 2010). The responses to these questions were used to determine how satisfied customers were with the overall quality of Booking.com's customer service. The questions for the study were inspired by Dutta, Chauhan, and Chauhan (2017). The context of the study was changed. In this section, researchers collected participant responses to the question, "What makes him or her satisfied or dissatisfied with customer service at other online travel agencies compared to human customer care at Booking.com?" To comprehend client expectations regarding human and artificial intelligence customer support on Booking.com. According to Tanner, J. F., and Raymond, M. A. (2011), loyalty is the feeling a person has when a product or service achieves their expectations. For example, when a customer has a positive experience with previous products or services provided by a company, they are satisfied; however, when they

encounter failures or other issues, they are dissatisfied. According to the citation above, researchers know that customer satisfaction causes loyalty. This section will only cover one dimension: satisfaction.

The selection of interviewees for the in-depth interview is using exponential Non-Discriminative Snowball Sampling. The first interviewee provides the recommendation of other potential interviews. Each new referral offers more referrals, and so on, until the sample has enough people. ("Snowball Sampling: Definition, Method, Advantages and Disadvantages | QuestionPro") A Zoom conference was utilized to conduct in-depth interviews with each participant in the study. Zoom online meeting is a wonderful way to meet an interviewee who is unable to attend the interview in Bangkok, Thailand in person. This enables us to bypass the possible issue posed by the distance between the researcher and the interviewee. Additionally, it could reduce time for both parties and enhance the likelihood that a possible interviewee will attend.

3.3 Procedure

This section describes the researcher's procedures before, during, and after the in-depth interview. Outlining procedures allows the researcher to reflect and track progress during research (Noble & Smith, 2015).

Pre-in-depth interview

1. In-depth interview participants through the researcher's network.

2. Identify participants using selection criteria and recorded contact info.

3. Contacted participants to check availability and scheduled an in depth interview.

4. Confirmed participants' attendance the day before and asked them to download Zoom Cloud Meetings.

5. Pretested Zoom Cloud Meetings and prepared a notebook, pen, and MacBook charger for in-depth interview.

6. Reviewed the interview guideline to understand the questions.

During in-depth interview

1. The researcher explained study goals.

2. Explained in-depth interview, moderator's role, topic, and participant rules.

3. The researcher requested permission to record the interview.

4. Throughout the interview, the researcher kept participant relaxed.

5. Key statements and nonverbal cues were noted during the interview.

6. The researcher thanked the participant.

Post in-depth interview

1. After the interview, the researcher recorded initial insights and impressions.

2. Data were transcribed and checked thoroughly.

3.4 Validity and Reliability

Validity is the integrity and precision of methods used to gather data-based findings. Consistency of analytical procedures is reliability (Long & Johnson, 2000). Qualitative research is criticized for lacking scientific rigor and method justification. Due to lack of transparency during analysis, findings are often subject to research bias (Rolfe, 2006).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed an alternative criterion to improve qualitative research rigor and credibility. Validity means true

value, and reliability means consistency. True value recognizes many realities. The researcher must accurately transcribe participant views. Personal bias must be removed from data. Consistency in reliability means trustworthiness. The researcher must be transparent, and decisions must be unbiased (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Qualitative research can include methodological strategies that boost research findings' credibility. This study used Noble and Smith's strategies (2015). This study's strategies are below.

• Take into account any potential personal biases that may have an effect on the findings.
• Record the information obtained from the participants in a complete and exhaustive fashion.
• Interpret the results consistently and openly.
• Participate in the process of approving question guidelines and reducing research bias by working with other researchers and research advisors.

These strategies that along with the discussion guide adapted from earlier research can be helped to improve the study's validity and reliability.

3.5 Data Collection and Data Analysis

The platform of Zoom Cloud Meetings was utilized in order to carry out the discussion with the in-depth interview. The discussion among the in-depth interview took place on the October and November in 2022. The duration of the in-depth interview was set at 15 mins. During the duration of the in-depth interview, notes were taken to collect information, which was then recorded for the researcher to review in order to facilitate greater comprehension. (Dilshad & Latif, 2013).

Following the interview session with the in-depth interview, an analysis of the data was carried out straight away. This was done to ensure that the information obtained and the insights gained are still fresh in the mind of the researcher after they have been processed. (Anderson, 1990).

The researcher analyzed data using thematic analysis, which is derived from the grounded theory methodology. Thematic analysis is a technique for identifying, analyzing, and reporting on themes within data(Braun & Clarke, 2006). Similar to grounded theory, thematic analysis includes two stages of coding: I open coding and (ii) axial coding. The initial step in qualitative data analysis is open coding. It is an interpretive procedure that analyzes data breakdowns. The procedure involves labeling and encoding raw data. The objective is to stimulate theoretical possibilities and provisionally classify obtained raw data. Axial coding is the process of establishing relationships between the codes identified in open coding. The codes will be organized into conceptual categories that will serve as their axis(Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Following the method of thematic analysis, conceptual categories will correspond to themes. A theme represents patterned responses or meanings within a data set, and it is the culmination of significant data that relates to the research questions. After identifying themes, the researcher conducted a comprehensive review of the findings and transcribed the narrative. (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

CHAPTER 4

FINDING

This chapter is divided into sections based on the objectives of the study. The first section focuses on the demographic profile of participants, while the second section examines their perceptions of Booking.com's human and artificial intelligence customer service perceived quality. The third portion addresses the participants' perspectives on the perceived value of human and artificial intelligence customer support provided by Booking.com. The fourth segment investigates the participants' satisfaction with human and artificial intelligence customer support on Booking.com. The final section compares participant satisfaction with Booking.com's human and artificial intelligence customer service to that of other travel agencies and businesses.

4.1 Demographics of Participants

According to the approach, participants for the in-depth interview must be between the ages of 18 and 64. In addition, participants must have used both human and artificial intelligence customer care on Booking.com and be aware that human customer service is provided by human agents and artificial intelligence customer service is provided by a robot. Five of the 10 participants were female and five were male, and they ranged in age from 19 to 60 years old. All participants were exposed to Booking.com's human and artificial intelligence customer support for a minimum of one year, with four individuals utilizing the website for up to five years. And particular one individual has utilized Booking.com's service for around 6 years. One participant was an undergraduate

student, while three others worked as content moderators for a business process outsourcing company. One was a quality control engineer for an architectural firm, while the other was a labor management analyst for an industrial firm. Four remains participants were working in the travel business. One participant was an outbound tour leader, while the remaining three were employees of a London-based B2B travel agency. The researcher chose participants based on the following qualities to maximize data quantity and variety.

1. Participant 1: 26 years old, male, content Moderator, 3 years experience with Booking.com.
2. Participant 2: 26 years old, male, content Moderator, 3 years experience with Booking.com.
3. Participant 3: 24 years old, male, content Moderator, 2 years experience with Booking.com.
4. Participant 4: 45 years old, female, workforce management reporting analyst., 5 years experience with Booking.com.
5. Participant 5: 32 years old, female, outbound tour leader, 2 years experience with Booking.com.
6. Participant 6: 29 years old, female, employee of a b2b travel agency, about 6 years experience with Booking.com.
7. Participant 7: 31 years old, female, employee of a b2b travel agency, about 5 years experience with Booking.com.
8. Participant 8: 60 years old, male, quality control engineer, 5 years experience with Booking.com.
9. Participant 9: 32 years old, female, employee of a b2b travel agency, about 5 years experience with Booking.com.
10. Participant 10: 19 years old, male, undergraduate student, around 1 and half years experience with Booking.com.

As a prelude to the in-depth interview, participants were asked about their prior experiences with Booking.com. Also their past experience with using the service of other online travel agencies.

4.2 Consumers' perceived quality of Booking.com human customer service and artificial intelligence customer service

Effectiveness Dimension   **KeyWords**

Theme	Artificial Intelligence	Human
Responsiveness	(1)"convenient and effective way".	(1)"ineffective way"
	(2)"speed of response is fast"	(2)"westing time"
	(3)"almost immediately"	(3)"slow"
Reliability		
(1)"cannot handle complex inquiry"	(1)"valid solution"	
	(2)"cannot meets my request."	(2)"agents are well trained"
	(3)"cannot help with complex issue"	(3)"understand what I mean"

Theme 1: Responsiveness

Given the abundance of online travel agencies on the market, the majority of participants agreed that the speed of service delivery to the customer is a crucial aspect of online travel agency customer service. Regarding the responsiveness theme, four respondents expressly stated that Booking.com's method of contacting human customer service representatives is ineffective.

- "What I dislike about the human customer service of booking is the way of approaching them. I can only text them and that cost me more time to explain my needs." (Participant 1)

- "What I despise most about Booking.com's human customer support is the way of approaching. It is quite annoying

and inconvenient for me as I dislike typing and westing time."

(Participant 2)

- "The only approach for contacting their human customer service is to submit my inquire via texting to them. I do not think it is an effective way of communication. It is out of date."   (Participant 5)

- "The speed of their response to me is too slow. I do not think communicate via massaging is an efficient way of communication."

(Participant 10)

On the other hand, the remaining six participants informed that the approach of contacting artificial intelligence customer service is significantly more effective than human customer service.

- Comparing to human. Customer service, booking assistant is providing a more convenient and effective way of approaching to Booking.com customer service.

(Participant 1)

- It could identify my inquires accurately and response with human like tone. I can simply typing in the chat bot and receive the my answer within few seconds.

(Participant 2)

- What I like about the quality of Booking.com AI customer service is about the speed of its response to my inquires.

(Participant 3)

- it can answer some easy inquiry. And I feel less pressure to communicate with the robot. It can identify the meaning of my english well.

(Participant 4)

- I used to ask booking assistant about the parking
  information of the hotel I booked in Paris. And I have
  received the answer right away. And the language that
  booking assistant response to me is like a right
  human.
  (Participant 5)
- I like this feature because it could respond my inquires
  almost immediately. (Participant 10)

Theme 2 Reliability

As evidenced by the comments of numerous participants, customers want to be able to rely on the businesses they do business with. Regarding the reliability theme, ten respondents opined that human customer service is significantly more dependable than artificial intelligence customer service because it can handle more complex issues and provide better quality service. For instance, a human customer service agent can provide a customer with a satisfactory solution and compensation based on their professional knowledge and skills.

- "What I like about their human agents is they always get
  back to me with a valid solution."   (Participant
  2)
- "Their agents are well trained. And always solve your
  problem promptly with responding to you via massage."
  (Participant 5)
- "The communication between human & human they have
  provided me the exact what I want. Because some
  questions AI cannot give me the answer."
  (Participant 7)

- "They are professional and their performances are sometime exceed my expectation." (Participant 8)

In contrast, artificial intelligence customer service can only respond to elementary and straightforward inquiries.

- It cannot manage complex cases such as hotel overselling rooms. (Participant 2)

- if I have general question, I can ask AI but somehow I have complicated issue the AI cannot help me. (Participant 7)

4.3 Consumers' perceived value of Booking.com human customer service and artificial intelligence customer service

Emotional Dimension		KeyWords
Theme	Artificial Intelligence	Human
Assurance professional "	(1)"Quick response &save your time" (2)"Give the info and confirmation on time" (3)"Unable to identify complex inquires." (4)"Can only understand simple inquires" inquires" knowledges"	(1)"Supportive and (2)"Trained properly" (3)"Warm interaction" (4)"Able to handle complex (5)"Solve problems with
Empathy customer emotion"	(1)"Response with human-like language" (2)"Unable to identify customer emotion"	(1)"Highly trustable" (2)"Simplify the problem" (3)"Able to identify

Theme 1 Assurance

All the participants are agree that the human customer service's agents of Booking.com are well trained. They are professional, knowledgeable and knew how to assist the customer with their problem.

- Their human customer service agents are very supportive
  and professional once they are starting handle your
  inquires.
  (Participant 1)
- They are professional and trained properly. They are
  capable of handling the challenging issue in an
  exemplary manner. I feel as though I am conversing with
  a genuine person and an
  expert.
  (Participant 2)
- Perfect. Their agents are professional and supportive.
  Warm interaction, supportive with customer's challenging
  situation.
  (Participant 3)
- I think the their human customer service agents are well
  trained. They can simplify the communication and direct
  to point.
  (Participant 6)

The respondents also depicted that the expertise of the human customer agents of Booking.com can increase their trust toward the brand.

- Their agents are supportive and professional And making
  me believe the brand.   (Participant 4)
- I can trust them while they are solving the problem for
  me. Because, they are the
  expertise.
  (Participant 7)

In contrast, participants 6, 7, and 9 did not perceive "Booking Assistant" as a valid form of customer service. Because it can only answer simple questions and cannot solve complex issues.

- I was moody and annoying, I did not get what I want from them and they keep me repeat my inquiry again and again.
  (Participant 6)
- It unable to answer what I want to know. Cause, most of inquires required human representative involve.
  (Participant 7)
- It just response only the general questions. And I cannot get useful information from it.
  (Participant 9)

The remaining participants agreed that artificial intelligence customer service "Booking Assistant" has delivered its function as promised by Booking.com.

- It can respond promptly to simple inquiries. It meets some of my requirements for customer service.
  (Participant 1)
- It could restrict the pressure of human customer service agents and also answering my simple inquiries correctly and politely.
  (Participant 2)
- Quick response, identify and lead your inquires to the correct department in-order to save your time.
  (Participant 3)
- It can understand what I try to ask and answer my inquires quickly and correctly. And I do not think most my inquiry is completive enough requiring human agents to involve.
  (Participant 4)

- It could give me the information and confirmation that I required on time. Since most of my inquires is seeking for the confirmation of small things, like 'Parking area of the hotel. I do not have to wait a long time for waiting human customer service's agent to reply my message.   (Participant 5)
- It response to customer quickly with human-like language pattern. It able to save customer's time and reduce human customer service's work load.   (Participant 8)
- Enjoyable. It could give me the information and confirmation that I required on time.
  (Participant 10)

Theme 2 Empathy

Seven participants reported that Booking.com's human customer service made them feel satisfied, relieved, and at ease. Because they will utilize company policy and market expertise to assist the customer in problem-solving. And providing a better alternative or compensation if necessary.

- I feel comfortable when using Human customer service because I am very confident that my issue can be solve by them.
  (Participant 6)
- I was satisfying when using human customer service. Because, I knew that their agents are doing a good job of taking care of customer.
  (Participant 7)
- Feel relieved. I know they will fix my problem. And my needs will be value and paid enough attention in their side.
  (Participant 8)

However, the remaining participants reported that the approach to human customer service makes them feel impatient, irritated, and unenthusiastic about using it. Because they find it inefficient and inconvenient. And experiencing discomfort.

- I feel annoyed while using Booking.com's human customer service. It is really inconvenient to communicate with them by texting. And this make me feel like the company did not pay attention on our feeling and demand.
  (Participant 1)

- It is difficult to articulate. I believe that their agents are competent and helpful. However, I can only escalate my inquiries by submitting a ticket. This is quite obsolete. And I do not like it.
  (Participant 2)

The respondents also depicted that they are more prefer to talk with the human agents via phone instead of texting.

- The only thing I think it could be improved is the way of communicate with their agents. I prefer to talk with their agents via phone, not via texting.
  (Participant 3)

- Not looking forward to use it. I prefer to talk with real human vial telephone. My parents are 60 years old, and they do not know how to contact their human agent. Texting is a new concept to them. It is not convenient to us.
  (Participant 5)

On the other hand, seven participants valued the customer service function of artificial intelligence. They appreciate how quickly it can respond to them. So that they can save time and obtain the desired information.

- It can respond promptly to simple inquiries. It meets
  some of my requirements for customer service.
  (Participant 1)
- It could restrict the pressure of human customer service
  agents and also answering my simple inquiries correctly
  and politely.
  (Participant 2)
- Quick response, identify and lead your inquires to the
  correct department in-order to save your time.
  (Participant 3)
- It can understand what I try to ask and answer my
  inquires quickly and correctly. And I do not think most
  my inquiry is completive enough requiring human agents
  to involve.
  (Participant 4)
- It could give me the information and confirmation that I
  required on time. Since most of my inquires is seeking
  for the confirmation of small things, like'Parking area
  of the hotel. I do not have to wait a long time for
  waiting human customer service's agent to reply my
  message. (Participant 5)
- It response to customer quickly with human-like language
  pattern. It able to save customer's time and reduce
  human customer service's work load.
  (Participant 8)
- Enjoyable. It could give me the information and
  confirmation that I required on
  time.
  (Participant 10)

Three participants oppose the notion of artificial intelligence customer service. Because they discovered that the robot cannot comprehend what they are requesting and cannot detect their emotions.

- ```
  I was moody and annoying, I did not get what I want from
  them and they keep me repeat my inquiry again and again.
  (Participant 6)
  ```
- ```
  It unable to answer what I want to know. Cause, most of
  inquires required human representative involve.
  (Participant 7)
  ```
- ```
  It just response only the general questions. And I
  cannot get useful information from it.
  (Participant 9)
  ```

4.4 Consumers' satisfaction of Booking.com human customer service and artificial intelligence customer service

Satisfaction Dimension	KeyWords	
Attitude	**Artificial Intelligence**	**Human**
Favorable	(1)"Using human like language pattern."	(1)"Provide good service"
	(2)"Like talking with real human"	(2)"Agents are well trained"
	(3)"It is a good tool"	(3)"Provide effective solution "
	(4)"Able to receive respond promptly"	
Unfavorable	(1)"Cannot handle complex inquires"	(1)"Respond time of texting is slower than calling"
	(2)"The communication process is cumbersome"	

Human Customer service

Five of participants have utilized Trip.com's human customer service. Participant 1, Participant 4, Participant 8, and Participant 10 concur with the statement that Trip.com's provision of a client's phone number enables a quicker response time for human customer service. And

Trip.com's human customer service representatives are always prompt to answer the phone. In contrast, Agoda frequently places customers on a phone waiting list for long time.

- I am more happy with Trip.com human customer service. Their agents will pick up my phones quickly every time and help me with my inquires. Agoda's human agents are good too. But, there are always a long waiting list while calling to them.

  (Participant 1)

- Trip.com and Agoda both provide phone number of customer service to the customer. So, I can talk with the real human easily. Especially, Trip.com human customer service's agents always pick up the call quickly. On the other hand, Agoda commonly put me in the waiting list for long time.

  (Participant 4)

Comparing the well-trained and professional human customer service of Booking.com, Agoda, Trip.com, com, and traveloka, the majority of respondents indicated that Booking.com, Agoda, and Trip.com are comparable.

- I have used contacted human customer service of Trip.com. I contacted their representatives via telephone. They are also well-trained. However, I believe Booking.com's agents can better comprehend my problem explanation. The agent of Trip.com has less experience than the representative at Booking.com. They required me to provide further details on my difficulty in order to comprehend my requirements.

  (Participant 2)

- I cannot answer which brand's agents are more professional than another. They both provide good

service.

(Participant 4)

- I have used Agoda and Trip.com. I think their agents are all professional and supportive. But, booking, com and Trip.com will give you good compensation when your booking has an error. Like, cannot find the booking at the hotel, or overbooking.

(Participant 3)

- I have used the human customer service of Agoda. I think the service as good as Booking.com was.

(Participant 9)

However, traveloka has been less remarkable after outsourcing its customer service.

- I have used Trip.com and Traveloka human customer service. Trip.com's human customer service is great . Response fast, pick up my phone fast too. Also provide good compensation and solution to the human or system errors. Traveloka is good too. I means Traveloka's customer service was good. Because, they have their own customer service department. But, now they have outsourced the customer service. I feel the agents of outsourcing company are less experiences and unable to provide an efficient solution to the problem.

(Participant 8)

The remaining participants discussed their user experiences with other travel agencies. The only factor in which the agencies they have previously used differ from Booking.com is the well-trained level and professionalism of their agents. The feedback depicted that the professions of booking.com's human customer service agents are better than AirAsia and Lion Travel.

- I have used the human customer service of Lion Travel, a
  Taiwanese local travel agency. I would said the speed of
  response of their human customer service is way faster
  than Booking.com. However, I don't think their agents
  are well trained as Booking.com's agents and able to
  give me an effective solution about my problem.
  (Participant 5)
- I've used Air Asia. I think Booking.com is better
  because Air Asia is difficult to reach the Human
  customer service and made me waiting for a long time.
  And the difference agents of them sometime gives me
  different answer toward same questions. Which this made
  me confused.
  (Participant 6)

The respondent also feedback that the experience of talking with human
agents via phone is way favorable than communicating via texting.

- I have used the human customer service of Trip.com. I
  would said the speed of response of their human customer
  service is way faster than Booking.com. And I can
  contact them via phone. It is good to talk with real
  human.   (Participant 10)

Artificial Intelligence Customer service

Nine of participants have utilized the artificial intelligence customer
service of other travel agencies. Seven respondents have previously
utilized Trip.com's artificial intelligence customer service. And they all
preferred Booking.com's "Booking Assistant" artificial intelligence
customer service as opposed to that of other travel agencies. In contrast to
Trip.com's artificial intelligence customer service, booking assistant of

Booking.com communicating with the customer using more human-like pattern language.

- I have used Trip.com AI customer service. It's feature is similar to Booking.com's one. But, I think Booking.com's booking assistant is using more human like language patten than Trip.com's one. Sometime it make me believe I was talking with real human.
  (Participant 1)

- I have used Trip.com AI chatbot. I am more happy with Booking.com's booking assistant than Trip.com's AI chat bot. Because, booking assistant is responding in human like pattern. Sometime, I feel like I am talking with a human agent.
  (Participant 2)

- I have used Trip.com AI chatbot. It use the robot-like language pattern. I don't really like it. The Booking.com's booking assistant can use the human like conversational language pattern. I like that one more.
  (Participant 3)

- I have used Trip.com's AI chatbot. It works efficiently. Although it use more robot-like language pattern to communicate with the customer, it still can solve your problem. But, communicating with booking assistant is more like communicate with real human.
  (Participant 4)

- I have used Trip.com's AI chatbot. It did not use human like language pattern to communicate with you. I knew that I am talking with robot. Booking.com's robot is designed more human nature.
  (Participant 8)

Participant 9 also mentioned one's experience with Agoda's artificial intelligence customer service, indicating a similar outcome to Trip.com. Participant 9 prefers using the booking assistant on Booking.com because it makes them feel more like they are conversing with a real person.

- `AI of Agoda it asked me general question first and then past me direct message to hotel. Therefore my issue was solve by hotel directly. It is a good tool. But I prefer Booking.com's AI customer service. Cause, it can use more human-like language pattern to communicate with me. (Participant 9)`

Nevertheless, the purpose of artificial intelligence customer service is to receive prompt and efficient assistance from the business. Trip.com and Agoda are both capable of achieving this objective. However, the way of communicating did affect customer satisfaction with the service.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This chapter includes a thorough summary of the research findings, followed by a discussion of the research objectives. The summary and discussion pertain to consumers' attitudes of Booking.com's human and artificial intelligence customer service representatives. Explanations of the study's limitations and directions for future research are provided. This chapter will conclude with a discussion of the study's practical implications.

5.1 Summary

Effectiveness Dimension		KeyWords
Theme	**Artificial Intelligence**	**Human**
Responsiveness	(1)"convenient and effective way".	(1)"ineffective way"
	(2)"speed of response is fast"	(2)"westing time"
	(3)"almost immediately"	(3)"slow"
Reliability	(1)"cannot handle complex inquiry"	(1)"valid solution"
	(2)"cannot meets my request."	(2)"agents are well trained"
	(3)"cannot help with complex issue"	(3)"understand what I mean"

Emotional Dimension		
Theme	**Artificial Intelligence**	**Human**
Assurance professional "	(1)"Quick response &save your time"	(1)"Supportive and
	(2)"Give the info and confirmation on time"	(2)"Trained properly"
	(3)"Unable to identify complex inquires."	(3)"Warm interaction"
	(4)"Can only understand simple inquires"	(4)"Able to handle complex
inquires"		
		(5)"Solve problems with
knowledges"		

Empathy	(1)"Response with human-like language"	(1)"Highly trustable"
	(2)"Unable to identify customer emotion"	(2)"Simplify the problem"
		(3)"Able to identify customer emotion"

Satisfaction Dimension		
Attitude	**Artificial Intelligence**	**Human**
Favorable	(1)"Using human like language pattern."	(1)"Provide good service"
	(2)"Like talking with real human"	(2)"Agents are well trained"
	(3)"It is a good tool"	(3)"Provide effective solution "
	(4)"Able to receive respond promptly"	
Unfavorable	(1)"Cannot handle complex inquires"	(1)"Respond time of texting is slower than calling"
	(2)"The communication process is cumbersome"	

5.2 Discussion

The qualitative research data was gathered on the 12th, 13th, 19th, and 20th of November 2021. Ten participants were selected to participate in the in-depth interview in an effort to comprehend consumer sentiments regarding the human and artificial intelligence customer service provided by Booking.com.

The findings of the in-depth interview indicated that Booking.com's human customer service has received positive feedback in the areas of reliability, assurance, and empathy. Professionalism and the breadth of human customer service support are the most influential factors in influencing participants' positive attitudes. Which these elements are frequently mentioned by the participants when they have talked about their's satisfaction toward human customer service. However, the theme of responsiveness in human customer service is yielding unfavorable results. Booking.com's human customer service could only be reached via

text message, and as a result, customers viewed this as an ineffective method of communication.

In contrast, artificial intelligence customer service has received only positive feedback regarding the theme of responsiveness. Participants have praised the promptness with which the organization responds to customer inquiries. On the assurance and empathy theme, it was met with mixed reviews. Participants affirmed that it can handle simple inquiries, respond quickly, and communicate with customers using human language patterns. However, it is unable to identify customer emotions and solving complex inquiries are viewed negatively by the participants.

Comparing artificial intelligence customer service to human customer service, participants perceived artificial intelligence customer service to offer fewer benefits. Does that means Booking.com should give up artificial intelligence customer service? The researchers assured no as the answer toward above question. According to previous research (TBRC Business Research PVT LTD, 2022) in the travel industry, the use of chatbot platforms by online travel agents is on the rise. Chatbot platforms are increasingly utilized by players to enhance customer experiences. Booking.com, Expedia Inc., Ctrip, TripAdvisor, Trivago, eDreams, Odigeo, Despegar, MakeMyTrip, Lastminute, On the Beach, Alibaba Group Holding Limited, Hostelworld Group, Hotel Urbano Travel and Tourism SA, Fareportal Inc., Trivago GmbH, ThomasCook Group, Priceline Group Inc., HRS; Agoda, Airbnb Inc., and Hotel.de are major players in the online In addition, the global market for online travel agents is anticipated to increase from $664.42 billion in 2021 to $761.90

billion in 2022. There is no reason for Booking.com to fall behind other rivals.

Then, how can Booking.com optimize its customer service models? The finding of this research actually depicted the direction of the answer. The shortcoming of the human customer service of Booking.com is the way of approaching them. Participants are more used to and preferred to communicate with the customer service's agents via phone. Because it facilitates an easier and more convenient process. The findings of the in-depth interview indicated that well-trained agents were able to use their profession to simplify the issue and get straight to the point. When a customer speaks with a live agent, he or she feels more understood. This results in a more satisfying customer experience, even if the customer does not receive the ideal solution.(Wood, 2018) Therefore, an primary solution for Booking.com to optimize its human customer service would be to provide the phone number of a human customer service representative who can promptly answer customers' calls, just as their competitor in Asia-Pacific, Trip.com, does. This may able to eliminate the exist reputation risk occurred because the human customer service fails to meet the expectations of the stakeholders.

Participants have a negative opinion of artificial intelligence customer service due to its inability to handle complex inquiries and identify human emotion. However, the majority of participants agree that Booking.com's Booking Assistant has fulfilled its promise and function to the customer. Which may indicate that if Booking.com chooses to maintain the same function and capability for the Booking Assistant,

there may be no reputation risk. However, further research was required to confirm this hypothesis.

5.3 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Regarding limitations, participants in the in-depth interview ranged in age from 18 to 64 years old. The researchers utilized non-discriminatory snowball sampling to identify in-depth interview participants. There are four participants between the ages of 20-30, three participants between the ages of 30-40, one participant between the ages of 40-50, one participant between the ages of 60-64, and one participant between the ages of 18-20. All participants are asian and have at least one year of experience with Booking.com. However, the occupation and age distribution of the participants are too diverse. This made the researcher difficult to link the specific response toward specific group.

For future research, researchers may choose to conduct the in-depth interview with 2 different age group of participants, which each group has similar age-range and background and try to understand whether the result of 2 different age group align or not. in-depth interview is an open-ended, discovery-oriented method to obtain detailed information about a topic from a stakeholder. This method may be able to distinguish between the responses of different age groups with similar backgrounds.

5.4 Practical Implications

• Based on the finding from the study, the participants have positive attitude toward the efficiency, assurance and empathy characteristic of human and artificial intelligence of online travel agencies.

- Participants as the customer of Booking.com did cared about the way of approaching the human customer service, also the speed of their customer service's representatives response their inquiries. Booking.com performed an excellent job of preserving their agents' professions. However, Booking.com's management should reach out to the general public in order to determine if the current system for contacting customer service meets the requirements of current customers or not.

- Findings revealed that the assurance and reliable characteristic of Booking.com's human customer support agents encourage the majority of participants to continue using Booking.com's services.

- However, the continually improvement of Booking.com's competitors in terms of customer service, texting inquiries is no longer an efficient method for current customers. If Booking.com insists on texting as the only means to reach its human customer service personnel, the corporation should consider enhancing its artificial intelligence customer service so that it can handle more complicated enquiries and response to the customer promptly.

- As the majority of participants stated that the current booking assistant is a good tool as a part of customer service, but it can only handle simple inquiry.

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APPENDIX A
In-depth Interview Question List

Section 1: General questions (5 mins)
1.1 Name
1.2 Age
1.3 Gender
1.4 Occupation
1.5 How many years have you utilized Booking.com's customer services?

Section 2: Customer perceived quality of Booking.com human/ artificial intelligence customer service.
2.1 How do you like or dislike the quality of Booking.com human customer service?
• Do you think the quality of Booking.com's human customer service meets the requirement?
2.2 How do you like or dislike the quality of Booking.com artificial intelligence customer service?
• Do you think the quality of Booking.com's artificial intelligence customer service meets the requirement?

Section 3: Customer perceived value of Booking.com human/ artificial intelligence customer service.
3.1 How do you feel using Booking.com's human customer service?
• What is the value of Booking.com's human customer service?
3.2 How do you feel using Booking.com artificial intelligence customer service?
• What is the value of Booking.com's artificial intelligence customer service?

Section 4: Customer satisfaction of Booking.com human/ artificial intelligence customer service
4.1 Have you used other online travel agencies's customer service in addition to Book.com's?   If so,
• What makes you happy or unhappy with customer service at other online travel agencies compared to human customer service at Booking.com? Which part did they do better or worse
• What makes you happy or unhappy with customer service at other online travel agencies compared to artificial intelligence customer service at Booking.com? Which part did they do better or worse?
4.2 Have you used other service industries' customer service in addition to Booking.com's?   If so,
• What makes you happy or unhappy with customer service in other service industries compared to Booking.com human customer service? Which part did they do better or worse?
• What makes you happy or unhappy with customer service in other service industries compared to Booking.com artificial intelligence customer service? Which part did they do better or worse?

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