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# Who booked five-star hotels in Macau? A study of hotel guests' online booking attention

## Abstract

The Internet now serves as a useful tool for suppliers and consumers to communicate information and enable purchasing online. Due to its importance in the travel industry, the Internet has attracted attention from both academic researchers and industrial practitioners. Over the last two decades, various approaches have been taken to investigate travelers' online satisfaction and purchase attention. This research is the one of the first attempts that explores the demographic profile of visitors to five-star hotels in Macau, including their choice of information search channels and hotel booking options, the most frequently used online purchasing channels, and the influence of demographic characteristics on channel selection. The findings indicate a direction for future analysis of the Macau online travel market. The study shows that more than half of the respondents had made their reservations online, and the most popular channel for searching hotel information was individual hotel websites. This paper provides useful information for travel industrial managers not only about hotel guests' propensity to search and book online, but also on why some consumers did not use online channels to purchase.

**Keywords:** Macau, luxury hotel, online browsers, online travel information channels, Online punchers, off-line consumers

## Introduction

From 2000 to 2012, the global population of Internet users increased by 566.4% (Internet World Stats, 2013). Such rapid growth demonstrates the importance of the Internet in the business world. The World Wide Web has created both challenges and opportunities for the hospitality and tourism industry (Buhalis & Law, 2008). It has altered communication, distribution channels, and transactions in tourism-related business (Akehurst, 2009), and, as such, the technology has revolutionized consumers' purchase behaviors. The Internet has become a highly valuable channel for consumers, one that enables them to not only "surf" and purchase online without geographic boundaries and time limits, but also to interact and communicate with other users and suppliers during the purchasing process (Piccoli, Brohman, Watson, & Parasuraman, 2004).

In the last decade, many studies have looked at consumers' online satisfaction and purchase attention (Jarvenpaa & Todd, 1996; DeLone & McLean, 2003; Pavlou, 2003; Hwang & Kim, 2007). Rodgers and Sheldon (2002) showed that consumers' major motivators to use the Internet are information gathering, communication, exploration of websites, and shopping. Website design, system usability, information quality, and service quality, as well as website responsiveness, reliability, tangibility, assurance, and empathy all affect users' online satisfaction and purchase decision making (Johnson, Moe, Fader, Bellman, & Lohse, 2004; Song & Zahedi, 2005; Kettinger & Lee, 2005; Liao, Proctor, & Salvendy, 2009; Songa, Baker, Sangno, & Wetherbea, 2012).

Many studies have made considerable efforts to investigate how to attract consumers' online attention (Teo, 2002), improve website quality (Tan, Xie, & Li, 2003), and reduce the gap between online browsers and purchasers (Law & Wong, 2003; Teo, 2006).

However, published studies rarely focused on determining the demographic impacts on consumers' online behaviors (Beldona, Racherla, & Mundhra, 2011; Cho, Rivera-Sánchez, & Lim, 2009). However, in the existing hospitality literature, only a limited number of prior studies have examined consumers' profiles in terms of the impact of demographic factors on online channel selection. Additionally, as the most-researched component of the travel industry, the hotel sector has become increasingly important in the online travel market (Hawela, Boyle, & Murray, 2007; O'Connor, 2007). The current study is the first attempt to investigate the characteristics of visitors to five-star hotel in Macau. As one of the two Special Administrative Regions (SAR) of China, Macau attracts millions of visitors every year and is famous around the world for its gambling (Chu, 2011). The current study has three objectives: (1) to identify the profile of on- and offline bookings made by visitors to five-star hotels; (2) to determine the percentage of visitors who searched online for hotel information before their trip; (3) to identify the most popular online channels used by travelers; and (4) to list online travelers' booking resources and to determine why offline users do not use the Internet.

## Literature Review

In the hospitality and tourism industries, online transaction intentions and completeness of information are the two main factors directly influencing travelers' online satisfaction (Kim & Kim, 2004). Users' travel activities, destination selections, and purchase behaviors are strongly influenced by the information that they have collected from the Internet (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). Furthermore, prior studies show that online information gathering has become one of the most important steps in travel planning (Gursoya & Umbreit, 2004; Xiang & Fesenmaier, 2006; Lo, McKercher, Lo, Cheung, & Law, 2010). Online consumers are more active than ever and are eager to interact

with both the site content and other users in order to share their experiences and opinions online (Mackiewicz, 2010). Investigating travelers' characteristics and preferences about online search channels is crucial for practitioners not only to obtain a deeper understanding of consumers, but also to produce effective marketing strategies (Fill, 2009). Examining the demographic profiles of online browsers and purchasers may be the first step in charting consumers' online spending patterns (Citrin, Sprott, Silverman, & Stem, 2000; Bhatnagar & Ghose, 2004).

Demographic factors are important in predicting and explaining propensity to search and purchase online (Beldona, Racherla, & Mundhra, 2011). For example, age, gender, and income can all significantly influence online shopping attention (Mostafa, 2006). Demographic factors (such as age, gender, and Internet experience) also affect Internet users' privacy concerns (Cho, Rivera-Sánchez, & Lim, 2009). In the context of tourism, middle-aged consumers with high levels of education are more likely to make online reservations (Hernández, Jiménez, & Martín, 2011). Compared to offline travelers, online browsers or purchasers have higher incomes, higher-status occupations, and more experience using the Internet (Weber & Roehl, 1999). Taking advantage of these demographic factors to attract customers' attention and encourage them to make online purchases will be a key to the future of the hospitality and tourism industries. Although prior studies demonstrated the significance of demographic factors in the online business market, they mainly focused on investigating the characteristics of online purchasers. Kamarulzaman (2007) shows that consumers increasingly gather information online, but purchase offline. There are few studies which simultaneously investigate online travel browsers' demographic characteristics and their preferred online channels.

Beldona, Racherla, and Mundhra (2011) emphasize gender as a significant differentiator between channels in terms of travel purchasing. Compared to males, female Internet users trust the online environment less, are more concerned about privacy, tend to rely more upon word-of-mouth information, and are less likely to purchase online (Miyazaki & Fernandez, 2001; Garbarino & Strahilevitz, 2004; Carl, 2005; Kempf & Palan, 2006; Cho & Jialin, 2008). Eastman and Iyer (2004) also cite age as an important factor in explaining consumers' attitudes toward Internet use. Moreover, Zhang (2009) claims that age is an important determinant of online shopping behavior. However, although age influences initial decisions in online purchasing, it is irrelevant to further such behaviors (McCloskey, 2006). With regard to online consumers' age ranges, despite the fact that younger people are more likely to use the Internet to search for information, middle-aged consumers are more likely to make purchases online (Donthu & Garcia, 1999; Dholakia & Uusitalo, 2002). In terms of education, researchers have demonstrated a positive link between education and Internet shopping (Vrechopoulos, Siomkos, & Doukidis, 2001). Moreover, Akhter (2012) argues that education makes it easier for people to acquire the skills and knowledge needed to navigate the Internet, thereby positively influencing online spending. Consumers with higher education tend to spend more money and time online (Card, Chen, & Cole, 2003). Furthermore, Lieber and Syverson (2011) show that education is a predictive factor for Internet use, with advanced educational levels being associated with higher probabilities of going online. Income is also an important variable in online spending (Lohse, Bellman, & Johnson, 2000) and positively correlates with online purchase behaviors (Korgaonkar & Wolin, 1999; Patwardhan & Yang, 2003), with higher income being associated with more online purchasing (Donthu & Garcia, 1999; Mahmood, Bagchi, & Ford, 2004; Akhter, 2012). People with high

incomes perceive less risk in the adoption of new information technologies (Hubona & Kennick, 1996; Lu, Yu, Liu, & Yao, 2003).

Macau is a popular tourism destination which is often called the "Las Vegas of the East" (Chu, 2011). As the sector has developed, many academic researchers have started to investigate Macau, but most have focused on analyzing the gaming industry (Wong & Rosenbaum, 2012; Gu & Gao, 2006; Hobson, 1995; Wan, 2012), destination development (Wong, 2011; Wan & Kong, 2008; McCartney, 2008) and tourism demand and economic impact (Chu, 2011; Song & Witt, 2006). Only very few prior studies have investigated the Macau online travel market. In their study, Choi, Lehto, and Morrison (2007) identified image representations of Macau on the Internet by studying Chinese tourists' information-seeking behaviors on Macau-oriented websites. Tang, Choi, Morrison, and Lehto (2009) also analyzed Macau's online tourism information sources. However, there has been no investigation of Macau online travelers' characteristics, their preferences for online booking websites, and the reasons why some visitors choose not to book online, creating a research gap.

The current exploratory study aims to address this gap by (1) providing a general picture of five-star hotels guests in Macau; (2) collecting data on the visitors who purchased online and who carried out information searches before their trip; (3) identifying consumers' online searching channels; and (4) analyzing the relative popularity of those channels.

The remainder of this article is organized into three sections. The methodology section introduces the methods used in the study and the location where the work was

conducted. The results section describes the characteristics of visitors to Macau's five-star hotels and the online information channels that they use the most frequently. The contributions and implications section lists the contributions of the study, offers advice to online marketers, analyzes the limitations of the study, and makes suggestions for future research.

## Methodology

The activities carried out in this study include the identification of the characteristics of Macau's five-star hotel guests, the most popular online booking channels, the reasons why offline guests did not book their hotel room online, and a comparison between online browsers and online bookers in terms of their selections of online information search channels. As previously stated, this research aims to provide a general picture for Macau hotel guests in their way of hotel booking. The main reason for selecting five-star hotels was that these hotels have a strong financial background in promoting their hotels on different channels, which provides multiple booking choices for customers.

The study was conducted in Macau, a popular tourism destination in Asia. A questionnaire was administered in the study, which was divided into two sections. The first section comprised two questions. Firstly, respondents were asked "Did you book your hotel room online?" This was a screening question designed to select respondents who had actually booked a room in a five-star hotel in Macau, and also distinguished between on- and offline guests. If the answer was yes, a respondent was then asked to name the website which he/she had used to book the room. If not, the respondent went on to describe the reason why she/he did not book online. The second question was "Did you search for hotel information online?" If a respondent answered yes, he/she

was then asked to indicate the online information channel, which he/she had used. This question identified visitors who had carried out information searches online before their trip and the online channels they had checked for travel information. The most popular online channels include wikis (such as Wikitravel), blogs (such as Travelblog) and microblogs (such as Twitter), social networks (such as Facebook), media-sharing sites (such as Flickr and YouTube), review sites (such as TripAdvisor), and voting sites (such as Digg; Zarrella, 2010). Therefore, the questionnaire also listed seven online channels, including official tourism websites, travel agent websites, third-party travel websites, hotel websites, social media, web blogs (travel diaries), and other travel-related websites.

The second section was designed to collect demographic data and included questions about respondents' gender, age, education, and monthly income. Data on country of residence were also collected in order to investigate the impact of cultural differences on preferences about website content (Liao, Proctor, & Salvendy, 2009).

A large-scale survey using this instrument was then conducted from early-March to end of May, 2012. Convenience sampling was used. The data were collected in the entrances of 18 five-star hotels randomly selected from a list held by the Macau government tourist office website (Macau Government, 2012). The questionnaire was made available in both English and Chinese to accommodate respondents from different regions. A total of 1,036 travelers responded. Respondents ($N$ = 1,036) included those who had booked on- ($n$ = 439) and offline ($n$ = 597).

## Findings

This study set out to investigate the characteristics of five-star hotels guests in Macau and provides a profile of online travel purchasers, browsers, and offline consumers in this market. In order to provide further support for tourism practitioners' development of online markets, the popularity of online travel information channels and booking resources was also investigated.

In terms of the first research question, Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the respondents. Generally speaking, these visitors were young and middle-aged tourists whose ages ranged from 25-44. With regard to educational background, most of the respondents had a college degree. They were mainly leisure travelers. While many respondents chose not to indicate their monthly income, 31.9% had monthly incomes of over 10,501 RMB. This finding is anticipated, since people who visit five-star hotels may be expected to have incomes high enough to support this expenditure. Additionally, most of the visitors were from Asian regions, especially mainland China and Hong Kong, which is consistent with the findings of Wong and McKercher (2012).

Among the respondents, 596 (57.5%) purchased their hotel rooms online and 440 (42.5%) used other channels. Although a large number of consumers did not booked their hotel room online, 853 indicated that before their trip they had searched online for hotel information. Chi-square tests were conducted to examine the differences between on- and offline consumers. The results indicated statistically significant differences in terms of gender, $x^2$ (1, $N$ = 1001) = 15.69, $p$ < .05, educational level, $x^2$ (4, $N$ = 1036) = 86.60, $p$ < .05, income, $x^2$ (8, $N$ = 1036) = 26.51, $p$ < .05, and region, $x^2$ (7, $N$ = 1036) = 57.04, $p$ < .05. Also, more than half of the female respondents (53.9%) had booked online. In terms of age and education, most respondents who had booked online were

young and had a college degree. In contrast, markedly more male than female respondents had booked offline. Online consumers tended to fall into the 25-34 or 35-44 age groups, whereas those who had booked room offline tended to be aged 45-54. A large number of this latter group held only a high school diploma and, when compared to online purchasers, were less likely to be in the highest income group.

*** Please Place Table 1 Here ***

The question about not purchasing online was answered by 439 respondents and the breakdown of this figure is displayed in Table 2. The majority stated that they preferred to use a travel agency as this was cheaper, convenient, and more informative. "A friend/relative helped me to book or recommend," "Do not know how to use the Internet as it is complicated, a phone reservation is better," and "Casino gave me the rooms on a complementary basis," were the major reasons for choosing not to purchase a room online. It is of interest to note that many male respondents stated that they did not trust the Internet or did not know how to use it. Additionally, compared with female consumers, most of the men had obtained their hotel rooms via a casino or a company arrangement. It is perhaps surprising to find that younger and older consumers expressed a lack of familiarity with the Internet. In terms of educational background, consumers with either a high school or a college degree were the two largest groups among non-Internet users. People with higher incomes preferred to book their rooms via a travel agency, which offered cheaper options, was convenient, and provided more information.

*** Please Place Table 2 Here ***

Hotel guests' online booking experiences are summarized in Table 3. As noted earlier, 596 respondents indicated that they had booked online, of whom 594 gave details of the channels used. Most respondents had used the hotel's own website, followed by online travel intermediates including no specific named travel agency websites and other travel websites such as C-trip, Agoda, Booking.com, e-Long, hotels.com, Qunar, and Expedia.

The results show that this subgroup of consumers shared an interesting point of view on the selection of an online purchasing channel in terms of gender, age, and region. More female respondents used Agoda and Qunar, and more males booked via Booking.com and Hotels.com. Younger and middle-aged consumers mainly purchased via Agoda, C-trip, hotel websites, no specific travel agency websites, and other travel websites. Consumers in different regions expressed similar preferences about online booking channels, with most of them using the hotel website directly, followed by Agoda, and no specific travel agency websites. However, consumers from mainland China expressed different choices, with most preferred to book via the hotel website directly followed by C-trip. These findings imply that even though hotel websites are beginning to become prominent in the Macau online hotel market, there is still a place for online travel agencies.

*** Please Place Table 3 Here ***

Table 4 displays the demographic data of those respondents ($n$ = 749) who had searched online for hotel information before their trip but not booked via the Internet ($n$ = 560) and those who had conducted a similar search but also made their actual purchase online ($n$ = 234). Results of Chi-square tests revealed statistically significant differences between these two groups in terms of all the demographic variables; gender, $x^2$ (1, $N$ = 777) = 11.80, $p < .05$; age, $x^2$ (5, $N$ = 793) = 23.08, $p < .05$; education, $x^2$ (2.51, $N$ = 793) = 42.51, $p < .05$; income, $x^2$ (8, $N$ = 794) = 22.45, $p < .05$; and region, $x^2$ (7, $N$ = 794) = 32..97, $p < .05$. Respondents who had searched for hotel information online but did not make a booking were generally males and aged 25-34. The majority had a college degree and earned over 10,501 RMB per month. Similar to Table 1, Table 2 shows that the majority of these respondents were from Asia, particularly from mainland China and Hong Kong. In contrast, the respondents who actually purchased online tended to be female, are less likely to be aged 19-24, are more likely to have a college degree and to earn a higher monthly income.

*** Please Place Table 4 Here ***

The usage frequencies of the listed online information channels are given in Table 5, with hotel websites ranked as the most frequently used channel for checking hotel information. This result may be an artifact of the manner in which the question was asked (that is, we asked where respondents had searched for specific hotel information online, but did not ask about general information searching). Travel agency websites (18.1%) were the second most popular online channel, followed by blogs (14.6%), third-party websites (16.7%), online social media (13.0%), other travel-related websites (8.1%), and official tourism websites (0.8%). Xiang and Gretzel (2010) noted that social media is perceived as an important information source for travelers. It is perhaps surprising to find it ranked as only the fifth most popular resource by these consumers.

This suggests that when consumers have a specific purpose for their online search, they will go directly to a specific website for information. This also demonstrates to hoteliers that a well-established website can have a significant impact on the hotel's image.

Social media sites and hotel websites were frequently used by online browsers. In contrast, online buyers chose hotel and online travel agent websites as their main information resources. Both groups had a similar response to official tourism websites, which were not a popular channel for gathering information on hotels.

*** Please Place Table 5 Here ***

## Contributions and Implications

Along with the increasing number of online consumers comes a demand for a deeper understanding of their characteristics. The findings of this research can help improve tourism professionals' general understanding of Macau's five-star hotel guests. More importantly, they can be of benefit to both academia and industry.

### Theoretical contributions

The paper has opened up possibilities for online market research focusing on Macau, in particular that are relating to online hotel marketing. Given its large sample size, the study provides a general map of Macau five-star hotel guests, charting which channels they like to use to search for information and to purchase, and explaining why many respondents did not use the Internet to make bookings. The findings suggest a bright future for the online market in Macau. Hotel and travel agency websites are two major resources used by customers to reserve rooms and search for hotel information. Additionally, a majority of offline consumers do not trust the Internet and prefer to purchase from a travel agency to obtain more information and get a cheaper price.

Therefore, more studies of website development are urgently needed to assist practitioners to meet the needs of offline consumers. This work can inspire future studies by describing the current situation of the online market for five-star hotels in Macau.

Practical contribution

The findings of this study indicate that the majority of visitors to five-star hotels in Macau are aged 25-44 and college educated; 31.9% have monthly incomes in excess of RMB 10,501 (though nearly a third of the respondents preferred not to disclose their income). Most of the respondents came from mainland China and other Asian regions, implying that tourism practitioners may consider focusing particularly on the preferences of this subgroup of consumers.

The study also found significant differences in the demographic characteristics of online purchasers, online browsers, and offline users. Offline consumers tended to be male, older, less educated, and earn less. This suggests that on- and offline users are two different groups of consumers. Although using the Internet is becoming a trend for travelers, offline users should also not be ignored by the tourism industry. Practitioners may consider using product promotions to maintain a balance between attracting both on- and offline consumers. As shown in Table 4, in general, most offline users chose not to use the Internet because they thought that online booking was complicated, inconvenient, and would not provide them with enough information. In the light of this, practitioners should make an effort to create online booking systems which are easier to use and have more comprehensive content, and, more importantly, emphasize convenience and safety.

With regard to the demographic characteristics of those travelers who did use online resources, purchasers and browsers share some features but differ in other respects. Online purchasers tend to be female, while there is no gender difference between browsers. Male and female respondents also show similar frequencies of online channel selection. Kim, Lento, and Morrison (2007) state that women are highly involved in the decision-making process during travel planning. This may explain why more women purchased online, but a similar number of men and women browsed for information.

Moreover, a majority of online purchasers and browsers are young and middle-aged consumers aged 18-44. Young people are more likely to use the Internet to search for information (Beldona, Racherla, & Mundhra, 2011). However, industrial practitioners should be aware that intention to purchase online reduces with age (Akhter, 2003), and that online buyers are middle-aged consumers (Dholakia & Uusitalo, 2002). Therefore, the tourism industry may consider selecting middle-aged consumers as their target demographic for online promotions.

Furthermore, the online purchasers and browsers are similar in terms of education and income, which is consistent with the findings of Akhter (2012). That is, online users' purchase behaviors increase with income and education level. This is likely to be a result of the fact that relatively well-educated people who are familiar with computer technologies value their time more and exhibit elevated online purchase intention (Akhter, 2012). As mentioned in Table 5, even though hotel websites are beginning to come to prominence in the Macau online hotel market, there remains a role for online travel agencies. Branded travel agencies have a better chance of attracting "floating"

customers. Familiarity increases trust, and a business with a good reputation or a well-known brand name is often selected as a searching or booking channel (Degeratu, Rangaswamy, & Wu, 2000; Beatty & Ferrell, 1998). Thus, increasing the booking rate of leisure travelers and building a trustworthy brand reputation with a reasonable price, are both the necessary steps in the development of an online travel agency.

The findings also show that for most online browsers, hotel websites are the most popular information search channel. Blogs (travel diaries) and travel agency websites are the second and third most popular channels, respectively. Generally speaking, browsers' educational backgrounds, incomes, and ages showed different correlations with their online channel selections. This may be because people with relatively low educational background and lower income may have less confidence operating in the online environment. Thus, helping them search for more information may increase their confidence when purchasing online. Additionally, younger browsers not only tend to choose hotel websites as their preferred online resource, but are also more likely to search for more information in order to compare prices and quality from multiple resources, which may help them secure the best deal.

## Limitations

This research is still at an initial stage as it offers a general description of the characteristics of visitors to Macau's five-star hotels. In this study, we only computed the correlations between age, educational background, and monthly income for these respondents. The direct connections between these variables should be investigated in future work. Furthermore, this study utilized a convenience sample limited to guests in five-star hotels in Macau, and considered only their room-booking preferences. Future

research should use a larger sample and also include purchasers of other tourism-related products. In addition, as respondents were only asked about their choice of online purchasing resources, future studies may consider investigating the service quality and website performance of Macau tourism businesses online.

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**Table 1 Using the Internet for hotel booking**

| Did you book your hotel room on the Internet? | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **No (N=440)** | **Yes (N=596)** | **Total** | $x^2$ | ***df*** | $p <$ |
| **Gender (*N*=1,001)** | | | | 15.69 | 1 | 0.000* |
| Male | 245 (58.8%) | 269 (46.1%) | 514 (51.3%) | | | |
| Female | 172 (41.2%) | 315 (53.9%) | 487 (48.7%) | | | |
| **Age (*N*=1,035)** | | | | 33.24 | 5 | 0.000* |
| 18 or less | 9 (2.1%) | 1 (0.2%) | 10 (1%) | | | |
| 19-24 | 65 (14.8%) | 110 (18.5%) | 175 (16.9%) | | | |
| 25-34 | 153 (34.9%) | 276 (46.3%) | 429 (41.4%) | | | |
| 35-44 | 137 (31.2%) | 150 (25.2%) | 287 (27.7%) | | | |
| 45-54 | 57 (13%) | 48 (8.1%) | 105 (10.1%) | | | |
| 55 and over | 18 (4.1%) | 11 (1.8%) | 29 (2.8%) | | | |
| **Education (*N*=1,036)** | | | | 86.60 | 4 | 0.000* |
| Elementary school or below | 25 (5.7%) | 6 (1%) | 31 (3%) | | | |
| Completed secondary/high school | 150 (34.1%) | 97 (16.3%) | 247 (23.8%) | | | |
| Completed diploma/college/university degree | 209 (47.5%) | 400 (67.1%) | 609 (58.8%) | | | |
| Completed postgraduate degree | 38 (8.6%) | 87 (14.6%) | 125 (12.1%) | | | |
| Other | 18 (4.1%) | 6 (1%) | 24 (2.3%) | | | |
| **Travel Type (*N*=1,036)** | | | | 0.053 | 1 | 0.906 |
| Leisure | 407(92.5%) | 549(92.1%) | 956(92.3%) | | | |
| Business | 33(7.5%) | 47(7.9%) | 80 (7.7%) | | | |
| **Income (*N*=1,036)** | | | | 26.51 | 8 | 0.001* |
| RMB 1500 or less | 4 (0.9%) | 9 (1.5%) | 13 (1.3%) | | | |
| RMB 1,501-3,000 | 10 (2.3%) | 7 (1.2%) | 17 (1.6%) | | | |
| RMB 3,001-4,500 | 9 (2.0%) | 18 (3%) | 27 (2.6%) | | | |
| RMB 4,501-6,000 | 19 (4.3%) | 30 (5%) | 49 (4.7%) | | | |
| RMB 6,001-7,500 | 24 (5.5%) | 11 (1.8%) | 35 (3.4%) | | | |
| RMB 7,501-9,000 | 40 (9.1%) | 29 (4.9%) | 69 (6.7%) | | | |
| RMB 9,001-10,500 | 39 (8.9%) | 65 (10.9%) | 104 (10%) | | | |
| RMB 10,501 or above | 121 (27.5%) | 209 (35.1%) | 330 (31.9%) | | | |
| Prefer not to answer | 174 (39.5%) | 218 (36.6%) | 392 (37.8%) | | | |
| **Regions (*N*=1,033)** | | | | 51.04 | 7 | 0.000* |
| Asia | 52 (11.8%) | 146 (24.5%) | 198 (19.1%) | | | |
| Europe | 8 (1.8%) | 28 (4.7%) | 36 (3.5%) | | | |
| Hong Kong | 101 (23.0%) | 143 (24.0%) | 244 (23.6%) | | | |
| Mainland China | 262 (59.5%) | 242 (40.6%) | 504 (48.6%) | | | |
| South America | 1 (0.2%) | 2 (0.3%) | 3 (0.3%) | | | |
| North America | 9 (2.0%) | 26 (4.4%) | 35 (3.4%) | | | |
| Others | 7 (1.1%) | 9 (1.3%) | 13 (1.3%) | | | |

*1 RMB = 6.335 USD*

*Note. *p < .01.*

**Table 2 The off-line respondents' booking experiences**

| | Casino complementary | Company arrangement | Do not know how to use the Internet, phone reservation is better | Friend/relative helps to book or recommend | Online booking is not safe and afraid of online deceptions | Others | Prefer booking through travel agency, which is cheaper, more convenient, and provides more information |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender (n=416)** | | | | | | | |
| Male | 26 (65%) | 13 (81.3%) | 28 (63.6%) | 28 (56%) | 11 (68.8%) | 20 (50%) | 96 (55.2%) |
| Female | 14 (35%) | 3 (18.8%) | 16 (36.4%) | 22 (44%) | 5 (31.3%) | 20 (50%) | 78 (44.8%) |
| **Age (n=438)** | | | | | | | |
| 18 or less | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 1 (2.3%) | 2 (3.6%) | 1 (6.3%) | 3 (7.1%) | 1 (0.5%) |
| 19-24 | 3 (7.5%) | 1 (5.9%) | 9 (20.5%) | 6 (10.9%) | 1 (6.3%) | 5 (11.9%) | 29 (15.4%) |
| 25-24 | 9 (22.5%) | 7 (41.2%) | 12 (27.3%) | 21 (38.2%) | 3 (18.8%) | 16 (38.1) | 73 (38.8%) |
| 35-44 | 18 (45%) | 7 (41.2%) | 10 (22.7%) | 19 (34.5%) | 6 (37.5%) | 9 (21.4%) | 58 (30.9%) |
| 45-44 | 6 (15%) | 1 (5.9%) | 8 (18.2%) | 6 (10.9%) | 5 (31.3%) | 8 (19.0%) | 20 (10.6%) |
| 54 and over | 4 (10%) | 1 (5.9%) | 4 (9.1%) | 1 (1.8%) | 0 (0.0%) | 1 (2.4%) | 7 (3.7%) |
| **Region (n=439)** | | | | | | | |
| Asia | 6 (15.0%) | 3 (37.5%) | 4 (9.1%) | 3 (5.5%) | 0 (0.0%) | 9 (21.4%) | 21 (11.1%) |
| Europe | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 1 (2.3%) | 0 (0%) | 3 (18.8%) | 2 (4.8%) | 2 (1.1%) |
| Hong Kong | 4 (10.0%) | 3 (37.5%) | 7 (15.9%) | 8 (14.5%) | 0 (0%) | 5 (11.9%) | 59 (31.2%) |
| Mainland China | 29 (72.5%) | 2 (25.0%) | 31 (70.5%) | 39 (70.9%) | 12 (75.0%) | 22 (52.4%) | 103 (54.5%) |
| North America | 1 (2.5%) | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 2 (3.6%) | 0 (0.0%) | 4 (9.5%) | 2 (1.1%) |
| South America | 0 (0.0%) | 1 (11.1%) | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) |
| Others | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 1 (2.3%) | 2 (3.6%) | 1 (6.3%) | 0 (0%) | 1 (0.5%) |

**Table 2 continued**

| | Casino complementary | Company arrangement | Do not know how to use the Internet, phone reservation is better | Friend/relative helps to book or recommend | Online booking is not safe and afraid of online deceptions | Other | Prefer booking from travel agency, which is cheaper, more convenient, and provides more information |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Education (n=439)** | | | | | | | |
| Elementary school or below | 9 (22.5%) | 0 (0.0%) | 4 (9.1%) | 0 (0.0%) | 1 (6.3%) | 0 (0.0%) | 10 (5.3%) |
| Completed secondary/high school | 13 (32.5%) | 0 (0.0%) | 16 (36.4%) | 18 (32.7%) | 6 (37.5%) | 16 (38.1%) | 67 (35.4%) |
| Completed diploma/college/university degree | 13 (32.5%) | 10 (58.8%) | 18 (40.9%) | 27 (49.1%) | 8 (50.0%) | 21 (50.0%) | 94 (49.7%) |
| Completed postgraduate degree | 2 (5.0%) | 6 (35.3%) | 3 (6.8%) | 7 (12.7%) | 1 (6.3%) | 3 (7.1%) | 14 (7.4%) |
| Other | 3 (7.5%) | 1 (5.9%) | 3 (6.8%) | 3 (5.5%) | 0 (0.0%) | 2 (4.8%) | 4 (2.1%) |
| **Travel types (n=439)** | | | | | | | |
| Leisure | 40 (100%) | 4 (23.5%) | 40 (90.9%) | 52 (94.5%) | 14 (87.5%) | 42 (100%) | 181 (95.8%) |
| Business | 0 (0.0%) | 13 (76.5%) | 4 (9.1%) | 3 (5.5%) | 2 (12.5%) | 0 (0.0%) | 8 (4.2%) |
| **Income (n=439)** | | | | | | | |
| RMB 1500 or less | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 1 (1.8%) | 0 (0%) | 2 (4.8%) | 1 (0.5%) |
| RMB 1,501-3,000 | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 2 (3.6%) | 1 (6.3%) | 2 (4.8%) | 5 (2.6%) |
| RMB 3,001-4,500 | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 1 (1.8%) | 1 (6.3%) | 1 (2.4%) | 4 (2.1%) |
| RMB 4,501-6,000 | 1 (2.5%) | 0 (0%) | 3 (6.8%) | 3 (5.5%) | 1 (6.3%) | 2 (4.8%) | 9 (4.8%) |
| RMB 6,001-7,500 | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 4 (9.1%) | 1 (1.8%) | 3 (18.8%) | 4 (9.5%) | 12 (6.3%) |
| RMB 7,501-9,000 | 3 (7.5%) | 1 (5.9%) | 3 (6.8%) | 1 (1.8%) | 3 (18.8%) | 2 (4.8%) | 25 (13.2%) |
| RMB 9,001-10,500 | 1 (2.5%) | 0 (0%) | 6 (13.6%) | 6 (10.9%) | 0 (0%) | 4 (9.5%) | 20 (10.6%) |
| RMB 10,501 or above | 11 (27.5%) | 9 (52.9%) | 7 (15.9%) | 28 (50.9%) | 3 (18.8%) | 11 (26.2%) | 43 (22.8%) |
| Prefer not to answer | 24 (60.0%) | 4 (50%) | 21 (47.7%) | 12 (21.8%) | 4 (25.0%) | 14 (33.3%) | 70 (37.0%) |
| Total (%) | 9.10% | 3.10% | 10.00% | 12.50% | 3.60% | 9.60% | 43.10% |

*1 RMB = 6.335 USD*

**Table 3 Hotel guests' online booking experiences**

| | Agoda | Booking .com | C-trip | e-Long | Expedia | Hotel website directly | Hotels .com | No specific named travel agencies' websites and other travel websites | Qunar |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender (n=582)** | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 25 (33.8%) | 8 (72.7%) | 44 (51.2%) | 5 (50.0%) | 2 (50.0%) | 121 (45.0%) | 5 (62.5%) | 44 (48.4%) | 0 (0.0%) |
| Female | 49 (66.2%) | 3 (27.3%) | 42 (48.8%) | 5 (50.0%) | 2 (50.0%) | 148 (55.0%) | 3(37.5%) | 47 (51.6%) | 6 (100%) |
| **Age (n=594)** | | | | | | | | | |
| 18 or less | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 1 (1.1%) | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) |
| 19-24 | 20 (26.0%) | 4 (36.4%) | 15 (17.2%) | 3 (30.0%) | 1 (25.0%) | 50 (18.2%) | 2 (25.0%) | 9 (9.7%) | 5 (83.3%) |
| 25-34 | 32 (41.6%) | 3 (27.3%) | 42 (48.3%) | 4 (40.0%) | 2 (50.0%) | 130 (47.3%) | 3 (37.5%) | 46 (49.5%) | 1 (16.7%) |
| 35-44 | 16 (20.8%) | 4 (36.4%) | 23 (26.4%) | 3 (30.0%) | 1 (25.0%) | 69 (25.1%) | 3 (37.5%) | 25 (26.9%) | 0 (0.0%) |
| 45-54 | 8 (10.4%) | 0 (0.0%) | 5 (5.7%) | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 21 (7.6%) | 0 (0.0%) | 11 (11.8%) | 0 (0.0%) |
| 55 and over | 1 (1.3%) | 0 (0.0%) | 1 (1.1%) | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 5 (1.8%) | 0 (0.0%) | 2 (2.2%) | 0 (0.0%) |
| **Region (n=594)** | | | | | | | | | |
| Asia | 22 (28.6%) | 1 (9.1%) | 7 (8.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 70 (25.5%) | 5 (62.5%) | 34 (36.6%) | 0 (0.0%) |
| Europe | 5 (6.5%) | 1 (9.1%) | 1 (1.1%) | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 15 (5.5%) | 0 (0.0%) | 5 (5.4%) | 0 (0.0%) |
| Hong Kong | 34 (44.2%) | 2 (18.2%) | 12 (13.8%) | 1 (10.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 58 (21.1%) | 2 (25.0%) | 27 (29.0%) | 0 (0.0%) |
| Mainland China | 11 (14.3%) | 5 (45.5%) | 65 (74.7%) | 9 (90.0%) | 3 (75.0%) | 112 (40.7%) | 1 (12.5%) | 22 (23.7%) | 6 (100%) |
| North America | 4 (5.2%) | 1 (9.1%) | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 1 (25.0%) | 15 (5.5%) | 0 (0.0%) | 3 (3.2%) | 0 (0.0%) |
| South America | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 1 (0.4%) | 0 (0.0%) | 1 (1.1%) | 0 (0.0%) |
| Other | 1 (1.3%) | 1 (9.1%) | 1 (1.1%) | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 4 (1.5%) | 0 (0.0%) | 1 (1.1%) | 0 (0.0%) |

**Table 3 continued**

| | Agoda | Booking .com | C-trip | e-Long | Expedia | Hotel website directly | Hotels .com | No specific named travel agencies' websites and other travel websites | Qunar |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Education (n=594)** | | | | | | | | | |
| Elementary school or below | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 1 (1.1%) | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 3 (1.1%) | 0 (0.0%) | 2 (2.2%) | 0 (0.0%) |
| Completed secondary/high school | 11 (14.3%) | 1 (9.1%) | 18 (20.7%) | 3 (30.0%) | 1 (25.0%) | 45 (16.4%) | 0 (0.0%) | 13 (14.0%) | 0 (0.0%) |
| Completed diploma/college/university degree | 57 (74.0%) | 10 (90.9%) | 50 (57.5%) | 7 (70.0%) | 2 (50.0%) | 182 (66.2%) | 5 (62.5%) | 63 (67.7%) | 6 (100%) |
| Completed postgraduate degree | 9 (11.7%) | 0 (0.0%) | 17 (19.5%) | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 41 (14.9%) | 3 (37.5%) | 15 (16.1%) | 0 (0.0%) |
| Other | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 1 (1.1%) | 0 (0.0%) | 1 (25.0%) | 4 (1.5%) | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) |
| **Travel types (n=594)** | | | | | | | | | |
| Leisure | 74 (96.1%) | 11 (100%) | 75 (86.2%) | 10 (100.0% | 3 (75.0%) | 250 (90.9%) | 7 (87.5%) | 89 (95.7%) | 6 (100.0%) |
| Business | 3 (3.9%) | 0 (0.0%) | 12 (13.8%) | 0 (0.0%) | 1 (25.0%) | 25 (9.1%) | 1 (12.5%) | 4 (4.3%) | 0 (0.0%) |
| **Income (n=594)** | | | | | | | | | |
| RMB 1500 or less | 3 (3.9%) | 0 (0.0%) | 1 (1.1%) | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 4 (1.5%) | 0 (0.0%) | 1 (1.1%) | 0 (0.0%) |
| RMB 1,501-3,000 | 3 (3.9%) | 0 (0.0%) | 2 (2.3%) | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 2 (0.7%) | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) |
| RMB 3,001-4,500 | 3 (3.9%) | 0 (0.0%) | 5 (5.7%) | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 9 (3.3%) | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) |
| RMB 4,501-6,000 | 4 (5.2%) | 1 (9.1%) | 6 (6.9%) | 1 (10.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 17 (6.2%) | 1 (12.5%) | 2 (2.2%) | 0 (0.0%) |
| RMB 6,001-7,500 | 3 (3.9%) | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 2 (20.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 6 (2.2%) | 0 (0.0%) | 1 (1.1%) | 1 (16.7%) |
| RMB 7,501-9,000 | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 5 (5.7%) | 2 (20.0%) | 1 (25.0%) | 9 (3.3%) | 1 (12.5%) | 7 (7.5%) | 0 (0.0%) |
| RMB 9,001-10,500 | 4 (5.2%) | 3 (27.3%) | 7 (8.0%) | 1 (10.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 31 (11.3%) | 0 (0.0%) | 9 (9.7%) | 0 (0.0%) |
| RMB 10,501 or above | 27 (35.1%) | 3 (27.3%) | 22 (25.3%) | 1 (10.0%) | 1 (25.0%) | 97 (35.3%) | 1 (12.5%) | 38 (40.9%) | 1 (16.7%) |
| Prefer not to answer | 23 (29.9%) | 4 (36.4%) | 39 (44.8%) | 3 (30.0%) | 2 (50.0%) | 100 (36.4%) | 6 (75.0%) | 35 (37.6%) | 4 (66.7%) |
| **Total (%)** | 13.00% | 1.90% | 14.60% | 1.70% | 0.70% | 46.30% | 1.30% | 15.70% | 1.00% |

**Table 4 Comparison between online browsers and online buyers**

| Variable | Browsers (N=234) | Buyers (N=560) | $x^2$ | *df* | $p <$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | | | 11.80 | 1 | 0.001 |
| Male | 135 (59.0%) | 249 (45.4%) | | | |
| Female | 94 (41.0%) | 299 (54.5%) | | | |
| **Age** | | | 23.08 | 5 | 0.000* |
| 18 or less | 9 (3.9%) | 1 (0.2%) | | | |
| 19-24 | 50 (21.5%) | 105 (18.8%) | | | |
| 25-34 | 83 (35.6%) | 252 (45.0%) | | | |
| 35-44 | 62 (26.6%) | 144 (25.7%) | | | |
| 45-54 | 22 (9.4%) | 48 (8.6%) | | | |
| 55 and over | 7 (3.0%) | 10 (1.8%) | | | |
| **Education** | | | 42.51 | 4 | 0.000* |
| Elementary school or below | 10 (4.3%) | 6 (1.1%) | | | |
| Completed secondary/high school | 74 (31.6%) | 89 (15.9%) | | | |
| Completed diploma/college/university degree | 126 (53.8%) | 380 (67.95) | | | |
| Completed postgraduate degree | 18 (2.6%) | 80 (14.3%) | | | |
| Other | 6 (2.6%) | 4 (0.9%) | | | |
| **Travel type** | | | 0.350 | 1 | 0.644 |
| Leisure | 220 (94.0%) | 520 (92.9%) | | | |
| Business | 14 (6.0%) | 40 (7.1%) | | | |
| **Income** | | | 22.45 | 8 | 0.004 |
| RMB 1500 or less | 3 (1.3%) | 8 (1.4%) | | | |
| RMB 1,501-3,000 | 8 (3.4%) | 7 (1.3%) | | | |
| RMB 3,001-4,500 | 7 (3.0%) | 14 (2.5%) | | | |
| RMB 4,501-6,000 | 13 (5.6%) | 30 (5.4%) | | | |
| RMB 6,001-7,500 | 11 (4.7%) | 11 (2.0%) | | | |
| RMB 7,501-9,000 | 23 (9.8%) | 26 (4.6%) | | | |
| RMB 9,001-10,500 | 21 (9.0%) | 64 (11.4%) | | | |
| RMB 10,501 or above | 58 (24.8%) | 196 (35.0%) | | | |
| Prefer not to answer | 90 (38.5%) | 204 (36.4%) | | | |
| **Region** | | | 32.97 | 7 | 0.000* |
| Asia | 23 (9.8%) | 138 (24.6%) | | | |
| Europe | 6 (2.6%) | 28 (5.0%) | | | |
| Hong Kong | 61 (26.1%) | 139 (24.8%) | | | |
| Mainland China | 132 (56.4%) | 220 (39.3%) | | | |
| South America | 0 (0%) | 1 (0.2%) | | | |
| North America | 7 (3.0%) | 25 (4.5%) | | | |
| Other | 4 (1.7%) | 8 (1.4%) | | | |

*1 RMB = 6.335 USD*
*Note.*p < .01.*

**Table 5 Using the Internet to Search for Hotel Information**

| Online information Channels | Online Buyers (N=234) | Online Browsers (N=560) | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Blogs (travel diaries) (N=158) | 108 (14.0%) | 50 (12.5%) | 158 (14.6%) |
| Social media (N=140) | 50 (6.5%) | 90 (22.4%) | 140 (13.0%) |
| Hotel websites (N=400) | 296 (38.5%) | 104 (25.9%) | 310 (28.7%) |
| Third-party travel websites (N=180) | 126 (16.4%) | 54 (13.5%) | 180 (16.7%) |
| Travel agency websites (N=156) | 152 (19.8%) | 44 (11.0%) | 196 (18.1%) |
| Official tourism websites (N=9) | 8 (1.0%) | 1 (0.2%) | 9 (0.8%) |
| Other travel-related websites (N=87) | 29 (3.8%) | 58 (14.5%) | 87 (8.1%) |