

1 **The Effectiveness of Tryvertising in Hotels**

2

3 **Abstract**

4 Advertising has been a common practice to promote products and services in the
5 tourism and hospitality industry. Although ample research has investigated customers'
6 perceptions of and reactions to advertising visuals, direct experience advertising strategies,
7 such as tryvertising have been ignored. As an emerging direct experience approach,
8 tryvertising has been increasingly used in tourism and hospitality businesses especially in
9 hotels. This study explores the effectiveness of tryvertising practices on customer purchase
10 behaviors in hotel settings. Two real data sets that combine 6,858 records of customers' hotel
11 stays and guestroom products purchase transactions were obtained from a hotel management
12 company that uses tryvertising strategies in China. The results from a Heckit model analysis
13 determine the potential factors that affect hotel guests' likelihood to buy and the amount of
14 money spent on products promoted through tryvertising. This study fills this void in the
15 current literature that focuses on traditional mass advertisements and behavioral intentions
16 rather than actual purchase behaviors. It contributes to the literature with empirical evidence
17 of the impact of tryvertising strategies on consumer behaviors in a hotel context. Managerial
18 implications are suggested for practitioners to customize their tryvertising strategies.

19 **Keywords:** Tryvertising, direct experience, hotel, purchase decision, spending behavior

20

21 **1. Introduction**

22 Driving sales and profits has been an issue of utmost interest to businesses. Among the
23 various tactics that have been used to stimulate purchases, advertising is one of the most
24 widely adopted. Over the past two decades, the forms of advertising have dramatically
25 evolved from traditional mass media to online and social media (Dahlen & Rosengren, 2016).
26 Despite this wide adoption, measuring the effectiveness of advertising that varies across
27 contexts has been challenging, and such measurement depends on a number of factors.
28 Additionally, with advancements in information technology, issues such as excessive Internet
29 use, information overload, and declining consumer trust on branded commercials have raised
30 further criticism regarding the effectiveness of advertising (Drèze & Hussherr, 2003). Facing
31 high pressure to cut advertising expenses, marketers continue to seek ways to connect
32 advertising strategies and firm performance (Lehmann & Reibstein, 2006).

33 The biggest challenge for traditional advertising is to deliver messages that can
34 successfully gain consumers' attention and trust. Consumers may choose to avoid or ignore
35 advertisements that are interruptive and non-relevant to them (e.g., Benway, 1999; Cho &
36 Cheon, 2004; Drèze & Hussherr, 2003; Goldstein, Suri, McAfee, Ekstrand-Abueg, & Diaz,
37 2014; Zanut, 1984). One way to overcome such weakness is direct experience advertising
38 strategies that allow consumers to experience the actual product or service to facilitate
39 purchases. An emerging direct experience strategy is "tryvertising," which makes "consumers
40 familiar with new products by actually trying them out" (Trendwatching, 2005, p. 1). Unlike
41 a free sample or a product trial, tryvertising is a form of product placement. Giving out free
42 samples or inviting random consumers for free trials cannot guarantee that the right audience
43 is targeted at the right time and at the right spot. However, the idea of tryvertising is to
44 integrate products or services into the target audience's daily lives in a relevant way that
45 makes them feel that trying such products is natural (Trendwatching, 2005).

46 The concept of tryvertising is not new in the travel industry. In particular, tryvertising
47 practices have been in use in hotels for more than a decade. For example, Ritz-Carlton guests
48 were once offered to test drive a CLS500 Mercedes-Benz with unlimited mileage during their
49 stays (Trendwatching, 2005). IKEA has partnered with hotels to furnish guestrooms with
50 IKEA products (Trendwatching, 2005). United Airlines offers Westin’s products, such as
51 guestroom amenities, pillows, and blankets during select flights (Trendwatching, 2008).
52 MUJI Hotel guests can buy nearly all products on display in guestrooms (Demetriou, 2018).
53 Furthermore, in recent years, international hotel chains such as Fairmont, Marriott, and Hilton
54 have launched online stores that sell their own supplies, from beds and linens to bathroom
55 amenities and fragrances (Springer, 2018).

56 Although tryvertising has been recognized as a promising advertising idea, it has
57 elicited extremely limited research attention (Oberhofer, Füller, & Hofmann, 2014). Previous
58 studies in tourism and hospitality have focused on individuals’ perception of and reactions to
59 traditional advertising practices, such as mass media and online advertising. Furthermore,
60 previous studies generally measured advertising effectiveness using consumers’ behavioral
61 intentions rather than actual behaviors. This study aims to fill these gaps by exploring
62 tryvertising practices in hotels. It investigates what factors affect the effectiveness of
63 tryvertising using real data sets of hotel guests’ actual purchase behaviors. **As tryvertising is a**
64 **relatively new topic, the nature of this study is experimental, and the purpose is to investigate**
65 **what relationships might be meaningful.** This study contributes to research in advertising and
66 purchase behavior in the tourism and hospitality literature. **It serves as a springboard upon**
67 **which future research could be built.** Managerial implications are suggested for practitioners
68 to target customers and facilitate sales.

69

70 **2. Literature Review**

71 *2.1 Previous studies in advertising effectiveness*

72 Advertising has been the main marketing tool for tourism and hospitality businesses.
73 Research on hotel advertising started in the early 1990s. Initially, scholars were generally
74 interested in advertisement design and distribution channels (e.g., Lewis, 1990; Lubetkin,
75 1999). The research context then quickly shifted to online as the Internet era began. Since
76 then, numerous studies have been conducted to evaluate hotel websites (e.g., Chung & Law,
77 2003; Ip, Law, & Lee, 2012; L. Li, Peng, Jiang, & Law, 2017; Musante, Bojanic, & Zhang,
78 2009; Schmidt, Cantalops, & dos Santos, 2008; L. Wang, Law, Guillet, Hung, & Fong,
79 2015). Stimuli, such as website content, features, and functions, were normally evaluated
80 using the degree of individuals' favorable perceptions. Behavioral intentions, such as website
81 revisit intention and purchase intention, were normally used to measure advertising
82 effectiveness (Ip, Law, & Lee, 2011; Law, Qi, & Buhalis, 2010). The fast-changing
83 environment has gradually directed businesses to establish their social media presence. A
84 series of studies has been initiated to measure branded content effectiveness on social
85 network sites (e.g., Chan & Guillet, 2011; Kwok & Yu, 2013; Lei, Pratt, & Wang, 2017;
86 Minazzi & Lagrosen, 2013; Phelan, Chen, & Haney, 2013). Online customer engagement,
87 manifested by the number of "likes," "comments," and "shares," is often used as performance
88 metrics that reflect branded content effectiveness. Search engines are another popular online
89 advertising tool. Scholars have generally investigated how search engine data can be used to
90 expose products (e.g., Paraskevas, Katsogridakis, Law, & Buhalis, 2011) and forecast
91 demand (e.g., Pan, Chenguang Wu, & Song, 2012; Yang, Pan, Evans, & Lv, 2015).

92 Measuring advertising effectiveness using consumer perception of stimuli is a
93 common practice not only in hospitality but also in tourism research. Given that tourism
94 advertisements tend to use photographic images, most researchers have been interested in

95 understanding tourists' perception of and reaction to advertisement formats and designs (e.g.,
96 picture, logo, and text) (Dann, 1996; Decrop, 2007; Dewar, Li, & Davis, 2007; MacKay &
97 Fesenmaier, 1997; Olsen, Alexander, & Roberts, 1986). Similar to advertising research in the
98 hospitality literature, effectiveness is often measured by the extent to which an advertisement
99 can affect consumers' perception and behavioral intention, such as perceived destination
100 image and intention to visit a destination. For example, traditional approaches to assessing
101 tourism advertising effectiveness, such as conversion analysis (Burke & Gitelson, 1990; Hunt
102 & Dalton, 1983) and experimental studies (Woodside, 1990), measure effectiveness using
103 consumer behaviors, such as number of inquiries and visit/purchase intention induced by
104 advertising. Advanced approaches, including diagnostic methods (Chang, Wall, & Lai, 2005;
105 Van der Veen & Song, 2014; K.-C. Wang, Hsieh, & Chen, 2002), eye-tracking (N. Scott,
106 Green, & Fairley, 2016; Wedel & Pieters, 2008), and psychophysiological methods such as
107 skin conductance and facial electromyography methods, have also been used to analyze
108 audience's reactions to advertising (S. Li, Walters, Packer, & Scott, 2018). Except for a
109 relatively small portion of studies that investigated actual visits and visitor expenditure (e.g.,
110 Kulendran & Dwyer, 2009; Wöber & Fesenmaier, 2004), the majority of previous advertising
111 research relies on self-reported data and consumer perception of or reaction to advertising
112 stimuli to evaluate advertising effectiveness. Studies that examine the effect of advertising
113 strategies on actual purchase and spending behaviors are rare.

114 *2.2 Behavioral influence or direct experience strategies*

115 Compared with persuasive strategies (i.e., traditional mass advertising), behavioral
116 influence or direct experience strategies may induce stronger effects and affect consumer
117 behaviors more directly (Fazio & Zanna, 1981; Miller, Brickman, & Bolen, 1975). Direct
118 experiences allow consumers to interact directly with an object and obtain hands-on
119 experiences (Fazio & Zanna, 1981; Hamilton & Thompson, 2007; Mooy & Robben, 2002).

120 Such direct experience eliminates the potential noise or distortion in indirect experiences
121 (Hamilton & Thompson, 2007) which involve mediums, such as printed content and third
122 parties (Fazio & Zanna, 1981). Hence, direct behavioral experiences generate more concrete
123 and credible information than indirect experiences do, allowing consumers to evaluate a
124 product or service more confidently (Hamilton & Thompson, 2007; Smith & Swinyard, 1983).

125 Direct experiences produce stronger and more accessible memories in an individual's
126 information base (Smith & Swinyard, 1983) compared with indirect ones. When consumers
127 perceive the information they understand about a product or service as rich and credible, their
128 attitudes are reinforced. As consumers become confident about their decision making, their
129 future behaviors are likely to be influenced (Fazio & Zanna, 1981; Hamilton & Thompson,
130 2007). For example, researchers found that when individuals were exposed to product trials
131 rather than advertising, they became confident that their attitudes or beliefs were accurate.
132 When this happened, consumer attitudes better predicted actual purchase (Smith & Swinyard,
133 1983). In other words, consumer attitudes based on direct experience may better predict
134 actual purchase behavior. Despite the promising potential of direct experience strategies, a
135 review of the tourism and hospitality literature indicates a lack of research on this topic.

136 *2.3 Tryvertising*

137 Tryvertising is a promising advertising strategy when consumers' trust in mass
138 advertising has declined (Trendwatching, 2005, 2007, 2008). Tryvertising is an experience-
139 based, interactive advertising approach (Trendwatching, 2005). It is a new form of product
140 placement that aims to introduce and integrate products into consumers' everyday life in a
141 relevant way. The purpose is to create a stress-free environment for consumers to evaluate the
142 product/service but not the advertising messages (Trendwatching, 2005, 2008). Normally, a
143 manufacturer or product/service provider (e.g., IKEA) cooperates with organizations (e.g.,
144 hotels) that can provide environments where "voluntarily captive audiences" can be found.

145 Places such as waiting areas, offices, hotels, and airlines have been suggested as locations
146 where people are likely to try new products. The goal is not simply to make a new product
147 available, but also to associate meaningful memories with the consumption experience
148 (Trendwatching, 2007). When the strategy works, the result is a win–win situation: a
149 manufacturer or product/service provider successfully captures its target audience, and its
150 partner company that provides the space receives free products to use (The Guardian, 2007).
151 Tryvertising is expected to induce sales conversion rate, repeated purchases, and word-of-
152 mouth recommendations (Cuddeford Jones, 2005; Trendwatching, 2007).

153 Tryvertising helps businesses to place their products/services directly on their target
154 customers' hands while developing customer relationships. When individuals start spending
155 time interacting with a new product/service, they gradually form a new habit with the brand
156 and become comfortable with their hands-on experience (The Guardian, 2007). The idea of
157 tryvertising has also been implied by the “foot-in-the-door” marketing concept, which
158 suggests that once people are willing to take an initial small step (e.g., trying a new product),
159 augmenting the demand later becomes easy (e.g., making a purchase) because they have
160 already spent certain time and effort when complying with the previous demand (Freedman
161 & Fraser, 1966; Miller et al., 1975; Pliner, Hart, Kohl, & Saari, 1974; Scott, 1976).

162 Tryvertising also opens a new channel for consumers to share their opinions about a new
163 product/service before it is released to the market, which is more effective than traditional
164 methods, such as focus groups or free sample distribution (BizEd, 2010). Free samples and
165 product trials are particularly difficult to provide when expensive items are involved
166 (Cuddeford Jones, 2005).

167 Despite its position as an innovative marketing tool, little is known about the
168 implementation of tryvertising practices in the tourism and hospitality industry. Although
169 ample research has investigated traditional advertising effectiveness, a review of extant

170 literature reveals noticeable gaps. First, researchers tend to focus on consumer perceptions of
171 or reactions to advertisement visuals or contents, rather than direct experience strategies.
172 Second, behavioral intention rather than actual behavior was often used to measure
173 advertising effectiveness. The majority of previous studies rely on self-reported data to
174 evaluate advertising effectiveness. The findings from previous studies can hardly be applied
175 to the context of tryvertising because the mechanisms that underlie people's mental
176 processing of visuals and interactive experience is fundamentally different. In response to
177 scholars' calls for further research to explore what makes tryvertising successful across
178 different markets (Oberhofer et al., 2014), this study explores the effect of tryvertising
179 strategies on consumers' actual behaviors in a hotel context. The factors that affect hotel
180 guests' purchase and spending behaviors are explored and identified.

181 *2.4. Determinant factors of purchase and spending behaviors*

182 Numerous studies have been conducted to understand what factors affect purchase
183 behaviors. In addition to consumption volume, the importance of investigating expenditure
184 levels, particularly in the travel context, has also been emphasized (Legohérel & Wong,
185 2006). Although the factors that influence purchase and spending behaviors may vary across
186 contexts, the relevance of customer or individual characteristics has been consistently
187 recognized in general business research. Demographic variables, such as age, gender, income,
188 and education levels, have been widely acknowledged as influential to purchase and spending
189 behaviors (e.g., Akhter, 2003; Lawson, 1991; San Martín & Jiménez, 2011). For example,
190 previous research found that the elderly tend to be more careful when making purchase
191 decisions (Botwinick, 1973). In terms of gender, previous studies found male and female
192 consumers process information and made purchase decisions in different ways (e.g., female
193 buyers tend to be more sensitive to risk and need to consider more information than male
194 buyers do) (Darley & Smith, 1995; Kim, Lehto, & Morrison, 2007; Meyers-Levy &

195 Maheswaran, 1991). The two groups were also found to have different perceptions and
196 attitudes toward online shopping (e.g., Garbarino & Strahilevitz, 2004; Rodgers & Harris,
197 2003; Seock & Bailey, 2008; Van Slyke, Comunale, & Belanger, 2002). Income was found
198 as one of the most influential variables that affect tourism demand (Crouch, 1994) and
199 expenditures (Y. Wang, Rompf, Severt, & Peerapatdit, 2006). Research has found travelers
200 with high income tend to spend a large amount of money during their trips (Agarwal &
201 Yochum, 1999; Jang, Bai, Hong, & O’Leary, 2004; Mattila, 2007). Trip-related variables can
202 also affect customer purchase behaviors (Oppermann, 1996). For example, length of stay and
203 travel group size have been identified as positively related to travel expenditures (Agarwal &
204 Yochum, 1999; Jang et al., 2004; Legohérel & Wong, 2006).

205 In addition to demographic and trip-related variables, another common group of
206 variables is related to consumer trust and loyalty toward a service provider. Typically, the
207 more a customer is emotionally bonded with a firm, the better the firm–customer relationship,
208 which translates into high customer expenditure (Barsky & Nash, 2002; Leenheer, Van
209 Heerde, Bijmolt, & Smidts, 2007; Mattila, 2007). When loyalty members believe they can
210 receive high-quality service from a business, they tend to make faster purchase decisions
211 (Han & Hyun, 2012) and are willing to buy more frequently and pay a higher price than non-
212 members (Meyer-Waarden, 2008; Reichheld & Teal, 1996). Customers’ perceived service
213 quality of and satisfaction with prior experience with a product or service is also an important
214 factor. A good prior experience will positively affect customers’ post-usage beliefs and
215 satisfaction, which positively affect behavioral intentions. Satisfied customers are willing to
216 spend more and spread positive word-of-mouth feedback (Aaker, 1991; T. Wang, Oh, Wang,
217 & Yuan, 2013).

218 Although a number of factors have been identified as influential to customer purchase
219 and spending behaviors, contradictory findings from previous research suggest that the effect

220 of these factors is dependent on context. Previous studies have shown different results as
221 regards the effect of demographic variables on consumer behaviors (e.g., Lawson, 1994; San
222 Martín & Jiménez, 2011). Claims about the effect of loyalty programs on customer behaviors
223 have also been controversial (Liu, 2007). Whether satisfied customers will always return has
224 also been questionable. Customer purchase behavior is complicated and involves contextual
225 factors.

226 **3. Research Design**

227 *3.1. Methods*

228 Two data sets were obtained from an independent hotel management company that
229 owns over 100 hotel properties in China. As one of the first lifestyle hotel brands in the
230 country, one of its key features is the idea of selling guestroom products (i.e., tryvertising) via
231 online platforms. The company sells products of its own and those of business partners in its
232 hotel guestrooms. Customers are able to purchase a variety of guestroom products, from
233 mattresses and linens to bathroom supplies and electronic products. The two separate data
234 sets contain customers' hotel stay records and online store transaction histories during the
235 period between January 2016 and June 2017. Customers' mobile phone numbers in the two
236 data sets were matched to filter and identify those who had shopped in the online stores and
237 stayed in the company's hotels. Relevant variables based on previous literature were
238 extracted for later use.

239 We use a Heckit model to analyze the determinant factors that explain the purchase
240 behavior of customers that stay in hotels that implement tryvertising strategies. The model
241 allows us to examine the decision to buy and the amount of money spent, allowing us to
242 unearth intricacies that may exist in these relationships because some variables may have
243 different effects depending on the decision examined. The two equations that reflect each
244 decision are as follows:

245
$$b_i^* = \sum_{r=1}^R \gamma_r X1_{ir} + u_i \quad (1)$$

246
$$S_i = \sum_{s=1}^S \beta_s X2_{is} + \varepsilon_i \text{ observed only if } d_i^* > 0, \quad (2)$$

247 where we define a dummy variable b_i that takes a value 1 if the latent variable b_i^* is greater
 248 than zero ($b_i^* > 0$), and zero otherwise. $X1_{ir}$ shows a number r of variables that determine the
 249 decision to buy b_i , and γ_r are the coefficients associated with these variables. S_i is the amount
 250 of money spent, $X2_{is}$ is a set of s variables associated with this decision, and β_s reflects the
 251 impact of these variables. S_i is log-transformed so that semi-elasticities are obtained directly
 252 from the parameters. The error terms u_i and ε_i follow a bivariate standard normal distribution,
 253 and standard deviations σ_u and σ_ε , and covariance $\sigma_{\varepsilon u}$. Full information maximum likelihood
 254 is used to obtain the parameter estimates.

255 *3.2. Sample and variables*

256 After the data sets were combined and eligible customers were identified, irrelevant
 257 and repeated data were removed. A total of 6,858 valid records were included in the final
 258 sample. The dependent and independent variables are defined as follows (Table 1). (1)
 259 Dependent variables: the decision to buy is measured by a dummy variable that takes a value
 260 of 1 if the customer bought a product that was promoted through tryvertising and 0 otherwise.
 261 The money spent by the customer on this purchase is measured by a quantitative variable. (2)
 262 Independent variables: the variable *Stay* is measured through a dummy variable that takes a
 263 value of 1 if the individual stayed at the hotel and 0 otherwise. *Number of nights (someone*
 264 *else)* shows the number of nights someone else other than the cardholder stayed at the hotel
 265 using the card. *Number of nights (cardholder)* shows the number of nights that the cardholder
 266 stayed at the hotel. *Gender* is measured by a dummy variable where 1 indicates a female
 267 guest and 0 indicates a male guest. *Age* is measured by the quantitative age of the individual.
 268 *Membership* reflects the time (in years) the customer has been a member of the program.

269 *Hotel cost* is the amount of money an individual has spent at the hotel, including room rates
270 and food and beverage. *Online review* shows the number of online reviews the hotel has
271 received.

272 ***Please insert Table 1 here***

273 Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics for the dependent and independent variables.
274 A total of 77% of cardholders buy a product that is promoted by tryvertising and spend CNY
275 394 on average. A total of 87% of cardholders stay at hotels and spend CNY 451 on
276 accommodation and food and beverage and stay for 1.32 nights on average. A total of 51.2%
277 of the sample are women, the average age of the individuals in the sample is 33.6 years old,
278 and the average time they have been members of the program is 579 days. The customers
279 rated the hotel 4.8 times on average.

280 ***Please insert Table 2 here***

281 **4. Results**

282 Prior to estimating the model, we analyze the potential existence of collinearity.
283 Based on the variance inflation factors, all the parameters are below the recommended value
284 of 10 (Neter, Wasserman, and Kutner 1989). Thus, collinearity does not seem to be an issue.
285 Heteroskedasticity is also tested, and the Breusch–Pagan test rejects homoskedasticity
286 (F=35.04; $p < 0.01$). Thus, the White heteroscedasticity-consistent standard errors are
287 computed. Table 3 shows the parameter estimates for the two equations of buying decision
288 and quantity decision.

289 ***Please insert Table 3 here***

290 Regarding the decision to buy, the variable *Stay* is not significant. Thus, the fact that a
291 person stays at the hotel does not increase the likelihood of this customer buying a product
292 promoted by tryvertising. A person can have a membership card and buy products without

293 staying at the hotel. The price paid for the hotel shows a significant and positive parameter,
294 indicating that the more the customers spend on accommodation (more quality and/or more
295 days), they are more likely to buy products promoted through tryvertising (this variable is
296 used as the *exclusion restriction* of Heckit models; thus, it will not be included in the
297 equation of the decision on the amount spent). The number of nights the cardholders or
298 someone else stayed with the individual's card is not significant. Therefore, whether the
299 cardholder or someone else stayed at the hotel does not have any effect on the propensity to
300 buy. Gender is significant and positive, implying that women tend to buy more than men do.
301 Age is significant and positive; thus, the older the customers are, the more likely they are to
302 buy. Regarding membership, a significant and negative parameter is obtained; thus, the
303 longer the customers have had the card, the less likely they are to buy. The number of online
304 reviews has a positive and significant parameter; thus, the higher the popularity of a hotel, the
305 higher the probability of guests to buy products from them.

306 Concerning the decision on how much people spend on products, the following results
307 are obtained. The variable *Stay* presents a positive and significant parameter. Thus, if an
308 individual stays at the hotel, he/she either buys more products or products at higher prices
309 than do people who do not stay at the hotel. This variable is critical because, as indicated
310 earlier, the mere fact of staying at the hotel does not lead to a greater probability of buying.
311 Nevertheless, it does have a positive impact on the number of products bought or, more
312 importantly, on the quality of products. Having a membership card allows people to buy
313 regardless of whether they stay at the hotel or not. Thus, the probability of buying seems
314 unaffected by an individual staying at the hotel. However, products of a certain level of
315 quality (or higher-priced products), are more favored by those who stayed at the hotel. The
316 number of nights the cardholder stayed at the hotel is not significant, just as the decision to
317 buy is. However, the number of nights someone else stayed at the hotel using the card

318 significantly affects the amount of money spent on tryvertising products. Furthermore, gender
319 is not significant. Age is significant and positive; thus, the older the customers are, the more
320 they spend. We find a significant and positive parameter for membership; thus, the longer
321 people have had the card, the more they spend on products. The number of online reviews
322 also shows a significant impact on the amount of money spent on tryvertising products.

323

324 **5. Discussion**

325 All independent variables, except for the number of nights the cardholder stayed at the
326 hotel, significantly affect either decision to buy or amount of money spent on products
327 promoted through tryvertising. Whether customers have actually stayed at the hotel or not has
328 no significant effect on decision to buy, but it does on the amount of money spent. This
329 finding indicates that customers who have experienced in-room products tended to spend
330 more on these products. This finding is consistent with previous ones that suggest high
331 customer confidence generated by direct experiences (Hamilton & Thompson, 2007; Smith &
332 Swinyard, 1983). Although consumers normally become cautious when purchasing expensive
333 products, this finding suggests that tryvertising seems to create good opportunities for hotel
334 customers to build confidence with expensive products. When consumers are satisfied with
335 their experience and once trust is established, they are willing to pay more (Bolton & Lemon,
336 1999; Graham & Bansal, 2007) and become less price-sensitive (Fornell, Johnson, Anderson,
337 Cha, & Bryant, 1996; Marshall, 1980; Munnukka, 2008). Furthermore, hotel guests who had
338 good experiences in other service encounters during their stays may be willing to spend more
339 at the hotel (Anderson, Fornell, & Rust, 1997; Olsen & Johnson, 2003).

340 The more that customers spend on their hotel stays, the more likely they are to
341 purchase products promoted through tryvertising. Although previous studies have suggested
342 that travelers tend to shop more when they spend less on accommodation (Lee, Jee, Funk, &

343 Jordan, 2015), the findings of this study emphasize the potential of tryvertising strategies to
344 stimulate hotel guests to shop even when they have already spent a significant amount on
345 accommodation. A further implication is that tryvertising may work particularly well on
346 high-income groups who tend to spend more during travel (Agarwal & Yochum, 1999; Jang
347 et al., 2004; Mattila, 2007). A positive relationship between accommodation expenses and
348 decision to buy tryvertising products implies that customers who value the quality of hotel
349 accommodation are most likely to purchase products that will improve their own living
350 environment. A loyalty effect may also provide an explanation here. If customers are willing
351 to pay more for a hotel brand that they like and trust, they may have a favorable perception of
352 its products and positive behaviors.

353 Older customers are more likely to purchase and spend more on products promoted by
354 tryvertising than young customers. As people age, they receive high earnings and disposable
355 income especially if their children have grown up. Although older people tend to be more
356 cautious with where they spend their money (Botwinick, 1973), the findings from this study
357 highlight the effectiveness of hotel tryvertising strategies in attracting older customers. Prior
358 research has suggested that as people age and mature, they start to spend less on dispensable
359 expenses, such as nightlife and leisure, but more on necessities such as accommodations and
360 restaurants during vacations (Bojanic, 1992; Dardis, Soberon-Ferrer, & Patro, 1994), which is
361 in contrast to younger people who tend to spend less on lodging and food (Hong, Morrison, &
362 Cai, 1996). Hence, the significant positive effects of age on decision to buy and amount spent
363 on products promoted by tryvertising imply that tryvertising strategies in hotels can be
364 particularly effective in attracting and stimulating sales from older people who are willing to
365 spend for their home or family.

366 Women are more likely to buy products promoted through tryvertising than men.
367 Shopping by women accounted for a large portion of tourism expenditures. Anderson and

368 Littrell (1995) found that women purchase souvenirs such as apparel and household textiles
369 more frequently than men do. In another study, Littrell, Anderson, and Brown (1993) found
370 similar results that show the majority of gift and souvenir purchases was made by women.
371 Interestingly, another result shows that women spend similarly as do men on tryvertising
372 products. Previous research has suggested that gender was not an influencing factor in
373 explaining total travel expenditures (Wang, Rompf, Severt, & Peerapatdit, 2006). Unlike
374 other markets such as fashion and cosmetics, the holiday market is more group-oriented than
375 individual-oriented in nature (Lawson, 1991; Marshment, 1997). Although women may want
376 to shop more, their travel budget and expenditure are often constrained by their group
377 activities (e.g., what their family members or travel partners need and want) (Lawson, 1994).
378 Hence, although women may be more likely to buy hotel products promoted by tryvertising,
379 the amount that they can spend on these products may not be significantly higher than that of
380 men.

381 The number of nights that cardholders stayed at a hotel does not have any effect on
382 their propensity to buy and money spent on products promoted through tryvertising. However,
383 the number of nights that non-cardholders stayed at a hotel has significant effects on the
384 amount of money spent on tryvertising products. A possible reason for this finding is that
385 these non-cardholders only have limited time to use the card and make purchases. Customers
386 who have been members for a long time are less likely to buy but tend to spend more when
387 they buy. This variable is interesting because at first, people seem to become excited about
388 this experiential activity. After the initial excitement, their arousal diminishes with time, and
389 people tend to moderate the occasions in which they buy. Nevertheless, the reverse occurs in
390 terms of the amount purchased. People with more experience tend to discriminate better the
391 products they want to buy. In this study context, although loyal members are not more likely
392 to buy, they are willing to spend more with the company likely due to their trust in and

393 relationship with the company. Finally, the higher the number of online reviews, the more
394 likely customers buy and spend on products promoted through tryvertising. The positive
395 effect of the number of reviews on hotel performance found in the literature (Ye et al., 2009;
396 Kim et al, 2015; Kim et al., 2016; De Pelsmacker, van Tilburg and Holthof, 2018) is derived
397 from the fact that reviews, be they positive or negative, indicate hotel popularity, augment
398 customers' awareness of the hotel, and diminish uncertainty (De Pelsmacker et al., 2018).
399 These factors translate into willingness to buy and spend on products promoted through
400 tryvertising.

401

402

403 **6. Conclusion**

404 This study explores customer purchase behaviors driven by tryvertising strategies in a
405 hotel context. Using two sets of real data collected from a hotel management company that
406 features tryvertising practices in China, a sample that contains 6,858 customer records was
407 analyzed using a Heckit model. The determinant factors of customers' decisions to buy and
408 money spent on products promoted by tryvertising are identified. In conclusion, customers
409 who are female, older, loyal members, and spend more on accommodation are more likely to
410 buy products promoted through tryvertising. Customers who are older, loyal members, non-
411 cardholders and have actual stay experiences are more likely to spend more on products
412 promoted through tryvertising. Finally, hotels with a greater number of online reviews lead to
413 higher propensity to buy and larger amounts of money spent.

414 This study contributes to advertising and customer purchase behavior research in the
415 tourism and hospitality literature. Rather than investigating people's perceptions of traditional
416 advertising, this study explores an innovative advertising practice that is based on direct
417 influence strategies. The determinant factors identified in this study are specific to

418 tryvertising strategies in the hotel context, which are different from those that were identified
419 based on traditional advertising practices. Additionally, this study focuses on understanding
420 customers' purchase of guestroom products, rather than hotel rooms and souvenirs which
421 have received abundant research attention. Furthermore, given that the extent to which
422 behavioral intentions represent real actions continue to be controversial, this study provides
423 empirical evidence on customers' actual purchase decisions and expenditures driven by
424 tryvertising strategies.

425 The findings from this study help practitioners to identify their target customers and
426 improve their tryvertising strategies to boost sales. Understanding that tryvertising works
427 particularly well on certain customer groups, practitioners can customize their tryvertising
428 strategies to target these people. For example, considering that women are more likely to buy,
429 hoteliers can consider placing more guestroom amenities such as fragrances and bathroom
430 supplies that target them. Considering that older customers are more likely to buy and spend
431 more on guestroom products, hotels can consider placing more practical and useful
432 commodities to attract them. Incentives can be given to loyal members who continuously
433 purchase from the hotel. Particular customers book higher-priced rooms; thus, hotels may
434 consider placing luxury items in these customers' rooms to boost sales.

435 The data used in this study were collected from a single data source. **The results**
436 **should be interpreted with caution considering the unique characteristics of the Chinese**
437 **market (e.g., consumer characteristics and industry practices). Future research should**
438 **consider collecting data from other regions, platforms, and customer groups to triangulate the**
439 **findings of this study. Also, using samples with different categories of hotels could help with**
440 **the generalization of the results across different types of hotels.** The independent variables
441 used in this study are limited, which are based on the data sets obtained from a hotel
442 management company. Potential factors that may affect tryvertising effectiveness may

443 involve factors beyond the independent variables in this study. Future studies may attempt to
444 identify other potential determinant factors and compare their levels of influence on customer
445 behaviors.

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Table 1. Summary and Description of Variables

Variables	Description	Operationalization
Buy	Whether the customer made a decision to buy.	Nominal-dichotomous 0=No 1=Yes
Amount spent	The amount of money spent by the customer on a purchase.	Continuous
Stay	Whether the customer who was the cardholder had actually stayed at the hotel.	Nominal-dichotomous 0=No 1=Yes
Hotel cost	The amount of money spent at the hotel (e.g., room rate, food and beverage).	Continuous
Number of nights (someone else)	The number of nights someone else other than the cardholder stayed at the hotel using the card.	Continuous
Number of nights (cardholder)	The number of nights the cardholder stayed at the hotel using the card.	Continuous
Gender	Gender of the customer.	Nominal-dichotomous 0=Male 1=Female
Age	Age of the customer.	Continuous
Membership	Time (in years) the customer has been member of the program.	Continuous
Online review	The number of online reviews the customer has written.	Continuous

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Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

	Mean/Proportion	SD
<i>Dependent variables</i>		
Buy	77%	-
Amount spent (CNY)	394.2	969.3
<i>Independent variables</i>		
Stay	87%	-
Hotel cost (CNY)	451	500.6
Number of nights (someone else)	1.39	1.32
Number of nights (cardholder)	0.14	0.86
Gender	51.2%	-
Age (years)	33.6	9.1
Membership (days)	579.9	225.8
Online reviews	5.37	26.7

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Table 3. Determinant Factors of Buying and Quantity Decisions

	Buying decision		Quantity decision	
	Parameter	Std. Error	Parameter	Std. Error
Stay	-0.033	0.076	0.239 ^a	0.033
Hotel cost	0.0001 ^b	6E-05	-	-
Number of nights (cardholder)	0.047	0.029	0.010	0.010
Number of nights (someone else)	0.059	0.042	0.036 ^b	0.016
Gender	0.140 ^a	0.042	0.012	0.019
Age	0.005 ^b	0.002	0.002 ^b	0.001
Membership	-0.0006 ^a	7E-05	0.0004 ^a	4E-05
Online reviews	0.003 ^a	0.001	0.001 ^a	0.0003
Constant	1.594 ^a	0.121	5.025 ^a	0.056

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a=p<0.01; b=p<0.05

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