



พฤติกรรมของนักท่องเที่ยวกลุ่มอาเซียนมิลเลนเนียล ในการเลือกใช้บริการโรงแรมบูติคในจังหวัดเชียงใหม่

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บทคัดย่อ

การค้นคว้าอิสระนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาพฤติกรรมการเลือกใช้บริการโรงแรมบูติคในจังหวัดเชียงใหม่ ของนักท่องเที่ยวกลุ่มอาเซียนมิลเลนเนียล โดยใช้กรอบแนวคิดทฤษฎีพฤติกรรมตามแผน (Theory of Planned Behavior: TPB) เป็นกรอบในการวิเคราะห์หลัก ซึ่งครอบคลุม 3 ปัจจัยสำคัญ ได้แก่ 1) ทัศนคติต่อ พฤติกรรม (Attitude Toward Behavior) 2) อิทธิพลของกลุ่มอ้างอิง (Subjective Norms) และ 3) การรับรู้ความสามารถในการควบคุมพฤติกรรม (Perceived Behavioral Control) เพื่อทำความเข้าใจ แรงจูงใจภายในและปัจจัยภายนอกที่ส่งผลต่อพฤติกรรมการตัดสินใจเลือกใช้บริการโรงแรมบูติคของ นักท่องเที่ยวกลุ่มเป้าหมายดังกล่าว

การศึกษานี้ใช้ระเบียบวิธีวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพ โดยเก็บข้อมูลผ่านการสัมภาษณ์เชิงลึก (In-depth Interview) กับกลุ่มตัวอย่างนักท่องเที่ยวอาเซียนมิลเลนเนียลจำนวน 30 ราย ที่เดินทางมาท่องเที่ยวในจังหวัด เชียงใหม่ และทำการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลด้วยวิธีการวิเคราะห์เชิงเนื้อหาแบบ Thematic Analysis ผลการศึกษาพบว่า ในด้านทัศนคติต่อพฤติกรรม ผู้ตอบแบบสัมภาษณ์ให้ความสำคัญกับประสบการณ์ เนพาะตัวที่โรงแรมบูติคสามารถมอบให้ เช่น การตกแต่งที่มีเอกลักษณ์ ความสะอาดของห้องพัก ความสะดวกสบาย และความรู้สึกเป็น ส่วนตัว ส่วนในด้านอิทธิพลของกลุ่มอ้างอิง พบร่วมคำแนะนำจากเพื่อน ครอบครัว อินฟลูเอนเซอร์ และรีวิว ออนไลน์ มีผลต่อการตัดสินใจ ขณะที่ในด้านการรับรู้ความสามารถในการควบคุมพฤติกรรม พบร่วมปัจจัยที่เอื้อ ต่อการตัดสินใจ เช่น โปรโมชั่น ระบบการจองที่ง่าย ความสะดวกของสิ่งอำนวยความสะดวก และรีวิวเชิงบวก ส่งเสริมให้เกิดการจองได้ง่ายขึ้น ในขณะที่ข้อจำกัดด้านราคา ข้อมูลไม่ครบถ้วน และการเข้าถึงที่ยุ่งยาก เป็นอุปสรรคสำคัญที่ลดthonพฤติกรรมการเลือกใช้บริการ

ผลการศึกษานี้ชี้ให้เห็นว่าทฤษฎีพฤษติกรรมตามแผนสามารถอธิบายพฤษติกรรมการเลือกใช้บริการโรงเรมบูติคของนักท่องเที่ยวอาเซียนมิลเลนเนียลได้อย่างมีประสิทธิภาพ ทั้งในด้านทัศนคติ แรงกดดันจากสังคม และความสามารถในการควบคุมพฤติกรรม โดยข้อมูลที่ได้ผู้ประกอบการโรงเรม นักการตลาด และนักวางแผนกลยุทธ์ด้านการท่องเที่ยว เพื่อปรับใช้ในการพัฒนาแนวทางการสื่อสารทางการตลาด การออกแบบบริการ และการสร้างประสบการณ์ที่ตอบโจทย์กลุ่มนักท่องเที่ยวรุ่นใหม่ได้อย่างตรงจุดในอนาคต

คำสำคัญ: ทัศนคติต่อพฤษติกรรม การคล้อยตามกลุ่มอ้างอิง การรับรู้ความสามารถในการควบคุมพฤติกรรม นักท่องเที่ยวอาเซียนมิลเลนเนียล พฤติกรรมนักท่องเที่ยว

Behavior of ASEAN Millennial Tourists towards Selecting Boutique Hotels in Chiang Mai Province

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Received: October 8, 2025

Revised: November 5, 2025

Accepted: November 12, 2025

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ABSTRACT

The behavior of ASEAN millennial tourists in selecting boutique hotels is an important topic for the tourism and hospitality industry, particularly in Chiang Mai, where boutique hotels play a vital role in offering unique and personalized travel experiences. This study aims to examine the decision-making process of millennial travelers using the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) as the analytical framework, focusing on three key constructs: Attitude Toward Behavior, Subjective Norms, and Perceived Behavioral Control. A qualitative approach was employed through in-depth interviews with 30 ASEAN millennial tourists who had previously stayed in boutique hotels in Chiang Mai. Data were analyzed using Thematic Analysis, revealing that tourists with positive attitudes toward design, comfort, and cultural authenticity, combined with strong social influence from family, friends, and online reviews, are more likely to choose boutique hotels. In addition, enabling factors such as promotions, convenient booking systems, and attractive amenities significantly enhance perceived control and strengthen booking intentions, while barriers such as high prices, limited room availability, and inconsistent service reduce confidence and alter decisions. Our study thus extends the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) by contextualizing it within ASEAN millennial tourists' boutique hotel choices in a way that was not previously captured by prior research. The findings highlight both opportunities and challenges for boutique hotels to enhance competitiveness,

improve service standards, and design targeted marketing strategies tailored to millennial travelers' values and preferences.

Keywords: Attitude Towards Behavior, Subjective Norm, Perceived Behavioral Control, ASEAN Millennials, Tourists' Behavior

1. INTRODUCTION

The tourism and hotel industry is currently showing signs of continuous recovery and expansion due to the revitalized global economy. According to a report by the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), by 2025, the industry is projected to generate revenues accounting for more than 10% of the global GDP and support over 371 million jobs. This highlights the crucial role of tourism as a driving force for the global economy. In Thailand, tourism serves as a key economic mechanism that not only generates income but also distributes prosperity to different regions across the country. These trends, however, have intensified competition in the domestic hotel sector, driven by the continuous increase in both the number of hotel rooms and new operators (Puttirak Sa-ardluan, 2023).

The context of Chiang Mai, a world-renowned tourist destination celebrated for its natural resources, cultural heritage, and unique local lifestyle, has significantly attracted both domestic and international visitors. This environment has stimulated the growth of the hotel industry, particularly boutique hotels, which emphasize distinctive design and the reflection of local identity. As a result, boutique hotels have become a rapidly expanding and highly competitive business sector in the region (Strategic and Information Group for Provincial Development, 2017; Boutique Stay Travel, 2024). Therefore, studying tourist behavior toward boutique hotels is essential for creating differentiation and gaining a deeper understanding of the characteristics and preferences of boutique hotel guests.

This study focuses on ASEAN millennial tourists, a large demographic segment in the region known for their strong purchasing power and experiential travel preferences. They are entering the stage of life with the highest earning potential, and international travel spending among Asian Millennials is projected to increase 1.6 times, reaching approximately USD 340 billion (Singapore Tourism Board [STB], 2023). Furthermore, data reported by the World Economic Forum indicate that by 2030, Millennials and Generation Z together will account for

75% of consumers in ASEAN, underscoring their position as the “growth engine” driving future consumption trends (World Economic Forum, 2023).

Prior studies on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) in similar contexts have provided valuable insights. For example, Onsa-ang (2017) found that the most influential factor affecting Thai tourists’ decision to choose boutique hotels was service quality provided by staff, followed by product-related attributes, while price was considered the least significant factor. Similarly, Ashraf Fauzi (2022) demonstrated that subjective norms and perceived behavioral control (PBC) were the primary determinants of tourists’ intentions to select eco-friendly hotels. Previous research has also identified a “behavioral gap” between attitudes, intentions, and actual service usage. This gap suggests that studies relying solely on quantitative analysis may be insufficient to comprehensively explain the underlying factors influencing decision-making, particularly the psychological and social dimensions embedded in the choices of millennial travelers.

Using the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 2006) as the conceptual lens, the research investigates how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control shape the intentions and actual decision-making. Therefore, the present study adopts a qualitative research approach to explore in depth the internal dimensions of Attitude, Subjective Norms, and Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC). Such an approach provides richer insights into hidden motivations, emotions, and values that statistical figures alone cannot fully capture, thereby offering a more holistic understanding of boutique hotel selection behavior. Our study thus extends the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) by contextualizing it within ASEAN millennial tourists’ boutique hotel choices in a way that was not previously captured by previous research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Digital Influence and Millennial Travel Behaviour

Millennial tourists represent a distinctive market segment characterized by their preference for authentic, experience-driven travel and their strong reliance on digital media throughout the decision-making process. Extending this perspective, recent work from Liu et al. (2024) highlighted that short-form video content enhances Millennial behavioral intentions because of the immersive flow experiences.

The previous article highlights that millennial travelers place strong emphasis on authenticity and boutique-style experiences when selecting accommodation or travel destinations (Terrero et al., 2016). Boutique hotels by nature, put an emphasis on such personalized service, unique design, and local cultural identity. These are all qualities that align closely with millennials' pursuit of authenticity, uniqueness, and meaningful experiences.

Moreover, digital platforms and social media play a crucial role in shaping millennials' perceptions, attitudes, and behavioural intentions toward boutique hotel selection. As Goktepe and Öğretmenoğlu (2023) mentioned millennials' travel decisions are strongly influenced by their active engagement and based their decision on online content and peer experiences. Social comparison on social media can stimulate impulsive travel behaviour among millennial tourists which often mediated by factors such as fear of missing out and compulsive media use (Kumar and Kumar, 2025).

The intersection of these factors underscores the importance of understanding how such influences shape millennials' values, attitudes, and boutique hotel selection, an area that remains underexplored in the current literature.

2.2 Theory of Planned Behavior

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is a social-psychological framework developed by Icek Ajzen in 1985, building on the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) to overcome the limitations of the original model. TPB is one of the most widely applied theories in explaining and predicting human behavior. It posits that an individual's behavior is primarily determined by behavioral intention, which in turn is shaped by three key components: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. These factors collectively

provide a comprehensive understanding of how psychological and social influences drive decision-making processes.

Attitude toward the behavior refers to an individual's positive or negative evaluation of choosing a boutique hotel. This attitude is shaped by beliefs regarding the potential outcomes of the decision. When tourists believe that staying at a boutique hotel provides favorable benefits—such as distinctive design, comfort, and authentic local experiences—they are likely to form a positive attitude toward this choice. Conversely, if they anticipate drawbacks, such as higher costs or limited facilities, their attitude may become unfavorable.

Subjective norms reflect the social influence and perceived expectations from important reference groups, including family, friends, peers, or online influencers, that affect the decision-making process. When millennial tourists are surrounded by people who recommend or favor boutique hotels, whether through direct suggestions, reviews, or social media endorsements, they are more likely to be influenced to select this type of accommodation.

Perceived behavioral control concerns an individual's perception of how easy or difficult it is to book and stay at a boutique hotel, based on past experiences and perceived barriers. If ASEAN millennial tourists believe that making reservations is convenient, prices are manageable, and information is easily accessible, they are more likely to repeat the behavior of choosing boutique hotels. For instance, when travelers find booking systems simple and services reliable, the sense of ease enhances their intention to prefer boutique hotels during their visits to Chiang Mai consistently.

In summary, TPB provides an integrated framework for explaining why individuals decide to engage in certain behaviors. The theory emphasizes that attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control are not isolated elements but interrelated factors that collectively determine behavioral intention. A positive evaluation of the behavior enhances the willingness to act, while social approval and encouragement reinforce this tendency. At the same time, when individuals believe they possess sufficient resources, skills, or opportunities to perform the behavior, the likelihood of translating intention into actual action significantly increases. In this way, TPB not only predicts behavior but also highlights the psychological and social mechanisms that drive decision-making processes (Ajzen, 2006).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study investigates ASEAN millennial tourists' selection of boutique hotels in Chiang Mai Province, using the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) as a guiding framework (Ajzen, 2006). The research was conducted through in-depth interviews, which served as the primary data collection method. Interviewees were purposively selected to reflect the target population is ASEAN millennial tourists aged between 27 and 42 years, born between 1981 and 1996, as defined by the Pew Research Center (2020). Participants were required to have traveled to Chiang Mai for tourism purposes and to have previously stayed at boutique hotels in the province. All respondents were nationals and residents of the ten ASEAN countries, namely Cambodia, Thailand, Brunei, Myanmar, the Philippines, Malaysia, Laos, Vietnam, Singapore, and Indonesia (ASEAN Economic Community, 2015).

3.1 Research Questions

This study seeks to understand the behavior of ASEAN millennial tourists in selecting boutique hotels in Chiang Mai, using the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) as the guiding framework. Specifically, the research aims to explore how attitudes, social influences, and perceived behavioral control interact to shape tourists' intentions and actual decision-making in choosing boutique hotels within the broader context of personalized and experiential travel behavior.

3.2 Data

The primary data for this study were collected through in-depth interviews, guided by the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) as the conceptual framework. Thematic analysis interprets the findings systematically. Participants were purposively selected to represent ASEAN millennial tourists aged 27 to 42 years. All respondents had traveled to Chiang Mai for tourism purposes and had previously stayed at boutique hotels in the province. Moreover, they were nationals and residents of the ten ASEAN countries (ASEAN Economic Community, 2015). Interviews were conducted face-to-face in English, typically lasting between 30 to 60 minutes. Each session was audio-recorded with participant permission. The fieldwork took place from August to October 2024.

3.3 Triangulations of Data

This study adopted triangulation as a methodological approach, which is widely recognized as an effective technique, particularly in research focusing on opinions, attitudes, or behaviors (Denzin, 1978). Three types of triangulations were applied to enhance the validity and credibility of the findings. Time triangulation was employed because tourism behavior and boutique hotel selection may vary across different time periods. Therefore, data were collected during both weekdays and weekends, allowing for comparison between participants from different time frames.

Space triangulation was implemented to capture the diversity of tourism contexts in Chiang Mai, where service settings and visitor experiences differ depending on location. Data were thus gathered from three distinct zones: the Old City, Nimmanhaemin, and the Ping Riverside. Person triangulation was applied to verify the consistency and trustworthiness of the information by comparing data from different groups of respondents. This method helped minimize individual bias and provided multiple perspectives on boutique hotel selection. The analysis further examined convergence and divergence across participant responses to identify whether key themes—such as attitudes or booking barriers—were consistently repeated, thereby confirming their significance as core findings.

3.4 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis based on Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase model. We follow Gioia's (2013) thematic approach to the steps and model used to present our analysis. This helps strengthen analytical rigour and ensure transparency. The process began with transcription and close reading of the interview data to build familiarity. Initial codes were generated both inductively and deductively, guided by the research questions and established constructs of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). These codes were then clustered into broader conceptual themes, which were subsequently reviewed and refined to ensure clarity and internal coherence.

To establish trustworthiness, Lincoln and Guba's (1985) four criteria—credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability—were applied. The use of multiple researchers in the coding process, combined with literature-guided analysis, further supported methodological rigor. Each theme was clearly labeled and described in relation to the research objectives and substantiated with representative quotations from the interview transcripts.

The findings were synthesized to highlight key motivational drivers, behavioral barriers, and social influences affecting ASEAN millennial tourists' decisions to select boutique hotels in Chiang Mai. These interpretations were mapped onto TPB's theoretical dimensions, thereby contributing both to the academic understanding of consumer behavior and to practical applications in boutique hotel management and tourism marketing strategies.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the qualitative findings derived from thematic analysis of 30 in-depth interviews with ASEAN millennial tourists who had stayed in boutique hotels in Chiang Mai Province. The results are structured around the three core components of the Theory of Planned Behavior—Attitude, Subjective Norm, and Perceived Behavioral Control—together with specific insights into tourists' motivations, social influences, and perceived challenges in the selection of boutique hotels. Each theme is illustrated through first-order evidence (direct participant quotations) and second-order interpretations to provide both depth and clarity.

4.1 Attitude Toward Boutique Hotel Selection Behavior

Table 1 Show the thematic analysis table of attitude toward boutique hotel selection

First Order	Second Order	Aggregated
<p>“It feels different from staying at a regular hotel because it allows me to connect with the local culture.”</p> <p>“The interior design is fresh, with a mix of old and new furniture that reflects the identity of Chiang Mai.”</p> <p>“The design is beautiful and harmonizes with Chiang Mai’s natural environment. I like the contemporary style that still retains a touch of Lanna culture.”</p>	<p>Unique design that reflects local culture</p>	<p>Positive Attitude</p>

First Order	Second Order	Aggregated
<p>“The staff provided excellent service and paid attention to details.”</p> <p>“The personalized service, friendly welcome, and knowledgeable staff who escorted me to the room and explained everything made me feel special.”</p> <p>“The close and friendly service, including recommendations for tourist attractions and restaurants, was impressive.”</p>	Service quality	
<p>“It felt like staying in a second home, with a sense of privacy.”</p> <p>“I wanted privacy, which chain hotels cannot offer. Boutique hotels in Chiang Mai provide a serene atmosphere with fewer rooms and less crowding.”</p> <p>“The quiet, peaceful atmosphere with private corners for relaxation was ideal.”</p>	Comfort and privacy of the hotel	Positive Attitude
<p>“The hotel’s location was not far from the attractions I wanted to visit and close to the airport, making travel convenient.”</p> <p>“The hotel was located near attractions, restaurants, and shops, making it easy to continue sightseeing.”</p>	Convenient location for travel	
<p>“I once had an experience where the room did not match the photos on the website, which was disappointing.”</p> <p>“The hotel I booked did not look like the pictures. Online, it looked great, but in reality, the room was old and not as clean as expected.”</p>	Inconsistency of the provided information	

First Order	Second Order	Aggregated
<p>The staff seemed unwilling to help resolve issues, which was disappointing.”</p> <p>“The staff did not smile much and could not provide useful information.”</p> <p>“The staff were inattentive, making me feel it was not worth the money I paid.”</p>	Substandard service	
<p>“I once had an experience where the room did not match the photos on the website, which was disappointing.”</p> <p>“The hotel I booked did not look like the pictures. Online, it looked great, but in reality, the room was old and not as clean as expected.”</p> <p>“The room looked nice in the photos, but when I arrived, it was not what I imagined—dusty, unclean, and the bathroom had a bad odor.”</p>	Inconsistency of the provided information	Negative Attitude
<p>“The room was not as clean as expected. Small details such as a musty smell and weak water pressure made it feel not worth the price.”</p> <p>“There was a problem with the water heater—it did not heat properly.”</p>	Substandard room quality	

4.2 Influence of Reference Groups (Subjective Norms)

Table 2 Show the thematic analysis table of Subjective Norms

First Order	Second Order	Aggregated
<p>“Friends recommend hotels they have stayed at and share their experiences.”</p> <p>“My friends usually send me both information and videos suggesting I try those places.”</p>	Recommendations from friends with direct experience	Direct Reference Group

First Order	Second Order	Aggregated
<p>“The person who influences my decision the most is my partner, because we often travel together.”</p> <p>“The greatest influence comes from my partner, since they usually manage the expenses.”</p>	Influence from partners	
<p>“Family members also play a role and have an influence on the decision.”</p> <p>“The most influential people are my family, since I rarely travel alone. If someone in my family has stayed and recommended a hotel, it strongly affects my choice.”</p>	Influence from family members	
<p>“One of the influencers I follow on social media is a YouTuber who makes hotel and travel review videos.”</p> <p>“Reviews from influencers include both photos and videos showing details about the rooms, hotels, and even nearby attractions.”</p>	Influence from public figures on social media	Indirect Reference Group
<p>“I usually look at illustrated reviews, not just Google reviews, but detailed articles from various websites, both positive and negative.”</p> <p>“Most of the time I rely on Google reviews and tend to choose hotels with many positive comments and high ratings.”</p>	Influence from social media reviews	
<p>“I personally follow and admire a Thai celebrity on Instagram who is very popular in my country. When I saw that they stayed at a boutique hotel in Chiang Mai, it inspired me and made me want to stay there as well, becoming one of the reasons I traveled to Thailand.”</p>	Influence from celebrities	Indirect Reference Group

4.3 Perceived Behavioral Control

Table 3 Show the thematic analysis table of Perceived Behavioral Control

First Order	Second Order	Aggregated
<p>“The main trigger for booking is promotional discounts or periods when room rates are cheaper.”</p> <p>“What motivates me to stay is packages that provide good value for the price paid.”</p> <p>“Special promotions for couples or honeymoon packages that include romantic activities are very appealing.”</p>	<p>Influence of promotions and discounts</p>	<p>Easy to Perform</p>
<p>“The overall appearance or image of the hotel is most important to me; if it is beautiful and unique, I will book immediately.”</p> <p>“What motivates me to book is the attractiveness and atmosphere, as I expect to take beautiful photos in private and scenic spots.”</p>	<p>Appealing image or atmosphere</p> <p>Appealing image or atmosphere</p>	
<p>“What encourages me to book is seeing beautiful photos and good reviews.”</p> <p>“Positive reviews from people I trust, such as family members or past guests, strongly influence my choice.”</p>	<p>Influence of positive reviews</p>	<p>Easy to Perform</p>
<p>“One of the obstacles to booking is the high price and whether it is worth paying.”</p> <p>“Boutique hotel prices are too high during the high season, which becomes a barrier.”</p> <p>“Some boutique hotels are quite expensive. Even if they are beautiful, if the price is beyond my budget, I have to find other options.”</p>	<p>Price constraints</p>	

First Order	Second Order	Aggregated
<p>“Some hotels do not provide convenient booking channels or have complicated conditions, such as requiring advance bank transfers without guarantees, which makes me hesitate.”</p> <p>“Certain hotels have strict cancellation policies; if I cannot cancel or modify the booking, I tend not to choose those hotels.”</p>	<p>Booking process constraints</p>	<p>Hard to Perform</p>
<p>“The details shown on travel agent websites or apps are sometimes incomplete or inaccurate compared to the actual hotel.”</p> <p>“There is often uncertainty in the information; sometimes the photos and descriptions online do not match the real accommodation.”</p>	<p>Information completeness constraints</p> <p>Information completeness constraints</p>	<p>Hard to Perform</p>

The findings indicate that attitudes toward boutique hotel attributes significantly influence tourists' intentions to stay. Key factors include distinctive design and high-quality service, aligning with Onsa-ang (2017), who emphasized that boutique hotels should prioritize service excellence and unique identity as core attractions. Respondents highlighted that elements such as local-inspired furniture, thematic décor, premium service, comfortable rooms, and a relaxing atmosphere foster positive attitudes, consistent with Kawaf (2012), who noted that experiential features like comfort and aesthetics directly enhance satisfaction. Furthermore, online reviews and hotel image play a crucial role in shaping trust and expectations, echoing Daengson (2022), who found that brand image and trust in green hotels directly affect intention to stay. Thus, this study not only reinforces previous frameworks but also deepens understanding of which attitudes matter most, under what conditions, and in connection with which influencing factors.

We extend Liu et al. (2024) that online visibility and digital storytelling strengthen positive attitudes and booking intentions among ASEAN Millennials. This might be explained by Terrero et al. (2016), who highlight that Millennials increasingly seek boutique and authentic experiences when travelling. Our study shows that such digital representations, whether from peers or influencers, further reinforce emotional attachment and the intensity in decision-making.

This study also reveals that subjective norms strongly influence ASEAN millennial tourists' decisions to stay in boutique hotels, particularly through direct reference groups such as friends, family, and partners, whose opinions are trusted more than traditional marketing due to closeness and credibility. This aligns with Bearden et al. (1989), who noted that direct groups play a primary role in shaping consumer behavior. Indirect reference groups, including influencers, online reviews, and social media content, also affect attitudes by shaping expectations and inspiring the desire to replicate experiences. These findings support Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior, which identifies subjective norms as a key determinant of behavioral intention. Similar evidence is seen in Jaitley (2023), who found that social opinions influenced Indian millennials' intentions to stay in eco-hotels, and in Ashraf Fauzi (2022), who highlighted social conformity as a driver in green hotel choices. Likewise, Daengson (2022) emphasized that trust built through image and recommendations significantly motivates hotel selection, while Onsa-ang (2017) demonstrated that positive online reviews, as a form of indirect reference, can also persuade tourists to book boutique hotels.

Regarding perceived behavioral control, enabling factors have a significant influence. Elements such as accessible booking systems, sufficient information, reliable standards, and affordable pricing enhance perceived behavioral control (PBC), thereby increasing booking intentions, consistent with Onsa-ang (2015) and Ashraf Fauzi (2022). Conversely, constraining factors—such as limited room availability, high prices, incomplete information, inconvenient locations, and strict policies—reduce tourists' sense of control and lower their intention to book, echoing Daengson (2022) and Ashraf Fauzi (2022), who emphasized the importance of trustworthy information, clear policies, and user-generated reviews in shaping hotel selection.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ASEAN millennial tourists generally demonstrate a positive attitude toward selecting boutique hotels in Chiang Mai, valuing unique atmosphere, creative design, privacy, and distinctive leisure experiences compared to conventional hotels. Boutique hotels that emphasize local art, cultural heritage, and personalized service often leave lasting impressions, encouraging repeat visits and word-of-mouth recommendations. However, some tourists hold negative perceptions due to difficulties in accessing reliable information or unsatisfactory past experiences, which generate unfavorable attitudes. The study also reveals that knowledge and awareness of boutique hotels enhance tourists' perceived value and authenticity of the experience, reinforcing favorable behavioral attitudes. For example, boutique hotels in Chiang Mai decorated with traditional Lanna elements or contemporary styles and located near cultural attractions align with millennials' interests in art, culture, and adventure. Consequently, staying in boutique hotels with creative design and unique identity is perceived as a rewarding experience that strengthens positive attitudes and significantly influences millennials' intentions to choose boutique hotels.

Subjective norms were influenced by reference groups, with family, friends, and influencers playing a central role in boutique hotel selection. Social media platforms, online reviews, and shared experiences act as powerful sources of information, often shaping decisions even without prior personal experience. In collectivist ASEAN cultures, recommendations from close social networks carry greater weight than traditional marketing, as they are perceived as genuine and trustworthy. At the same time, indirect influences from influencers and bloggers build credibility and inspiration through appealing visual content and storytelling, encouraging tourists to follow similar experiences. Together, these direct and indirect social pressures highlight the significant role of subjective norms in shaping millennials' accommodation choices.

Millennial tourists' decisions to stay in boutique hotels are shaped by their perceived behavioral control. Facilitating factors such as affordable promotions, clear information, flexible booking systems, and attractive amenities increase confidence and intention, while barriers like high prices, limited availability, or poor accessibility reduce it. When tourists feel that booking and staying in boutique hotels is easy, manageable, and within their resources,

they are more likely to choose them—consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior, which highlights the role of perceived control in shaping intention.

Theoretically, this study extends the Theory of Planned Behaviour by applying it to ASEAN millennial tourists' boutique hotel choices. We show how attitudes, social influences, and perceived control shape decisions in an emerging tourist destination which heavily influenced by the digital tourism environment. Our work thus provides a deeper understanding of millennial travel behavior.

Practically, we would recommend hotel managers in three directions, based on our findings, to build loyalty through personalized service, to use guest-generated stories to strengthen social influence, and to improve perceived control through clear and reliable online booking systems.

To broaden future applications and achieve a more comprehensive understanding, the scope of research could be expanded beyond Chiang Mai to other major tourist destinations such as Bangkok or Phuket, where boutique hotels are prevalent. This would help determine whether factors under the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) vary across different regional or seasonal contexts. For instance, in high season tourists may prioritize advance booking and room availability, while in low season they may focus more on promotions and value for money. Location contexts, such as the Old City, Nimmanhaemin, or suburban areas, could also reveal distinct decision-making patterns, offering insights for location-based marketing. In addition, quantitative research using surveys and statistical analysis could validate these qualitative findings and clarify the relationships among TPB variables. Comparative studies between Millennials and other generations (e.g., Gen Z or Gen X), as well as between ASEAN tourists and those from other regions, would further highlight cultural and behavioral differences influencing boutique hotel selection.

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