

What Drives Consumers' Booking Intention of E-Hailing Services in Malaysia?

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Abstract: This study aims to test the role of perceived price attractiveness, perceived service quality, perceived reputation, trust and attitude on consumers' booking intention of e-hailing services. The data were collected via self-administered survey questionnaire, yielding 192 usable responses. The study found that perceived attractiveness, perceived service quality, perceived reputation, attitude and trust positively influence consumers' booking intention of e-hailing services. This study is among the pioneers to highlight on the impact of the external factors namely price attractiveness and perceived reputation on consumers' booking intention towards e-hailing services in the Malaysian market. The findings from this study are expected to benefit the e-hailing company and the researchers that specialized in consumer behaviour study.

Keywords: E-hailing services, perceived price attractiveness, perceived service quality, perceived reputation, theory of planned behaviour

Paper type: Research paper

1. Introduction

The rapid development of e-hailing services in the recent years can be attributed by the easiness of use, high availability and speed, fair pricing, and fulfillment of the inefficiency and gaps found in the traditional transportation systems (Gaber and Elsamadicy, 2021; Jais and Marzuki, 2020). The popularity of the mobile internet technology and enhancement of the connectivity of the transportation networks makes e-hailing services more flexible and convenient for the users (Jais and Marzuki, 2020; Wang *et al.*, 2019). In Malaysia, e-hailing revenue is projected to grow by 6.02% (2022-2026), which resulting in a market volume of US\$1.44bn in 2026. The number of users also is expected to increase to 7.7m users by 2026 with the increase of average revenue per user (ARPU) to US\$151.90 (Statista, 2022). Currently, the largest e-hailing services in Malaysia is Grab, followed with 33 other e-hailing services. Each of the e-hailing firms particularly provide different services and features, tailored to consumer demands. For example, Grab and MyCar have a similar interface on their respective apps, including near-identical ride-booking and cancellation screens. Pickup2u provides the option to book taxis while PicknGo is mostly booked for tourism purposes (Tan 2019). With this increased relevance of e-hailing services in Malaysia (Jais and Marzuki, 2020), it has become indispensable to investigate the role of internal and external factors that influence the consumer booking intention of the e-hailing services. Particularly, understanding the

determinants of the consumers' intention to book the e-hailing services is critical to promote such services.

Although the study on the e-hailing services is well documented in past research (Gaber and Elsamadicy, 2021; Nguyen *et al.*, 2021; Si *et al.*, 2022; Sourav *et al.*, 2022; Wang *et al.*, 2020), there is dearth of study that have investigated the factors that affect consumer booking intention of e-hailing services in emerging markets like Malaysia in its depth and breadth. Nguyen *et al.* (2021) suggest competitive price as one of the reasons of the consumers willing to use e-hailing services in Vietnam. In different context, it is suggested that perceived price attractiveness, improve consumers' perceptions and loyalty (Jha *et al.*, 2019; Mans *et al.*, 2020; Suganda, 2022). However, the effect of perceived price attractiveness toward booking intention of e-hailing services is still concealed. Also, perceived service quality is regarded as one of the important indicators in understanding consumer intention towards service (Olya *et al.*, 2022; Su *et al.*, 2021). On the other hand, perceived reputation has positive impact on the customer loyalty (Quoquab *et al.*, 2019), consumer purchase intention (Sadom, 2022) and guest booking intention of Airbnb (Tiamiyu *et al.*, 2022). Nevertheless, to date, there is lack of research examine the effect of both perceived service quality and perceived reputation towards consumer booking intention, particularly in the context of Malaysian e-hailing service industry.

In the importance of the above-discussed gaps, the objectives of the study are to investigate the effect of internal and external factors namely perceived price attractiveness, perceived service quality, perceived reputation, trust and attitude towards consumer booking intention of e-hailing services in Malaysia. Also, considering younger generation, particularly Z generation among the top users of e-hailing services (Mitropoulos *et al.*, 2021; Sourav *et al.*, 2022), this study tested the above relationships across the Z - generation in Malaysia

The rest of the paper is structured as follows. The theoretical underpinning and hypotheses development are outlined. Next, the methodology and results and findings are presented. Finally, the discussion, limitation and future research are discussed.

2. Literature Review and Conceptual Design

Theoretical underpinning

Theory of planned behaviour (TPB) serves as the basis for the development of theoretical framework for this study (Ajzen 1991). In the field of consumer behaviour, TPB has served as the theoretical basis to understand the relationship among beliefs, attitudes, behavioural intentions and behaviours (Christina, and Yasa, 2021; Sutisna and Handra, 2022; Quoquab *et al.*, 2019; Wu and Song, 2021). TPB also has been the foundation for studies relating to online purchase intention and behaviour (Pillai *et al.*, 2022). Furthermore, the crucial aspect of the TPB emphasises the individual's intention in performing a given behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). Thus, it appropriate for the study to employ TPB as a theoretical framework. Drawing on TPB, this study examines how perceived price attractiveness, perceived service quality, perceived reputation, trust and attitude affect consumers' booking intention of e-hailing services. It is hoped that the findings derived from this study will serve as the basis for the better understanding of the factors that drive consumers' booking intention of e-hailing services in Malaysia and other emerging markets.

Hypotheses development

A. *Perceived price attractiveness and consumer booking intention*

Consumer booking intention refers to customers' tendency to book a service in the future (Tsao *et al.*, 2015). In the context of the e-hailing service, to secure a consumer booking is crucial as it will translated into revenues for the service provider. Consumers are also likely to purchase or booking a service when they perceived the services have better offers in terms of price (Mans *et al.*, 2020). In other words, consumers are inclined to purchase or book a service when the perceived the level of price attractiveness is

high (Lin, 2018). Thus, it is expected that consumers will be more inclined to booking the e-hailing services when they perceived the price is attractive to them.

In the literature, it is suggested that perceived price attractiveness have positive impact on the cruising intention of a new travellers (Chong, 2018). Also, perceived price attractiveness is showed to have positive association with purchase and booking intention of hotel/ accommodation (Esguerra *et al.*, 2021). In the same manner, this study argued that price attractiveness is likely to develop positive consumers' booking intention of e-hailing services, which is comparatively new link. Based on this assumption, the following relationship is hypothesized:

H1. Perceived price attractiveness positively affects consumer booking intention

B. Perceived service quality and consumer booking intention

Perceived services quality can be defined as 'a general perception of overall service excellence in the form of what a customer has experienced in service deliverables' (Olya *et al.*, 2022). Past scholars have focused on the effect of perceived service quality on attitudinal variables like consumer trust, loyalty, emotion and satisfaction (see Ali *et al.*, 2022; Ananda *et al.*, 2022; Chan *et al.*, 2022; Dang *et al.*, 2022; Ge *et al.*, 2021; Ulusoy and Akyürek, 2022). Previous study also suggests the positive linkage between perceived service quality and recommendation intention (Roy *et al.*, 2021) and revisit intention among tourists (Abdou *et al.*, 2022; Islamy *et al.*, 2022; Tabaeian *et al.*, 2022). Most importantly, perceived service quality is regarded as one of the important indicators in understanding consumer intention towards service (Olya *et al.*, 2022; Su *et al.*, 2021). However, to the best of authors' knowledge, the relationship between perceived service quality and booking intention has not yet been explored. Grounded by the discussion and considering the study gap, the following hypothesis is developed.

H2. Perceived service quality positively affects consumer booking intention

C. Perceived reputation and consumer booking intention

Perceived reputation can be defined as "a common emotional response that an individual possesses toward a company because of its action over a longer period of time (Loureiro *et al.*, 2017; Quoquab *et al.*, 2019). Previous studies have found that perceived reputation is an important determinant that may predict consumers' behavioral intention in a different context. For example, Tihamiyu *et al.* (2022) suggest positive effect of reputation and guest booking intention of Airbnb. Jufri *et al.* (2022) also confirmed the positive association between corporate reputation and purchase intention in the context of Indonesian cement industry. Additionally, Sodom (2022) has established the significant positive effect of reputation and purchase intention of the fast-food product. However, there is paucity of research focussing on this relationship, particularly in the context of e-hailing industry. In light of this gap, it is important to predict the relationship between perceived reputation and consumer booking intention of the e-hailing services. Hence, this study postulates the following hypothesis:

H3. Perceived reputation positively affects consumer booking intention

D. Trust and consumer booking intention

Trust is referred as customer's belief in the reliability and goodwill of a relationship (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Some scholars have indicated that trust is an important predictor of consumers' purchase intention (Chang *et al.*, 2014; Malak *et al.*, 2021 and Muflih and Juliana, 2021). In support of this view, past studies have argued that trust is a crucial predictor of consumers' behavioral intentions (Revilla-Camacho *et al.*, 2017). In similar vein, perception of higher trust is likely to impact consumers' intention to engage with the

service provider. (Tiamiyu *et al.*, 2022). As such, it is expected that trust will create positive impact on consumers' mind and are more likely to develop a positive intention to book an e-hailing services. Based on this assumption, the following relationship is postulated:

H4. Trust positively affects consumer booking intention

E. Attitude and consumer booking intention

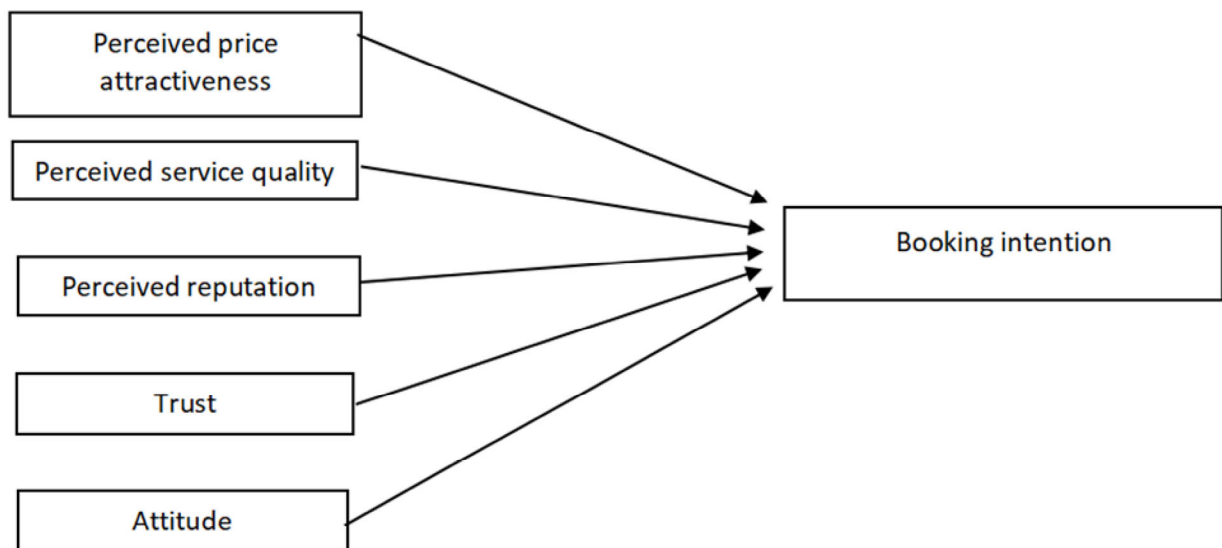
The relationship between attitude and behavioural intention can be supported by the TPB (Ajzen, 1991). According to these theories, if consumers develop a positive or negative feeling towards a specific object, they are likely to behave in either of two ways (avoiding or approaching (Ajzen 1991, Mohammad *et al.*, 2020). Beside theoretical support, past scholars also has identified attitude as a crucial predictor of consumers' behavioral intention in various contexts (Mohammad *et al.*, 2020; Sodom *et al.*, 2022; Sodom *et al.*, 2021). Moreover, Wu and Song (2021) contend that online shopping attitudes to have positive effect towards online shopping continuance intentions. Also, Christina and Yasa (2021) suggest attitude to positively influence online hotel booking intention. Similarly, this study assumes that attitude can influence consumer booking intention in the context of e-hailing services. Based on this discussion, the following hypothesis were outlined:

H5. Attitude positively affect consumer booking intention

Conceptual framework

The proposed relationships among the study variables are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Proposed conceptual framework



3. Methodology

A. Measurement

Perceived price attractiveness was measured by using three items adapted from Büyükdağ, *et al.*, (2020), perceived reputation was measured by using three items adapted from Nguyen and Le Blanc (2001). To measure perceived service quality, this study used three items adapted from Konuk, (2021) and trust was

measured by using three items adapted from Pivato *et al.* (2008). Also, consumer booking intention was measured by using four items adapted from Tiamiyu *et al.* (2020). To assess the items, a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) was employed.

Content validity was carried out to ensure that the study scale items measured the correct constructs (Cavana *et al.*, 2001). The opinions of three academicians, who are experts in the field, were obtained to validate the measurement items for this study. In addition to that, face validity was performed by distributing questionnaires to 10 postgraduate students. This is to ensure that the potential respondents will understand the questionnaires clearly (Cavana *et al.*, 2001).

B. Sample and data collection

Non-probability judgmental sampling was utilized to gather data from Generation Z (born between 1997 to 2012). The population of interest is specifically Generation Z, who have experienced booking e-hailing services or have prior knowledge regarding e-hailing services. Selecting Generation Z in Malaysia is justifiable, due to the fact that they make up the largest age group, representing 29% of the overall population (Tjiptono *et al.*, 2020) and among the top users of e-hailing services (Mitropoulos *et al.*, 202).

Data was collected by designing a web-based survey. The application of an online survey is appropriate especially for data collection pertaining to respondents' perception, attitude and behavioural intention (Evans and Mathur, 2005; Tiamiyu *et al.*, 2020). When conducted efficiently and analyzed effectively, the results of surveys can provide an opportunity to draw out beneficial data from respondents (Elias, 2015). The sample size of this study was determined by using the rule of thumb advocated by Hair *et al.* (2010) which is the requirement of having 10 respondents for each item. As nineteen questions were included in this study, 190 respondents were needed. In total, 220 questionnaires were distributed, out of which 192 questionnaires were found usable for further analysis.

C. Respondents' profile

As shown in Table 1, 40% of the respondents were male and 60% were female. The majority of the respondents, which is 56.25%, were Malays, 39.07% of the respondents were Indians and 4.75 % were Chinese. As for the level of education, diploma holders made up 54.69%, degree holders made up 30.21%, foundation/pre-diploma students made up 2.08% and master's degree/ PhD holders made up 2.604%. In regard to monthly income, 54.69% of the respondents earn below RM2000, 30.21% earn RM2001 - 3000, 13.02% earn RM3001-RM4000, 1.04% earn RM4001-5000 and 1.04% earn above RM5000.

Table 1. Demographic profile of the respondents

Demographic variables	No of respondents =192	(%)
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	77	40
Female	115	60
<i>Ethnicity</i>		
Malay	108	56.25
Indian	75	39.07
Chinese	9	4.75
<i>Education</i>		
Foundation/ Pre-Diploma	4	2.08
Diploma	101	52.6
Bachelor Degree	82	42.7
Master Degree/PhD	5	2.604
<i>Monthly income</i>		
Below 2000	105	54.69

RM2001-3000	58	30.21
RM3001-4000	25	13.02
RM4001-5000	2	1.04
Above RM5000	2	1.04

4. Data analysis and results

The gathered data was analysed by applying the structural equation modelling – partial least square (PLS-SEM) technique using SmartPLS (Ringle *et al.*, 2015) software. The study is exploratory, with the intention to examine the theoretically causal models; hence, the application of PLS SEM is justifiable. Since PLS-SEM is able to assess the measurement model and structural model simultaneously, there is more accuracy in the produced results (Hair *et al.*, 2017). A two-stage approach was adopted for this study, as recommended by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). The measurement model was first tested, followed by the structural model. The evaluation of the measurement model was completed by assessing the reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity.; while, the structural model was assessed in terms of path coefficient, coefficient of determination (R²) and effect size (f²) (Hair *et al.*, 2014; Quoquab *et al.*, 2018).

Results of the measurement model

A. Reliability and validity

Reliability of the construct was evaluated by using factor loading, Cronbach Alpha and composite reliability (Henseler *et al.*, 2015). As illustrated in Table 2, the value of Cronbach's Alpha (CA) and composite reliability (CR) is above 0.7, shows the reliability of all constructs (Hair *et al.*, 2014; Hair *et al.*, 2019). The loadings of each item for all constructs were above the threshold value of 0.5, consistent with the recommended value of factor loading as suggested by Anderson and Gerbing, 1988. This confirmed the reliability of the research model (Hair *et al.*, 2019).

The convergent validity was assessed by using AVE (Average Variance Extracted), which represents the number of variances in the construct. As depicted in Table 2, AVE values for all constructs were greater than 0.5. Thus, the convergent validity for all constructs were achieved.

Table 2. Reliability and validity

Constructs	Items	Loadings	AVE	CR	CA
Perceived price attractiveness	PA1	0.789	0.684	0.79	0.772
	PA2	0.853			
	PA3	0.837			
Perceived service quality	PQ1	0.889	0.755	0.841	0.838
	PQ2	0.85			
	PQ3	0.868			
Perceived reputation	REP1	0.849	0.704	0.797	0.789
	REP2	0.871			
	REP3	0.795			
Trust	TRUST1	0.886	0.774	0.855	0.854

	TRUST2	0.9			
	TRUST3	0.853			
Attitude	ATT1	0.821	0.71	0.796	0.795
	ATT2	0.84			
	ATT3	0.866			
Booking intention	PI1	0.867	0.73	0.878	0.877
	PI2	0.864			
	PI3	0.87			
	PI4	0.816			

Notes: PA = perceived price attractiveness; PQ = perceived service quality; REP = perceived reputation; TRUST = trust; ATT = attitude; PI= booking intention

The discriminant validity was assessed by using Fornell-Larcker (1981) Criterion and (Heterotrait - Monotrait Ratio) HTMT assessment (Hair et al., 2014; Henseler et al., 2015). As showed in Table 3, all of the square root of AVE of each construct is higher than its correlation with other constructs in the model. Thus, the discriminant validity was ascertained (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

Table 3. Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Construct	ATT	PA	PI	PQ	REP	TRUST
ATT	0.842					
PA	0.53	0.827				
PI	0.75	0.49	0.855			
PQ	0.657	0.587	0.621	0.869		
REP	0.729	0.587	0.655	0.768	0.839	
TRUST	0.757	0.546	0.669	0.664	0.702	0.88

Notes: PA = perceived price attractiveness; PQ = perceived service quality; REP = perceived reputation; TRUST = trust; ATT = attitude; PI= booking intention

According to Table 4, all HTMT value is below the threshold value of 0.85, confirming the discriminant validity for all constructs.

Table 4. (Heterotrait -Monotrait Ratio) HTMT

	ATT	PA	PI	PQ	REP	TRUST
ATT						
PA	0.664					
PI	0.847	0.583				
PQ	0.801	0.722	0.723			
REP	0.82	0.739	0.784	0.842		
TRUST	0.82	0.672	0.774	0.785	0.845	

Notes: PA = perceived price attractiveness; PQ = perceived service quality; REP = perceived reputation; TRUST = trust; ATT = attitude; PI= booking intention

Results of the structural model

The structural model was evaluated in terms of R^2 , f^2 , and the standardised path coefficients and their corresponding t-values using a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resample (Hair *et al.*, 2017, 2019). The results (Table 5) indicated that perceived price attractiveness ($\beta = 0.242$, $t = 2.103$, $p < 0.05$) and perceived service quality ($\beta = 0.358$, $t = 3.111$, $p < 0.05$) was positively related to booking intention, which provided support for H1 and H2. These findings suggested that perceived price attractiveness and perceived service quality has positive effect on booking intention. Results also indicated that perceived reputation ($\beta = 0.367$, $t = 3.421$, p-value of <0.05), trust ($\beta = 0.401$, $t = 3.986$, p-value of <0.05), and attitude ($\beta = 0.473$, $t = 5.406$, p-value of <0.05) was positively correlated with booking intention, confirming H3, H4 and H5.

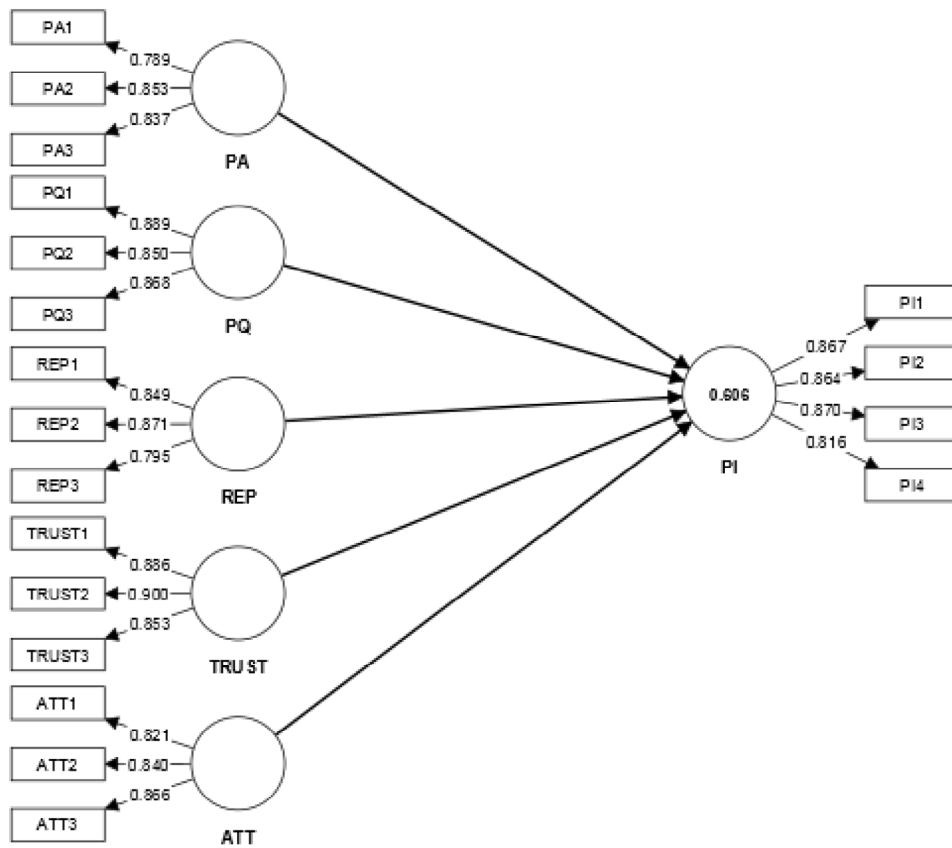
The explanatory power of the model was tested using the coefficient of determination (R^2). R^2 values indicates that amount of variances in the endogenous construct that can be explained by all the exogenous constructs associated with it. R^2 value closes to 1 is suggested for high predictive accuracy (Astrachan *et al.*, 2014; Hair *et al.*, 2014). As Figure 2 and Table 5 shows, R^2 for PI is 0.606, explaining 60.6% of the variance in booking intention. This result suggests the model has sufficient /substantial explanatory power (Cohen, 1988). This study also evaluates the of effect size (f^2 ,) which represents that magnitude of a specific exogenous construct on the endogenous construct (Hair *et al.*, 2014). As suggested by Cohen (1988), f^2 values of 0.02, 0.15 and 0.35, representing small, medium and large effects, respectively. Table 5 shows all five relationships with medium effect sizes.

Table 5. Direct relationship

Hypotheses	Relationship	Path coefficient	Standard error	t value	R^2	f^2	Result
H1	PA-> PI	0.242	0.07	2.103	0.606	0.242	Supported
H2	PQ ->PI	0.358	0.09	3.111		0.164	Supported
H3	REP-> PI	0.367	0.098	3.421		0.177	Supported
H4	TRUST->PI	0.401	0.092	3.986		0.154	Supported
H5	ATT->PI	0.473	0.087	5.406			Supported

Notes: PA = perceived price attractiveness; PQ = perceived service quality; REP = perceived reputation; TRUST = trust; ATT = attitude; PI= booking intention

Figure 2. Structural model



5. Discussion

Findings of this research provide understanding of the role of perceived price attractiveness, perceived service quality, perceived reputation, trust and attitude towards consumers' booking intention of e-hailing services in Malaysia. This study revealed the positive association between perceived price attractiveness and consumer booking intention. This finding is in line with the past studies that found perceived price attractiveness to positively influenced purchase and booking intention of hotel/ accommodation (Esguerra *et al.*, 2021). In addition to perceived price attractiveness, perceived service quality and perceived reputation is found to be a good predictor for consumers' booking intention of e-hailing services. This is an agreement with past scholars that suggest perceived service quality and perceived reputation is an important determinant that may predict consumers' behavioural intention (Olya *et al.*, 2022; Su *et al.*, 2021, Tiamiyu *et al.*, 2022). Thus, it indicates that when individuals perceive the price of e-hailing services is attractive and their service quality is on the par, they might likely to book e-hailing services in the future.

Moreover, this study also confirmed that trust and attitude have a positive effect towards consumers' booking intention. This is an accordance with the previous research that found an empirical support for the positive linkage between trust-intention and attitude-intention links (Revilla-Camacho *et al.*, 2017, Wu and Song, 2021). This result suggests that, when individuals have built the trust and acknowledge the reputation of the e-hailing services, they will increase their intention to book the e-hailing services.

Taking consideration of all the findings, e-hailing companies should emphasize their price attractiveness when strategizing marketing activity. In doing that, e-hailing companies should consider apply 'short yet impactful' sales promotions to signal price attractiveness and help improve consumers' perceptions towards e-hailing services. Additionally, e-hailing companies should enhance the consumers' perceived service

quality by improve the condition of vehicles as well as the quality of drivers. This might give a good impression on quality of the services provided by the e-hailing companies. Also, e-hailing companies should also encourage the online community to create a positive content strategy to build consumers' trust and positive attitude towards e-hailing services. For instance, e-hailing companies could launch a viral campaign to raise awareness on the safety aspect etc.

6. Limitation and future research direction

Noteworthy findings have been presented in this article; however, they are bound by some limitations which provide an avenue for future research. This study employed a positivist approach (quantitative method); utilising a mixed methods research approach can be considered for future studies to explore and gain a deeper understanding of the subject. In addition to that, the respondents of this study were Generation Z members in Malaysia. Generation Z members in other parts of the continent can be targeted to analyse the effects of cultural differences on consumer booking intention in the context of e-hailing services. The demographic factors such as gender, age, income and etc. also should be considered.

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