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From Generative AI to Hotel Brand Advocacy: A Proposed Research Framework

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Abstract

Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) is increasingly involved in travel planning and hotel choice, yet research has not fully explained how consumers move from evaluating an AI-generated recommendation to responding to the hotel brand being recommended. This paper develops an integrated research framework that connects GenAI-related perceptions with recommendation acceptance and hotel brand advocacy intention. The framework distinguishes two psychological routes. A motivational route links GenAI anthropomorphism with GenAI-evoked inspiration, whereas an evaluative route links recommendation credibility and relevance with trust in GenAI recommendations. Inspiration and trust are subsequently proposed to increase recommendation

acceptance, which is further associated with advocacy intention toward the recommended hotel brand. The framework also proposes that lack-of-transparency anxiety weakens the positive effect of GenAI anthropomorphism on inspiration. The Stimulus - Organism - Response (S-O-R) framework provides the overall structure, while customer inspiration, affordance - actualization, fear-acquisition, and commitment - consistency perspectives explain specific relationships. Eight hypotheses are developed, together with a pathway for future empirical validation using a survey of GenAI users and partial least squares structural equation modeling. The framework extends GenAI hospitality research by connecting recommendation-level psychological responses with a downstream hotel-brand outcome.

Keywords: Generative AI, Hotel Recommendation, Trust, Customer Inspiration, Recommendation Acceptance, Hotel Brand Advocacy

1. Introduction

Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) is changing how travelers search for information, compare alternatives, and make accommodation decisions. Conversational systems such as ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot, and Claude allow users to describe their travel needs in natural language and receive hotel suggestions tailored to factors such as budget, location, facilities, and trip purpose. Hotel choice is a useful setting for studying GenAI because travelers book before they have experienced the service. At that point, they depend on reviews, descriptions, and recommendations to compare their options. Booking.com's Global AI Sentiment Report surveyed more than 37,000 consumers across 33 markets. It found that 67% had already used AI in some part of travel, and 89% wanted to use it in future planning. Trust is another matter: only 6% fully trusted AI, and 12% were comfortable letting it make decisions independently (Booking.com, 2025) [2]. Use is high; trust is not. That gap makes hotel recommendations a revealing context for asking how travelers judge advice generated by GenAI. A search engine returns a list and leaves the comparing to the traveler. Conversational GenAI does some of that work itself. It combines information, answers follow-up questions, and refines its suggestion within the same interaction. In doing so, it can quietly narrow which hotels a traveler ever considers. As a result, GenAI is becoming an intermediary between travelers and hospitality brands. Research on GenAI in tourism and hospitality has expanded quickly, but the literature remains fragmented. Li *et al.* (2025) [19], reviewing 170 studies across tourism and business, found that much of the literature concentrates on antecedents, applications, and outcomes of GenAI use, while theoretical development remains limited. Dai Tuyen *et al.* (2025) [7] similarly identified a broad range of applications, benefits, challenges, and research opportunities surrounding ChatGPT in tourism and hospitality. At the consumer level, Zhang *et al.* (2026) [35] highlighted the need for greater attention to psychological, social, ethical, and security-related concerns surrounding GenAI use. These reviews indicate that understanding how consumers evaluate and

respond to GenAI remains an important research direction. Hotel recommendations provide a particularly relevant setting because accommodation choices are usually made before direct experience with the service. Consumers must therefore decide whether the information available to them is sufficiently credible and relevant to support a choice. In personalized ChatGPT travel recommendations, Ali *et al.* (2023) ^[1] found that recommendation credibility and relevance contributed positively to travelers' trust, which in turn influenced behavioral intentions. Research on AI recommendation systems in travel planning similarly shows that trust plays an important role in adoption decisions (Shi *et al.*, 2021) ^[30]. More recent work on sustained GenAI travel use further indicates that both cognitive and affective forms of trust can influence continued reliance on GenAI in travel decision-making (Foroughi *et al.*, 2026) ^[11].

Trust, however, captures only one reason why travelers may respond positively to a GenAI-generated recommendation. A recommendation can also introduce an attractive possibility, help users imagine a future experience, and motivate them to explore an option they had not previously considered. Customer inspiration research describes this state as a motivational response to externally stimulated ideas that encourages consumers to pursue consumption-related goals (Böttger *et al.*, 2017) ^[4]. Inspiration has been linked to subsequent customer responses in tourism and hospitality settings (He *et al.*, 2023; Liang *et al.*, 2024) ^[16, 21], while recent research shows that inspiration plays an important role in how ChatGPT-generated information influences travel planning (Wang *et al.*, 2026) ^[33]. Huang *et al.* (2025) ^[17] provide direct evidence in the hotel recommendation context, showing that GenAI anthropomorphism can stimulate inspiration and increase recommendation acceptance.

Trust and inspiration represent different psychological processes. Trust reflects whether consumers believe a recommendation is dependable enough to use in a decision, whereas inspiration reflects whether the interaction motivates them to explore or pursue an attractive possibility. However, these two routes have largely been examined in separate research streams. Trust-oriented studies emphasize the evaluation of AI-generated information, while inspiration research focuses more on the motivational effects of GenAI interaction. Examining both within the same framework may provide a more complete explanation of why consumers become willing to accept a GenAI-generated hotel recommendation.

A second gap lies in what happens after a recommendation is accepted. Studies close to GenAI-assisted travel decisions have mostly looked at how people respond to the technology itself: whether they keep using it, adopt its suggestions, or talk about it to others (Ali *et al.*, 2023; Fakfare *et al.*, 2025; Huang *et al.*, 2025) ^[1, 10, 17]. What they say little about is the hotel. If a consumer becomes willing to accept one specific recommendation, does that consumer also come to view the named brand favorably? The question matters because GenAI does more than shape how people feel about a tool. When it picks and presents particular hotels, it also takes part in the first encounter between a consumer and a hospitality brand.

Hotel brand advocacy is a fitting outcome for testing this idea. Customer advocacy refers to positive communication aimed at influencing others, in which consumers recommend a brand, back it, or urge people to consider it

(Sweeney *et al.*, 2020) ^[32]. Hospitality researchers have long treated advocacy as a meaningful brand response, and recent work on AI-enabled hotel experiences has begun to link technology experiences to it (Khairy *et al.*, 2025; Nguyen *et al.*, 2022) ^[18, 25]. However, the link between willingness to accept a GenAI-generated hotel recommendation and advocacy intention toward that same hotel brand remains insufficiently examined.

The third issue concerns the point at which human-like interaction may become less effective. A GenAI system that communicates in a human-like way may be more engaging, but such interaction does not necessarily make the recommendation process more transparent. Travelers can still wonder what information the system used, why it suggested this hotel and not another, and whether the advice can be checked. This lack-of-transparency anxiety is therefore an important boundary condition. Huang *et al.* (2025) ^[17] found that worry about opaque AI processes can weaken the positive psychological effects of anthropomorphic GenAI. In other words, human-like communication may work only for users who feel comfortable with how the recommendation was produced.

Building on these issues, this study proposes an integrated framework to explain how perceptions of GenAI shape recommendation acceptance and, in turn, hotel brand advocacy intention. The Stimulus - Organism - Response (S-O-R) framework (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) ^[23] is used as the overarching structure for organizing these relationships. GenAI-evoked inspiration and trust in GenAI recommendations represent internal psychological responses. Recommendation acceptance and hotel brand advocacy intention represent subsequent consumer responses. Lack-of-transparency anxiety is positioned as a boundary condition affecting the anthropomorphism-inspiration relationship.

The framework brings together two psychological routes that have largely been examined separately in GenAI-assisted travel research. Trust captures the evaluative side of recommendation acceptance, whereas inspiration captures its motivational side. It also extends the process beyond acceptance of the recommendation by considering whether a favorable response to a GenAI-suggested hotel is associated with advocacy toward the same brand. Finally, the model incorporates lack-of-transparency anxiety as a condition that may weaken the inspirational value of anthropomorphic interaction. These relationships are expressed through eight hypotheses and a pathway for future empirical validation.

2. Theoretical background and hypothesis development

2.1 Theoretical architecture of the proposed framework

The proposed framework is organized around the Stimulus - Organism - Response (S-O-R) model (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) ^[23]. S-O-R provides the overall sequence of the model by explaining how external cues shape internal psychological states, which then influence subsequent responses. In the context of GenAI-assisted hotel choice, consumers are first exposed to characteristics of the interaction and the recommendation, then form internal motivational and evaluative responses, and finally develop intentions toward both the recommendation and the hotel brand.

Within this structure, three stimuli are distinguished. GenAI anthropomorphism represents an interaction-related cue because it concerns how the system communicates with the

user. Recommendation credibility and recommendation relevance represent recommendation-related cues because they concern how the output itself is evaluated. A GenAI system may communicate in a human-like manner while offering a recommendation that appears weak or poorly matched to the user. Conversely, a relevant and credible recommendation may be presented without strong anthropomorphic cues. Treating these cues separately allows the framework to examine whether different characteristics of the GenAI experience activate different psychological processes.

The organism stage contains two internal states: GenAI-evoked inspiration and trust in GenAI recommendations. The model treats them as parallel mechanisms, not as two expressions of the same response. Inspiration is primarily motivational. Customer inspiration is a temporary motivational state in which an externally triggered idea grows into a desire to pursue a related goal (Böttger *et al.*, 2017) [4]. In the GenAI context, an appealing hotel suggestion may lead travelers to imagine a possible trip and want to pursue it (Huang *et al.*, 2025) [17]. Trust is a different matter. It concerns whether users believe a recommendation is reliable enough to support their decision (Gefen *et al.*, 2003) [12].

The two states do not always arrive together. A traveler may find a recommendation inspiring without being confident that it is reliable. Another may judge a recommendation trustworthy and feel no excitement at all. Inspiration and trust are therefore separate routes through which a GenAI interaction can lead to recommendation acceptance.

Both states are expected to contribute to acceptance, and acceptance is expected to influence hotel brand advocacy intention. The two responses sit at different points in the decision process. Acceptance comes first and reflects willingness to act on the GenAI suggestion. Advocacy intention comes later and is directed at the hotel brand named in that suggestion. In this way, the model extends the response stage of the S-O-R framework (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) [23]. It asks not only whether consumers accept a recommendation, but whether that acceptance carries over into a favorable intention toward the recommended brand.

S-O-R alone, however, does not specify why a particular stimulus should produce a particular internal state or why one response should lead to another. Complementary theoretical perspectives are therefore used selectively to explain specific links within the broader structure. Customer inspiration theory explains why anthropomorphic interaction may stimulate inspiration by helping consumers notice and pursue new consumption possibilities (Böttger *et al.*, 2017) [4]. Affordance - actualization reasoning is used more narrowly to explain why recommendation qualities such as credibility and relevance become meaningful when they make the recommendation more usable for the consumer's decision goal (Markus & Silver, 2008; Strong *et al.*, 2014) [22, 31].

Each theory in this framework serves a specific role. Affordance theory is not used to argue that credibility and relevance are canonical dimensions of affordance. Instead, it is used more narrowly to explain how perceived qualities of a recommendation may make it more usable in decision-making and, in turn, support trust in that recommendation. Fear-acquisition reasoning is applied only to the moderating role of lack-of-transparency anxiety. It helps explain why

uncertainty surrounding opaque AI processes may weaken the positive psychological effect of an otherwise engaging anthropomorphic interaction (Rachman, 1977) [27]. The commitment - consistency principle is reserved for the final relationship between recommendation acceptance and hotel brand advocacy intention. Once consumers become willing to accept a recommended hotel, they may be more likely to respond to that hotel brand in ways that are consistent with this prior favorable orientation, including supporting or advocating for the brand (Cialdini *et al.*, 1995) [6].

2.2 GenAI anthropomorphism and GenAI-evoked inspiration

Anthropomorphism is the tendency to attribute human characteristics, intentions, emotions, or mental capacities to nonhuman entities (Epley *et al.*, 2007) [9]. GenAI invites this in several ways. It can hold a natural conversation, use socially responsive language, and appear to understand what the user said earlier. Cues like these make the system feel less like a technical interface and more like an interactive partner. They matter in travel and hospitality because travelers rarely choose on functional attributes alone. Personal preferences and imagined future experiences count too.

Customer inspiration theory explains why such cues may spark inspiration. Böttger *et al.* (2017) [4] define customer inspiration as a temporary motivational state in which an external stimulus helps consumers see new possibilities and motivates them to pursue a consumption-related goal. A stimulus that engages people, speaks to them personally, or offers a fresh perspective can move them from passively reading information to actively exploring.

Human-like interaction may strengthen this process. GenAI can respond to what travelers say about their needs, preferences, and plans, instead of showing the same information to everyone. A hotel recommendation built around the traveler's own situation is easier to picture as part of a future trip. New possibilities then feel more personal, and more worth pursuing.

Tourism and hospitality studies point the same way. He *et al.* (2023) [16] linked tourist inspiration to later engagement in wellness tourism. Liang *et al.* (2024) [21] found that environmental stimuli in hotels can evoke inspiration and shape later customer responses. In both cases, a stimulus triggered inspiration and that inspiration carried over into behavior. GenAI's human-like features may offer a different, conversational route to the same process.

In a GenAI-assisted hotel decision, anthropomorphic interaction may make a recommendation easier to engage with and increase the salience of the possibilities it presents. A responsive, human-like exchange can help users picture a hotel experience, notice alternatives they had not previously considered, or reconsider what they want from the trip. Rather than receiving the recommendation as another piece of information, users may begin to see the suggested hotel as an attractive possibility worth exploring. Huang *et al.* (2025) [17] provide direct evidence in this context, showing that GenAI anthropomorphism positively influenced the inspiration process in hotel recommendations. On this basis, greater perceived anthropomorphism is expected to strengthen the inspiration evoked by a GenAI-generated hotel recommendation.

H1: GenAI anthropomorphism has a positive effect on GenAI-evoked inspiration.

2.3 Recommendation credibility, recommendation relevance, and trust

Trust in this framework refers to the extent to which users feel they can rely on a GenAI-generated hotel recommendation in making a hotel decision, rather than to general trust in artificial intelligence. This distinction matters because consumers may hold mixed attitudes toward AI as a technology while still considering a particular recommendation sufficiently dependable to use.

Two recommendation-level characteristics are expected to shape this trust: credibility and relevance. Recommendation credibility refers to the extent to which the focal recommendation is perceived as believable, convincing, and trustworthy. Recommendation relevance concerns how closely the recommendation matches the traveler's needs, preferences, constraints, and trip requirements. Although related, these characteristics represent different judgments. A recommendation may appear credible but provide a poor match for the traveler, whereas a highly personalized suggestion may still generate doubt if the information supporting it appears unreliable.

Research on AI-assisted travel decisions shows that trust develops from the cues users evaluate during the recommendation process. Shi *et al.* (2021) [30] found that both systematic and heuristic cues contribute to trust formation in AI-based travel recommendation systems, with trust subsequently influencing adoption intention. Research on ChatGPT-based travel services similarly indicates that consumers form trust from their perceptions of the system and the interaction rather than simply from the presence of advanced technology (Pham *et al.*, 2024) [26]. These findings support the broader view that trust emerges from how consumers evaluate the quality and usefulness of the information presented to them.

Affordance - actualization reasoning further helps explain why credibility and relevance should matter in this process. Affordances describe the possibilities for action that emerge from the relationship between a technology and a user's goals (Markus & Silver, 2008; Strong *et al.*, 2014) [22, 31]. In GenAI-assisted hotel choice, a recommendation becomes more useful for decision-making when consumers perceive that it can meaningfully support their hotel-selection goal. Credibility provides a basis for treating the information as dependable, whereas relevance indicates that the recommendation addresses the user's specific decision requirements. In personalized ChatGPT travel recommendations, Ali *et al.* (2023) [1] applied this logic and found that both recommendation credibility and relevance positively influenced travelers' perceived trust.

Credibility is particularly important because hotel choices are typically made before direct service experience. Consumers cannot independently evaluate many aspects of the hotel at the time of the decision and must therefore rely on available information. When a GenAI-generated recommendation appears believable and convincing, uncertainty surrounding the suggested option is reduced and users have stronger grounds for relying on it.

H2: The credibility of a GenAI-generated hotel recommendation has a positive effect on trust in GenAI recommendations.

Relevance contributes to trust through the perceived fit between a recommendation and the traveler's decision needs. Users often come to GenAI with specific requirements: price, location, trip purpose, facilities, travel

companions, or other preferences. When a hotel recommendation reflects these requirements, users are more likely to feel that the system has understood what matters to them and has not simply produced a generic suggestion. That fit makes the recommendation more useful for the decision at hand, and it gives users a stronger basis for relying on it. Ali *et al.* (2023) [1] provide empirical support for the role of relevance in building trust toward personalized ChatGPT travel recommendations.

H3: The relevance of a GenAI-generated hotel recommendation has a positive effect on trust in GenAI recommendations.

2.4 Inspiration, trust, and recommendation acceptance

Inspiration and trust offer two different reasons for accepting a GenAI-generated hotel recommendation. Inspiration is motivational: it makes an option feel worth pursuing. Trust is evaluative: it gives consumers confidence that the recommendation is dependable enough to rely on. A traveler may therefore accept a recommendation because it presents an appealing possibility, because it appears trustworthy, or because both responses occur together.

Inspiration can turn a hotel recommendation from information into something the traveler wants to explore. A GenAI suggestion may help users picture a future stay, discover an option they had not previously considered, or see how a particular hotel could fit their travel plans. Customer inspiration theory describes this shift from an externally triggered idea to motivation to pursue a consumption-related goal (Böttger *et al.*, 2017) [4]. In tourism research, inspiration has been associated with later engagement and behavioral responses (He *et al.*, 2023) [16]. Wang *et al.* (2026) [33] showed that inspiration can mediate the influence of ChatGPT-generated information on travel-planning behavior. More directly, Huang *et al.* (2025) [17] found that inspiration played an important role in consumers' acceptance of GenAI-generated hotel recommendations. When a recommendation helps travelers imagine an appealing possibility and motivates them to pursue it, they should be more willing to consider that recommendation in their hotel decision.

H4: GenAI-evoked inspiration has a positive effect on GenAI recommendation acceptance intention.

Trust matters for a different reason. Following a GenAI recommendation means relying, at least partly, on judgments produced by a system whose underlying process the user may not fully observe. This creates a practical problem. Even an attractive recommendation may be difficult to act on if the user doubts its reliability. Trust reduces this hesitation by giving consumers greater confidence that the recommendation can reasonably be used in making a hotel choice.

Previous research supports this role. Shi *et al.* (2021) [30] linked trust to travelers' adoption intentions toward AI-based recommendation systems. Della Corte *et al.* (2023) [8] showed that trust contributes to attitudes and behavioral responses toward AI-enabled technologies in hospitality. In GenAI-assisted travel planning, cognitive and affective trust can encourage continued reliance on GenAI for travel decisions (Foroughi *et al.*, 2026) [11]. Although these studies examine different outcomes, they point to a common pattern: consumers are more willing to rely on AI-generated advice when they regard it as dependable. A traveler who trusts a GenAI-generated hotel recommendation should

therefore be more willing to incorporate it into the final hotel decision.

H5: Trust in GenAI recommendations has a positive effect on GenAI recommendation acceptance intention.

2.5 GenAI anthropomorphism and recommendation acceptance

Anthropomorphism may affect recommendation acceptance not only through inspiration but also directly. Human-like communication gives users social cues normally associated with interpersonal interaction. Research on social responses to computers shows that people apply familiar social expectations and behaviors even when the other party is a technological agent (Nass & Moon, 2000) ^[24]. In a GenAI setting, conversational language, responsiveness, and apparent understanding of the user can make the interaction feel more natural and the recommendation easier to approach.

This social quality can matter even when a recommendation does not strongly inspire the traveler. A user may still be willing to consider a hotel suggestion simply because the system communicates in a way that feels responsive and understandable. Anthropomorphism can thus contribute to acceptance through a route that inspiration does not fully explain.

Empirical research supports this possibility. Youn & Cho (2023) ^[34] found that anthropomorphic cues in AI chatbots influenced consumers' attitudes, intentions to use the chatbot, and intentions to accept its recommendations, with particularly positive responses in a hedonic consumption context. More directly, Huang *et al.* (2025) ^[17] found that GenAI anthropomorphism positively influenced hotel recommendation acceptance while also operating through inspiration. Their findings suggest that inspiration does not fully account for the influence of anthropomorphic GenAI on acceptance. The present framework therefore keeps a direct path alongside the motivational pathway through inspiration.

H6: GenAI anthropomorphism has a positive effect on GenAI recommendation acceptance intention.

2.6 Recommendation acceptance and hotel brand advocacy intention

Recommendation acceptance may not be the final response to a GenAI-generated hotel suggestion. Once consumers become willing to accept or seriously consider a specific hotel recommendation, that willingness may also influence how they respond to the recommended hotel brand. In this sense, the effect of GenAI can extend beyond acceptance of the recommendation itself and carry over to a later, brand-directed response.

Recommendation acceptance represents a consumer's willingness to accept, follow, or seriously consider the hotel suggested by GenAI. Hotel brand advocacy reflects a stronger brand-directed response, expressed through intentions to recommend the hotel, speak positively about it, or encourage others to consider it (Sweeney *et al.*, 2020) ^[32]. Although the two constructs capture different responses, they are linked by the consumer's orientation toward the same recommended hotel.

The commitment - consistency perspective suggests that people tend to maintain responses that are consistent with an earlier position or choice (Cialdini *et al.*, 1995) ^[6]. Once consumers become willing to accept a recommendation for a

particular hotel, they have already formed a favorable orientation toward that option. Because the subsequent advocacy response concerns the same hotel brand, maintaining this positive position through supportive communication is consistent with the consumer's earlier evaluation. Evidence from field research also shows that an initial commitment can encourage subsequent behavior that is aligned with that commitment (Baca-Motes *et al.*, 2013) ^[3].

This logic is relevant in AI-mediated hospitality decisions because GenAI increasingly introduces consumers to specific hotel brands before direct interaction with the property. A recommendation that is accepted may therefore shape not only the consumer's response to the AI-generated suggestion but also the way the recommended brand is evaluated. Research in hospitality has identified brand advocacy as an important positive response toward hotel and tourism brands (Rather *et al.*, 2022) ^[28], while studies of AI-enabled customer experiences show that technology-related evaluations can extend into brand relationships and advocacy-related outcomes (Nguyen *et al.*, 2022) ^[25]. Khairy *et al.* (2025) ^[18] further demonstrate that AI-related service experiences can contribute to hotel brand advocacy through consumer responses to technology-enabled service.

It therefore remains unclear whether consumers who are more willing to accept a GenAI-generated hotel recommendation are also more inclined to advocate for the recommended hotel brand. The framework examines that relationship directly.

H7: GenAI recommendation acceptance intention has a positive effect on hotel brand advocacy intention.

2.7 The moderating role of lack-of-transparency anxiety

Human-like interaction does not necessarily make the recommendation process transparent. Consumers may still be uncertain about which information was used, why a particular hotel was selected, or how the recommendation can be verified. These concerns are especially relevant to GenAI because users often observe the generated output without fully understanding the process behind it.

Li & Huang (2020) ^[20] identify lack-of-transparency anxiety as a dimension of AI anxiety arising from uncertainty about how AI systems operate and make decisions. Rachman (1977) ^[27] suggests that anxiety can develop not only through direct negative experiences but also through observation and information about potential threats.

Users may become uneasy about opaque recommendation processes in a GenAI setting, even if they have never experienced a serious AI failure. Transparency matters for acceptance as well. When the source of a hotel recommendation is made clear, travelers are more willing to adopt it because it appears more authentic and less manipulative (Bu *et al.*, 2027) ^[5]. Worries about trust, reliability, inaccurate information, and opaque recommendation logic also hold travelers back from using GenAI for trip planning (Seyfi *et al.*, 2025) ^[29]. Human-like interaction alone may therefore not be enough. If users remain anxious about how the system reaches its recommendations, the benefits of anthropomorphic communication may weaken.

Such anxiety may be particularly important for the inspirational value of anthropomorphism. Human-like communication normally makes GenAI interaction engaging and may encourage users to imagine new possibilities.

When lack-of-transparency anxiety is high, however, attention may shift from the possibilities presented by the recommendation to concerns about how the recommendation was generated and whether it can be verified.

Huang *et al.* (2025) ^[17] provide direct evidence for this boundary condition. Their hotel recommendation study found that lack-of-transparency anxiety weakened the positive relationship between GenAI anthropomorphism and inspiration, whereas its moderation of the direct anthropomorphism - acceptance relationship was not supported. This supports positioning the anxiety specifically on the anthropomorphism - inspiration pathway.

H8: Lack-of-transparency anxiety negatively moderates the relationship between GenAI anthropomorphism and GenAI-evoked inspiration, such that the positive effect of anthropomorphism on inspiration becomes weaker at higher levels of lack-of-transparency anxiety.

3. Proposed research framework

Fig 1 brings the eight hypotheses together. The model begins with three characteristics of the GenAI interaction: anthropomorphism, recommendation credibility, and recommendation relevance. They are expected to work in different ways. Human-like interaction is mainly associated with inspiration, because it can make a hotel suggestion more engaging and easier to imagine as a possible trip. Credibility and relevance matter more for trust, because they help users judge whether a recommendation is believable and suited to their actual travel needs.

Inspiration and trust then give travelers two different reasons to accept a hotel recommendation. A traveler may be drawn to a suggestion because it creates an appealing possibility, because it seems dependable enough to rely on, or because both happen together. The model also allows anthropomorphism to affect acceptance directly. This path is kept because human-like communication may make users more willing to consider a recommendation even when inspiration does not fully explain it.

The process does not end with acceptance. Once consumers are willing to accept a particular hotel recommendation, their response may carry over to the hotel brand named in it. Hotel brand advocacy intention is placed after acceptance to capture this later, brand-directed response.

Lack-of-transparency anxiety plays a different role. The framework does not treat it as another predictor of inspiration or acceptance. It asks whether anxiety changes the effect of anthropomorphism on inspiration. Human-like communication may encourage travelers to imagine and explore a recommended hotel, but that effect may weaken when they are uneasy about how the system reached its suggestion. The same anthropomorphic interaction may therefore produce different levels of inspiration, depending on users' concerns about the opacity of the recommendation process.

These relationships also create several indirect paths. Anthropomorphism may contribute to acceptance through inspiration, while credibility and relevance may do so through trust. Their effects may extend further to hotel brand advocacy through acceptance. The empirical analysis will examine these indirect paths as part of the proposed model, without adding hypotheses beyond H1 - H8.

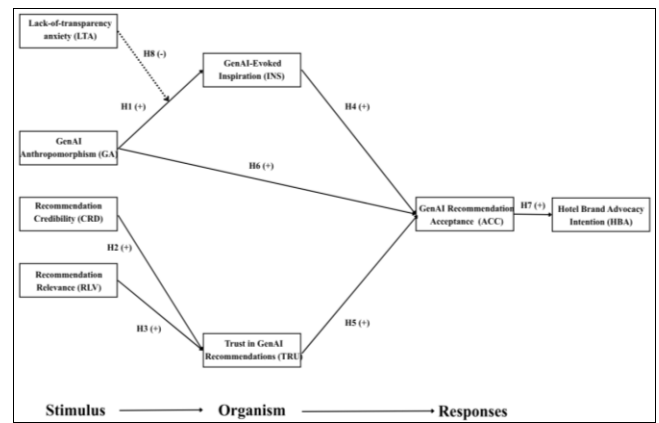


Fig 1: Proposed research framework

4. Pathway for empirical validation

The proposed framework can be tested through a quantitative survey of consumers who have actually used GenAI to search for, compare, or evaluate hotel options. Respondents should first pass a screening question confirming prior use of tools such as ChatGPT, Gemini, or similar GenAI applications for travel or hotel-related information. The constructs can then be measured with established multi-item scales adapted from prior research, with the wording adjusted to the GenAI hotel recommendation context. Adapting established measures this way keeps the scales grounded in validated work while making the items relevant to a specific setting (Hair, 2021) ^[14].

PLS-SEM suits this framework because the model contains multiple latent constructs, indirect relationships, and a moderating effect. It assesses the measurement model and the structural relationships in the same analysis, and it is widely used for complex predictive models involving mediation and moderation (Hair, 2021; Nguyen *et al.*, 2022) ^[14, 25]. Bootstrapping can then test the significance of the hypothesized paths, the indirect effects, and the interaction between GenAI anthropomorphism and lack-of-transparency anxiety.

Vietnam is a sensible place for this first test. The e-Conomy SEA 2025 report shows that Vietnamese users rank among the most active AI users in Southeast Asia: around 81% of surveyed users interact with AI tools or features every day, and nearly 60% report having conversations with AI chatbots (Google *et al.*, 2025) ^[13]. The same report puts Vietnam's online travel market at approximately US\$4 billion in 2025, which suggests that digital channels already play a substantial role in travel decisions (Google *et al.*, 2025) ^[13]. Together, these figures make Vietnam a useful setting for studying how GenAI-generated hotel recommendations enter consumers' travel decisions.

Before the main survey, the adapted measures should be reviewed and pilot-tested so that the items are clear and appropriate for the hotel recommendation context. The full analysis can then assess the reliability and validity of the measurement model before testing H1 - H8, the moderating effect of lack-of-transparency anxiety, and the indirect effects (Hair Jr *et al.*, 2021) ^[15]. Later studies could repeat the model across countries, GenAI platforms, and hotel categories to see whether the relationships hold in different contexts.

4.1 Research context and sampling

The target population is adults aged 18 or older who have used a GenAI tool such as ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot, or Claude to look for travel or hotel information and have received at least one recommendation for a specific hotel or hotel brand. This condition keeps the focus on an actual recommendation experience rather than on general attitudes toward AI.

Eligible respondents will be asked to recall one GenAI interaction and one hotel recommended during that interaction. The same recommendation and hotel brand will then anchor the whole questionnaire. Credibility, relevance, trust, recommendation acceptance, and brand advocacy will therefore all be evaluated with reference to the same hotel recommendation.

No complete sampling frame exists for consumers who have used GenAI specifically to obtain hotel recommendations. For this initial validation, the study will therefore use non-probability online sampling. The study will aim for at least 300 usable responses to support the testing of the proposed structural relationships and the moderating effect of lack-of-transparency anxiety. The adequacy of this target will be checked through a formal sample-size analysis before data collection begins.

4.2 Measurement development

The study will measure eight constructs: GenAI anthropomorphism, recommendation credibility, recommendation relevance, GenAI-evoked inspiration, trust in GenAI recommendations, lack-of-transparency anxiety, recommendation acceptance intention, and hotel brand advocacy intention. Rather than developing new measures, the questionnaire will adapt established scales to the setting of a specific hotel recommendation generated by GenAI.

Anthropomorphism items will be adapted from Huang *et al.* (2025) [17]. Credibility, relevance, and trust will draw on Ali *et al.* (2023) [1], while the inspiration scale will be adapted from Liang *et al.* (2024) [21]. Measures for lack-of-transparency anxiety and recommendation acceptance will be based on Huang *et al.* (2025) [17] and Li and Huang (2020) [20]. Hotel brand advocacy intention will be measured using items adapted from Rather *et al.* (2022) [28]. In total, the questionnaire contains 28 items rated on a seven-point Likert scale.

The main survey targets Vietnamese respondents, so the original English items will be translated into Vietnamese and independently back-translated to check that the intended meaning is preserved. A small pilot study will then be conducted before the main data collection. It will help identify wording that is unclear, difficult to interpret, or inconsistent with the GenAI hotel recommendation context, while also showing whether the questionnaire flows smoothly.

One design issue requires particular care. Respondents will answer the questionnaire with one specific GenAI-recommended hotel in mind, and the same hotel will remain the reference point across the relevant measures. This matters most for recommendation acceptance and hotel brand advocacy intention. Acceptance concerns whether respondents are willing to accept the recommendation, whereas advocacy concerns how they intend to respond to the hotel brand named in it. Because respondents are not required to have stayed at the hotel, the advocacy items will be phrased as prospective intentions and will avoid wording

that assumes prior consumption or direct service experience.

4.3 Empirical assessment of the framework

The proposed relationships can be tested with partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). The analysis should start with the measurement model, checking reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Only when these are acceptable should the structural relationships be evaluated.

The seven direct relationships specified in H1 - H7 will be examined through their corresponding structural paths. The moderating effect proposed in H8 will be assessed through the interaction between GenAI anthropomorphism and lack-of-transparency anxiety in predicting GenAI-evoked inspiration.

The framework also implies several indirect pathways. GenAI anthropomorphism may influence recommendation acceptance through inspiration, whereas recommendation credibility and relevance may influence acceptance through trust. These processes may extend further to hotel brand advocacy through recommendation acceptance. Testing these specific indirect effects can help evaluate whether the data are consistent with the broader psychological process proposed in the framework.

Because the initial validation is expected to rely on cross-sectional self-report data, any indirect relationships should be interpreted cautiously. Statistical mediation would provide evidence consistent with the proposed process, but stronger claims about temporal or causal mechanisms will require longitudinal or experimental designs.

5. Theoretical contributions

The proposed framework offers three distinct theoretical contributions to research on GenAI-assisted consumer decision-making in hospitality.

First, this study contributes by placing trust and inspiration in the same explanation of GenAI recommendation acceptance. Earlier work shows that both matter in AI-assisted travel decisions, but they address different questions. Research on trust asks whether consumers see AI-generated information as credible, relevant, and dependable enough to rely on (Ali *et al.*, 2023; Shi *et al.*, 2021) [1, 30]. Work on inspiration asks whether the interaction helps consumers discover an appealing possibility and motivates them to pursue it (Huang *et al.*, 2025; Wang *et al.*, 2026) [17, 33].

The two responses do not always move together. A traveler may trust a hotel recommendation because it appears accurate and relevant, yet feel little motivation to explore the hotel further. Another recommendation may spark interest and make a future stay easy to imagine, while still leaving the traveler unsure whether the information can be trusted. In the proposed S-O-R framework, trust is the evaluative route to acceptance and inspiration is the motivational route. Acceptance can follow from either one, or from both working together. Looking at the two side by side gives a fuller account of why consumers accept GenAI-generated hotel recommendations.

Second, the framework extends GenAI research from recommendation-level responses to a brand-level outcome. Much of the existing literature examines whether consumers trust GenAI, continue using it, adopt its recommendations, or communicate positively about the technology itself (Ali *et al.*, 2023; Fakfare *et al.*, 2025; Huang *et al.*, 2025) [1, 10, 17].

These outcomes explain consumers' relationships with the technology or its output, but they do not fully capture the consequences for the hospitality brand being recommended. The proposed framework introduces hotel brand advocacy intention as a downstream response to recommendation acceptance. This extension is important because GenAI increasingly operates as an intermediary through which consumers encounter and evaluate hotel brands. The framework therefore connects two levels of consumer response that have usually been treated separately: acceptance of an AI-generated recommendation and subsequent orientation toward the brand contained in that recommendation. By proposing recommendation acceptance as the link between these levels, the framework provides a theoretical basis for examining how an AI-mediated decision process may extend into the consumer - brand relationship.

Third, the framework identifies lack-of-transparency anxiety as a boundary condition on the motivational value of GenAI anthropomorphism. Anthropomorphism is often expected to improve consumer responses by making AI interaction more natural and socially engaging. The proposed framework does not assume that this effect is equally strong for all users. Building on AI-anxiety research and evidence from GenAI hotel recommendations (Huang *et al.*, 2025; J. Li & Huang, 2020) [17, 20], it positions lack-of-transparency anxiety specifically on the anthropomorphism - inspiration relationship. This placement distinguishes the social appeal of the interaction from users' uncertainty about how the recommendation was generated. A GenAI system may appear highly human-like while remaining difficult to understand or verify. Under such conditions, transparency-related anxiety may restrict the extent to which anthropomorphic cues are converted into inspiration. The contribution therefore lies not in treating anxiety as a general negative attitude toward AI, but in identifying where in the proposed psychological process its constraining role is theoretically expected to occur.

The first integrates two psychological mechanisms, the second extends the consequences of GenAI recommendations from the recommendation itself to the recommended brand, and the third specifies a condition under which one of the proposed mechanisms becomes weaker. Together, they shift the theoretical question from whether GenAI affects consumer decisions to how different GenAI-related cues activate distinct psychological routes, how those routes extend into brand-level responses, and when part of that process may be constrained.

6. Managerial relevance

Although the proposed relationships require empirical validation, the framework identifies several issues relevant to hotel managers and GenAI service providers. One is that an effective recommendation may require more than persuasive conversational design. Anthropomorphic communication may support engagement and inspiration, but recommendation quality remains important for trust. Systems that generate hotel suggestions should therefore provide information that fits the traveler's stated needs and is credible enough to support a decision. A recommendation is more useful when travelers can see why a particular hotel matches what they asked for, instead of receiving a generic list of properties.

Hotels also need to pay attention to how their brands appear in AI-generated recommendations. As GenAI increasingly acts as an intermediary between travelers and accommodation providers, some travelers may meet a hotel through an AI recommendation before they visit its website or contact the property. Accurate descriptions, clear positioning, consistent hotel information, and verifiable digital content can affect how well the brand is represented. This matters especially for smaller or domestic hotels in Vietnam. A hotel may promote a newly renovated room type or an airport-transfer service on its own website while older information stays on booking platforms or map listings. If GenAI draws on inconsistent sources, the recommendation may describe the hotel inaccurately or miss an important feature. The risk falls when room types, facilities, location details, policies, and service descriptions are kept consistent across the hotel's website, online travel agencies, and map platforms.

Transparency also deserves attention. Recent evidence suggests that identifiable and verifiable source information can strengthen the adoption of GenAI-generated hotel recommendations. Systems could make recommendations easier to evaluate by showing where key information comes from, explaining why a hotel matches the traveler's stated preferences, and distinguishing verified facts from the system's own interpretation. These features may help most for travelers who feel uneasy about opaque AI processes.

Finally, hotels and platforms should not evaluate GenAI-enabled recommendation services only through interaction metrics or recommendation clicks. If the framework is supported empirically, what happens after acceptance deserves attention too. Hotel brands may want to examine whether AI-generated recommendations influence brand consideration, willingness to advocate for the property, and other brand-level responses beyond the immediate interaction with the technology.

7. Limitations and future research

The framework is conceptual, so every proposed relationship still requires empirical validation. The survey outlined for Vietnam offers a first test, but its design has several limits. A non-probability online sample makes it hard to generalize to all travelers who use GenAI. The study would also rely on self-reported measures collected from the same respondents at one point in time, which may introduce common method bias. Asking participants to recall a past GenAI interaction means some details of the recommendation may be remembered imperfectly. Results from the initial validation should be read with these limits in mind.

The cross-sectional design adds a further constraint. It can show whether recommendation acceptance and hotel brand advocacy are associated, but it cannot establish that one develops after the other. Longitudinal research could follow consumers from the moment they receive a GenAI-generated hotel recommendation through later consideration, booking, and post-stay responses. That would separate advocacy that already exists at the recommendation stage from advocacy that develops after an actual hotel experience. Experiments could test causality in a different way by manipulating anthropomorphic cues, credibility, relevance, or transparency while keeping other information constant.

The framework is also selective by design. It focuses on anthropomorphism, credibility, relevance, inspiration, trust, and lack-of-transparency anxiety because these variables carry the psychological routes at the center of the proposed explanation. Perceived risk, brand familiarity, prior experience with the hotel, and general attitudes toward AI are left out of the core model. This keeps the framework manageable, but recommendation acceptance may be shaped by influences the model does not capture. Future studies could add these factors as predictors, controls, or boundary conditions.

The empirical setting limits generalizability too. Consumers in Vietnam may use GenAI within a different digital travel environment from travelers in Singapore or Thailand, where platform use, familiarity with international hotel brands, and travel-planning habits may differ. A GenAI recommendation could therefore carry different weight in each market. Testing the framework across countries, hotel categories, trip purposes, and GenAI platforms would show which relationships hold and which depend on context. The initial study may also include users of several tools, such as ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot, and Claude, without examining whether platform-specific differences affect their responses. Finally, the proposed study relies mainly on intentions, not observed behavior. Saying that a recommendation will be accepted or that a hotel brand will be supported does not necessarily mean the traveler will act on it. Later research could examine whether users save the recommended hotel, visit its website, add it to a shortlist, complete a booking, share the recommendation, or advocate for the hotel after a stay. Observing these behaviors would show more directly how far the influence of GenAI reaches beyond the recommendation itself.

8. Conclusion

This paper develops a framework for understanding how GenAI-generated hotel recommendations may influence consumers beyond the immediate interaction with the technology. At the recommendation level, it brings together two psychological processes. GenAI-evoked inspiration is the motivational side of the decision, and trust in GenAI recommendations is the evaluative side. Both are expected to shape recommendation acceptance, although for different reasons.

The framework then asks what happens after a traveler becomes willing to accept a recommended hotel. Instead of treating acceptance as the end of the process, it links acceptance to hotel brand advocacy intention. GenAI does not only affect how travelers respond to an AI system. By selecting and presenting particular hotels, it may also shape the early relationship between a traveler and the recommended brand.

Human-like interaction is not assumed to work equally well everywhere. Anthropomorphic communication may stimulate inspiration, but that effect may weaken when users feel anxious about how opaque the recommendation process is. Lack-of-transparency anxiety thus marks a boundary to the benefits of human-like GenAI interaction.

The eight hypotheses give future studies a clear set of relationships to test. Hospitality brands may increasingly be encountered through AI-generated recommendations before travelers reach the hotel's own digital channels, and for smaller or less familiar hotels, the accuracy and consistency of the information available to GenAI matters even more.

The broader question is not only whether travelers use or accept GenAI recommendations. It is also how GenAI may influence which hotel brands enter consideration, and what consumers then intend to do about them.

9. References

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