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Brand Image and Membership on Direct Booking Intention through Perceived Value in Resort Hotels

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the effects of brand image and membership on direct booking intention, with perceived value as a mediating variable at Jayakarta Hotels & Resorts. A quantitative approach was applied to 180 respondents across three Jayakarta properties, using purposive and proportionate stratified sampling and analyzed through SEM-PLS with SmartPLS 4. The results indicate that brand image has no significant direct effect on direct booking intention, while membership has a positive and significant effect. Both brand image and membership significantly influence perceived value, which subsequently affects direct booking intention. Perceived value fully mediates the effect of brand image and partially mediates the effect of membership. These findings highlight the importance of translating brand strength and membership benefits into perceived customer value to encourage direct bookings and reduce hotel dependence on Online Travel Agents (OTAs).

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INTRODUCTION

The hospitality industry has increasingly relied on digital distribution channels to reach travelers, yet a persistent challenge for hotel operators is the growing dominance of Online Travel Agents (OTAs) over hotels' own reservation channels(Utama, 2019). Direct booking intention, defined as a customer's tendency to reserve accommodation directly through a hotel's official channel rather than through a third-party intermediary, has become a strategic priority because it strengthens hotels' distribution independence, builds direct customer relationships, and reduces commission-related revenue leakage (Piboolvitayakul & Methavasaraphak, 2025; Touni et al., 2022). Within this context, hotel brands that fail to convert brand awareness into direct transactions face mounting pressure on profitability despite favorable demand conditions.

Jayakarta Hotels & Resorts, an Indonesian hotel network operating resort properties in leading tourism destinations such as Bali, Lombok, and Flores, illustrates this paradox. Between 2022 and 2025, the occupancy rates of its three flagship properties The Jayakarta Bali Beach

Resort & Spa, The Jayakarta Lombok Beach Resort & Spa, and The Jayakarta Suites Komodo-Flores increased steadily, reflecting strong post-pandemic recovery in tourist mobility. However, this positive demand trend was not matched by an improvement in direct distribution performance, as the contribution of direct bookings to total reservations declined across all three properties over the same period, while OTA-driven bookings rose to more than 74% of total reservations by 2025.

This growing dependency on OTAs carries clear financial consequences. Commission expenses paid by Jayakarta Hotels & Resorts to third-party platforms increased several-fold between 2022 and 2025, indicating substantial revenue leakage even as room sales grew. From a revenue management perspective, the ability of a hotel to convert demand into direct transactions is a critical determinant of channel profitability, since each distribution channel carries a different cost structure (Touni et al., 2022). The persistence of this gap suggests that occupancy growth alone is an insufficient indicator of distribution success, and that hotel management must address the underlying drivers of customers' channel choice.

Brand image is often regarded as a primary lever for influencing booking behavior, since a strong and credible brand can reduce the uncertainty travelers face when transacting (Agag & El-Masry, 2016; Lien et al., 2015). Jayakarta Hotels & Resorts maintains an active digital presence through its official website and social media platforms; however, observation of these channels reveals inconsistencies such as outdated copyright information and inaccessible web pages that may undermine the credibility of the brand's digital touchpoints. Customer reviews further reflect gaps between the brand image communicated online and guests' actual experiences, with recurring complaints regarding aging facilities, inconsistent service quality, and unresolved guest concerns. Such discrepancies between expectation and experience can elevate perceived risk and diminish customers' confidence in booking directly through the hotel's own channel (Kanten & Mertha, 2022).

Membership programs represent another strategic instrument commonly used to strengthen direct booking behavior by offering exclusive benefits such as member rates, reward points, and personalized services (Fazal-e-Hasan et al., 2024; Setiyorini et al., 2019; Wilkinson, 2021). At Jayakarta Hotels & Resorts, however, the membership segment's contribution to total reservations remains relatively small and inconsistent across the observation period, suggesting that the loyalty program has not yet been fully optimized as a driver of direct booking intention. This condition indicates that the presence of a membership scheme alone does not automatically translate into a stronger direct booking channel unless it is supported by benefits that customers genuinely perceive as valuable.

The concept of perceived value the customer's overall evaluation of the benefits received relative to the costs, risks, and sacrifices incurred has been identified as a key mechanism linking marketing stimuli to booking behavior. Prior studies show that perceived value mediates the relationship between brand image, customer engagement, and hotel booking intention (Touni et al., 2022), while information quality and ease of use significantly shape guests' direct booking decisions (Piboolvitayakul & Methavasaraphak, 2025). This suggests that a favorable brand image or an available membership program may not be sufficient on their own to drive direct booking behavior unless they are translated into value that customers genuinely perceive as superior to what OTAs offer.

Empirical findings regarding the direct effect of brand image on booking intention remain inconsistent. Several studies report that brand image significantly influences booking intention (Aryanti & Tjokrosaputro, 2024; Mohammad et al., 2024; Salsabila et al., 2025), whereas others find that brand image has no significant direct effect on purchase or booking intention, with customers instead prioritizing price, trust, and customer engagement (Agustin, 2019; Fitra, 2025). This inconsistency indicates that the relationship between brand image and direct booking intention may not be direct, but rather operates through an intervening mechanism such as perceived value.

Despite the extensive literature on brand image, membership, and perceived value, limited research has examined how these variables interact jointly to explain direct booking intention at the resort hotel level, particularly within an integrated mediation model. Most prior studies have focused on OTA-based booking behavior in isolation, leaving a gap in understanding how hotels can leverage brand image and membership strategies mediated by perceived value to reduce their structural dependence on third-party platforms. The novelty of this study therefore lies in testing an integrated mediation model that examines the pathways through which brand image and membership influence direct booking intention via perceived value, using empirical data from Jayakarta Hotels & Resorts as a representative case of Indonesian resort hotels facing chronic OTA dependency.

This study is grounded in *Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) Theory* (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) as its primary grand theory. SOR Theory posits that external stimuli received by an individual do not directly produce behavior; rather, they are first processed internally cognitively and affectively before generating a behavioral response. The theory comprises three core components: stimulus, referring to external marketing cues a company provides to customers; organism, referring to the internal evaluative process customers undergo upon receiving those cues; and response, referring to the resulting behavioral outcome. In this study, brand image and membership are positioned as the stimuli hotels provide to customers. Brand image reflects the overall perception held by consumers regarding the hotel's reputation, credibility, and reliability, formed through marketing communication, staying experience, and information available across digital platforms (Lien et al., 2015). Membership, in turn, represents a relationship marketing instrument offering tangible and exclusive benefits such as member rates, reward points, personalized service, and recognition of member status, designed to strengthen the long-term relationship between the hotel and its customers (Fazal-e-Hasan et al., 2024). These two stimuli are subsequently processed by customers through perceived value, which occupies the organism position in the model and reflects their internal evaluation of the benefits, convenience, and advantages received relative to the costs, risks, and sacrifices incurred when transacting through the hotel's official channel (Zeithaml, 1988). This evaluative process ultimately produces direct booking intention as the response, namely the customer's resulting behavioral tendency to reserve accommodation directly through the hotel's official website or social media rather than through a third-party Online Travel Agent (OTA). Through this stimulus-organism-response sequence, SOR Theory provides the structural logic connecting brand image and membership, as external stimuli, to direct booking intention, as the behavioral outcome, via perceived value as the intervening psychological mechanism.

To complement this psychological mechanism, this study also draws on *Consumer Behavior Theory*, which explains the broader process by which individuals select, purchase, use, and evaluate products or services to satisfy their needs and wants (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2020).

This process typically unfolds through several stages, beginning with need recognition, followed by information search, evaluation of alternatives, the purchase decision itself, and post-purchase evaluation. Consumer behavior in this process is shaped not only by functional considerations, such as price and convenience, but also by psychological, social, and perceptual factors, including brand perception, trust, and the digital experience a company provides. Within this framework, customers of Jayakarta Hotels & Resorts are understood to progress through these stages when deciding on a reservation channel: they first recognize the need for accommodation, search for information through the hotel's official website, social media, or third-party platforms, and evaluate the alternatives available based on the brand image they perceive and the membership benefits they anticipate. These evaluations shape the perceived value customers associate with booking directly, which in turn informs their final reservation decision, whether through the hotel's official channel or an OTA. While SOR Theory specifies the internal stimulus-evaluation-response mechanism linking brand image, membership, perceived value, and direct booking intention, Consumer Behavior Theory situates this mechanism within the broader, multi-stage decision-making journey customers undergo, thereby reinforcing the theoretical rationale for examining brand image and membership as antecedents of direct booking intention through the mediating role of perceived value.

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the influence of brand image and membership on direct booking intention, and to examine the mediating role of perceived value in these relationships at Jayakarta Hotels & Resorts. The findings are expected to provide theoretical contributions to the application of Stimulus–Organism–Response Theory in hospitality distribution behavior, as well as practical guidance for hotel management in designing brand and membership strategies that effectively strengthen direct booking channels.

Hypothesis Development in this paper is:

1. Brand Image and Direct Booking Intention

Brand image is argued to directly influence booking intention by serving as a quality signal that reduces perceived uncertainty (Signaling Theory). Previous studies report that brand image significantly affects hotel booking intention (Aryanti & Tjokrosaputro, 2024; Fazal-e-Hasan et al., 2024; Touni et al., 2022; Witarsana et al., 2024). Based on this reasoning, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Brand image has a positive and significant effect on direct booking intention at Jayakarta Hotels & Resorts.

2. Membership and Direct Booking Intention

Membership programs are theorized to influence booking intention both by providing tangible transactional benefits and by strengthening the customer–brand relationship. Prior research shows that subscription-based membership enhances perceived value and loyalty, ultimately encouraging continued use of official reservation channels (Kim et al., 2026; Touni et al., 2022). Accordingly, this study hypothesizes:

H2: Membership has a positive and significant effect on direct booking intention at Jayakarta Hotels & Resorts.

3. Brand Image and Perceived Value

A positive brand image is expected to enhance customers' perception of value by reinforcing beliefs that the benefits received are commensurate with the price paid (Lien et al., 2015; Rini, 2017). Studies by Fazal-e-Hasan et al., (2024) and Wang & Hsu (2021) confirm that brand perception significantly contributes to the formation of perceived value in the

accommodation sector. Thus:

H3: Brand image has a positive and significant effect on perceived value at Jayakarta Hotels & Resorts.

4. Membership and Perceived Value

Membership benefits such as discounts, reward points, and delivery-related privileges have been found to enhance customers' perceived value in service industries(Kim et al., 2026). This suggests that exclusive membership benefits generate additional perceived value beyond the core service itself. Therefore:

H4: Membership has a positive and significant effect on perceived value at Jayakarta Hotels & Resorts.

5. Perceived Value and Direct Booking Intention

Perceived value has consistently been identified as a key determinant of online booking intention (Aryanti & Tjokrosaputro, 2024; Fazal-e-Hasan et al., 2024; Touni et al., 2022). Based on this evidence:

H5: Perceived value has a positive and significant effect on direct booking intention at Jayakarta Hotels & Resorts.

6. The Mediating Role of Perceived Value between Brand Image and Direct Booking Intention

Building on Signaling Theory and SOR Theory, brand image is theorized to function as an initial stimulus that customers must first interpret and evaluate before it influences behavioral intention (Ryu & Jang, 2008; Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). Empirical evidence supports perceived value as a mediating mechanism linking brand image to behavioral intention (Epstein & Buhovac, 2014; Touni et al., 2022). Accordingly, this study hypothesizes:

H6: Brand image has a positive and significant effect on direct booking intention mediated by perceived value at Jayakarta Hotels & Resorts.

7. The Mediating Role of Perceived Value between Membership and Direct Booking Intention

Membership is theorized to influence direct booking intention through two possible pathways: a direct path driven by tangible benefits, and an indirect path processed through perceived value evaluation. Prior studies confirm that membership significantly affects repurchase intention and guest satisfaction (Utomo & Indriani, 2024; Wisker et al., 2025). Accordingly, this study hypothesizes:

H7: Membership has a positive and significant effect on direct booking intention mediated by perceived value at Jayakarta Hotels & Resorts.

METHOD

This study employs a quantitative approach using a survey method to examine the relationships among brand image, membership, perceived value, and direct booking intention (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Several academic reasons underlie the selection of Jayakarta Hotels & Resorts specifically The Jayakarta Bali Beach Resort & Spa, The Jayakarta Lombok Beach Resort & Spa, and The Jayakarta Suites Komodo-Flores as the research site. First, these three properties are the flagship resort units of Jayakarta Hotels & Resorts, located in leading Indonesian tourism destinations (Bali, Lombok, and Labuan Bajo) with relatively homogeneous product characteristics, market segments, and business models. Second, all three properties have implemented an official website, digital media, and a membership program as part of their marketing strategy to strengthen direct booking, yet continue to experience a persistent gap between rising occupancy and declining direct channel contribution. Third, no prior study has

specifically examined the integrated pathway of brand image, membership, and perceived value in shaping direct booking intention within a resort hotel network facing chronic OTA dependency, making this setting empirically relevant rather than merely administratively convenient.

Data were collected from May to June 2026 through an online structured questionnaire distributed to members of Jayakarta Hotels & Resorts across the three properties. Respondents eligible to participate were members who had stayed at least once at one of the properties, had accessed the hotel's official website, had been exposed to information about the hotel through digital channels, and had prior experience booking accommodation online, either through the hotel's official channel or third-party platforms. The sample size was determined based on Hair et al.'s recommendation of five to ten respondents per indicator; with 18 statement items used in this study, the minimum required sample was 180 respondents (18 × 10). Respondents were selected using non-probability purposive sampling, and the total sample was subsequently allocated across the three properties through proportionate stratified sampling based on each resort's room capacity, resulting in 95 respondents from The Jayakarta Bali Beach Resort & Spa (53% of total rooms), 58 from The Jayakarta Lombok Beach Resort & Spa (32%), and 27 from The Jayakarta Suites Komodo-Flores (15%).

The research instrument was developed based on the operational definitions of each variable as outlined in the thesis, comprising 18 statement items in total. Brand image was measured using 3 items adapted from Godey et al., (2022, Schiffman & Wisenblit (2020), and Wang & Hsu (2023) covering the attractiveness of the resort, service performance in line with guest expectations, and the hotel's overall reputation. Membership was measured using 5 items adapted from Kim et al., (2026) and Utomo & Indriani, (2024) covering the fulfillment of promised member benefits, guests' understanding of membership privileges, staff recognition of member status, differentiated treatment received as a member, and the consistency of benefit delivery. Perceived value was measured using 5 items adapted from Fazal-e-Hasan et al., (2024), Setiyorini et al., (2019) and Touni et al., (2022) covering comfort in searching for hotel information through the official website and social media, ease of obtaining information, enjoyment when using the official digital channels, the impression of service quality conveyed by these channels, and understanding of the hotel's products and services. Direct booking intention was measured using 5 items adapted from Piboolvitayakul & Methavasaraphak (2025) and Wisker et al., (2025) covering preference for the official channel over third-party platforms, the official channel as a primary consideration when booking, intention to book directly on future visits, willingness to consider the official channel for future reservations, and the influence of online reviews on the decision to book directly. All statement items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale: (1) Strongly Disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Neutral; (4) Agree; and (5) Strongly Agree. The complete operationalization of the research variables is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Operationalization and Measurement of Research Variables

No.	Variable	Indicator	Measurement
1.	Brand Image (X1)	1. Attractiveness of Jayakarta Hotels & Resorts as a resort destination 2. Service performance in line with guest expectations 3. Overall hotel reputation among customers	Likert Scale
2.	Membership (X2)	1. Fulfillment of promised membership benefits 2. Guests' understanding of membership benefits 3. Staff recognition of member status 4. Differentiated treatment received as a member 5. Consistency of benefit delivery across visits	Likert Scale

3.	Perceived Value (M)	1. Comfort in searching for hotel information via official website/social media 2. Ease of obtaining needed information 3. Enjoyment when using official digital channels 4. Perceived service quality conveyed by digital channels 5. Understanding of hotel products and services	Likert Scale
4.	Direct Booking Intention (Y)	1. Preference for the official channel over third-party platforms 2. Official channel as a primary booking consideration 3. Intention to book directly on future visits 4. Willingness to consider the official channel for future reservations 5. Influence of reviews/recommendations on direct booking decisions	Likert Scale

Source: Data Analysis (2026)

Instrument validation in this study was conducted through the measurement model (outer model) evaluation in SmartPLS, which included convergent validity testing via factor loadings and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), as well as reliability testing via Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha. This approach represents a standard and widely recognized validation procedure in research based on Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)(Hair et al., 2022). Data analysis was subsequently conducted in three stages: outer model estimation, inner model evaluation (R-square, Q-square, and effect size f^2), and hypothesis testing through bootstrapping in SmartPLS 4, followed by specific indirect effect analysis and the Sobel test to examine the mediating role of perceived value, and further supported by descriptive analysis using SPSS v25.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

Data were obtained from 180 fully completed questionnaires distributed to members of Jayakarta Hotels & Resorts across the three studied properties. Respondents were relatively balanced by gender, comprising 91 males (50.6%) and 89 females (49.4%). By age, the majority were 18–30 years old (42.2%), followed by 31–40 years old (41.7%), while respondents above 40 years old accounted for only 16.1%, indicating that most members belong to the productive age group who are accustomed to using digital platforms for information search and reservation. In terms of education, 60.6% held a bachelor's degree, 23.3% held a diploma, 9.4% held a master's degree, and 6.7% completed senior high school. Regarding occupation, the largest group worked in the private sector (42.8%), followed by entrepreneurs/business owners (29.4%) and professionals (25.0%). By monthly income, the majority (57.2%) earned more than IDR 15,000,000, reflecting a relatively high purchasing power among respondents. Finally, in terms of the most frequently used reservation platform, 47.2% of respondents reported primarily using the hotel's official website or social media, while 28.9% relied more on OTAs, indicating that although a notable share of members already prefer the official channel, OTA usage remains considerable even among the membership base.

Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model)

Table 1 summarizes the results of the measurement model evaluation, including the mean and standard deviation of each item, standardized outer loadings, Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct.

Table 1. Measurement model evaluation

Item/Construct	Mean	SD	Loadings	Alpha	CR	AVE
Brand Image (Overall)	3.50	0.681		0.840	0.904	0.757
X1.1 I view Jayakarta Hotels & Resorts as an attractive resort destination	3.53	0.782	0.864			
X1.2 I believe Jayakarta Hotels & Resorts can deliver service that meets guest expectations	3.48	0.791	0.860			
X1.3 Jayakarta Hotels & Resorts has a good reputation among customers	3.49	0.775	0.886			
Membership (Overall)	3.50	0.703		0.906	0.930	0.726
X2.1 I receive the membership benefits as promised	3.51	0.804	0.853			
X2.2 I understand the various benefits offered by the membership program	3.53	0.812	0.831			
X2.3 Staff are able to recognize my status as a member	3.43	0.822	0.879			
X2.4 I receive differentiated treatment as a member	3.59	0.796	0.837			
X2.5 The membership program delivers benefits consistently on every visit	3.47	0.815	0.860			
Perceived Value (Overall)	3.50	0.658		0.913	0.935	0.741
M1.1 I feel comfortable searching for hotel information via the official website/social media	3.46	0.769	0.866			
M1.2 The website and social media make it easy for me to obtain the information I need	3.60	0.751	0.872			
M1.3 I feel pleased when using the website/social media to search for information or make a reservation	3.51	0.783	0.844			
M1.4 The website and social media convey the impression of good service quality	3.52	0.762	0.867			
M1.5 The website and social media help me understand the hotel's products and services	3.41	0.788	0.854			
Direct Booking Intention (Overall)	3.52	0.671		0.901	0.927	0.716
Y1.1 I am more interested in booking rooms through the official website/social media than third parties	3.59	0.795	0.813			
Y1.2 The official website/social media is one of my main considerations when booking	3.51	0.771	0.866			
Y1.3 I intend to book directly through the official website on my next visit	3.53	0.780	0.827			
Y1.4 I will consider the official website/social media for future reservations	3.47	0.774	0.870			
Y1.5 Reviews and recommendations about Jayakarta Hotels & Resorts influence my decision to book directly	3.48	0.799	0.854			

Source: Data Analysis (2026)

All outer loadings exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2022), ranging from 0.813 to 0.886, indicating that each indicator reliably reflects its corresponding construct. Convergent validity was further confirmed by AVE values above 0.50 for all constructs (0.716–0.757), while construct reliability was supported by Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values exceeding 0.70 across all variables (α = 0.840–0.913; CR = 0.904–0.935). Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-

Monotrait Ratio (HTMT), both of which confirmed that all constructs were empirically distinct, with HTMT values remaining below the 0.85 threshold.

Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

After the measurement model was confirmed to meet the criteria of validity and reliability, the structural model (inner model) was evaluated using SmartPLS 4 through bootstrapping with 180 respondents to assess the path coefficients, t-statistics, and coefficient of determination (R^2) among brand image, membership, perceived value, and direct booking intention. The complete results of the structural model testing are presented in Figure 1.

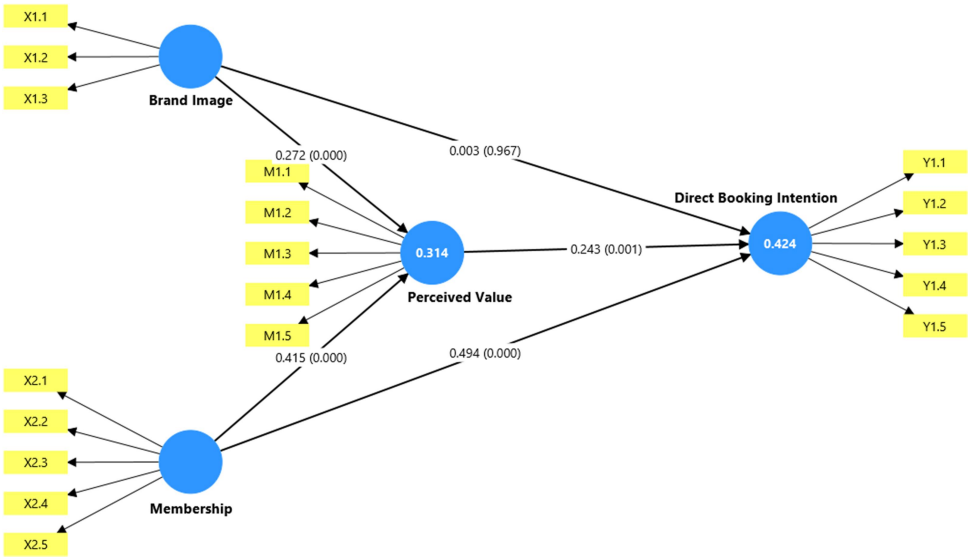


Figure 1. Structural model testing results

Source: Data Analysis (2026)

Based on Figure 1, the structural model explains 31.4% of the variance in perceived value ($R^2 = 0.314$) and 42.4% of the variance in direct booking intention ($R^2 = 0.424$), both categorized as moderate according to Hair et al. (2022). Effect size (f^2) analysis further indicates that membership contributes the largest share in explaining both perceived value ($f^2 = 0.229$, medium effect) and direct booking intention ($f^2 = 0.314$, medium effect), whereas brand image contributes only a small effect on perceived value ($f^2 = 0.099$) and no meaningful effect on direct booking intention ($f^2 = 0.000$). Perceived value shows a small effect size on direct booking intention ($f^2 = 0.070$).

Hypothesis Testing

Table 2 presents the results of the direct and indirect effect testing using bootstrapping in SmartPLS 4.

Table 2. Hypothesis testing results

Hypothesis	Path	Original Sample (β)	t-statistics	p-values	Result
H1	Brand Image → Direct Booking Intention	0.003	0.041	0.967	Not Supported
H2	Membership → Direct Booking Intention	0.494	8.324	0.000	Supported
H3	Brand Image → Perceived Value	0.272	4.046	0.000	Supported

H4	Membership → Perceived Value	0.415	6.097	0.000	Supported
H5	Perceived Value → Direct Booking Intention	0.243	3.465	0.001	Supported
H6	Brand Image → Perceived Value → Direct Booking Intention	0.066	2.603	0.009	Supported
H7	Membership → Perceived Value → Direct Booking Intention	0.101	2.881	0.004	Supported

Source: Data Analysis (2026)

The results show that brand image has no significant direct effect on direct booking intention (β = 0.003; t = 0.041; p = 0.967), leading H1 to be rejected. In contrast, membership has a positive and significant direct effect on direct booking intention (β = 0.494; t = 8.324; p = 0.000), supporting H2. Brand image significantly influences perceived value (β = 0.272; t = 4.046; p = 0.000), supporting H3, while membership also shows a positive and significant effect on perceived value (β = 0.415; t = 6.097; p = 0.000), supporting H4. Perceived value significantly influences direct booking intention (β = 0.243; t = 3.465; p = 0.001), supporting H5.

The indirect effect testing confirms that perceived value significantly mediates the effect of brand image on direct booking intention (β = 0.066; t = 2.603; p = 0.009), supporting H6. Since the direct effect of brand image on direct booking intention is non-significant while the indirect effect is significant, this indicates a full mediation (indirect-only mediation) pattern. Similarly, perceived value significantly mediates the effect of membership on direct booking intention (β = 0.101; t = 2.881; p = 0.004), supporting H7. Because both the direct and indirect effects of membership on direct booking intention are significant, this indicates a complementary partial mediation pattern.

Discussion

The finding that brand image has no significant direct effect on direct booking intention (β = 0.003; p = 0.967) indicates that a positive brand image alone is insufficient to drive customers toward the hotel's official reservation channel. This result is consistent with Agustin (2019) and Fitra (2025) who found that brand image does not significantly influence booking or purchase intention, with customers instead prioritizing price, trust, and tangible benefits. However, this finding contrasts with several previous studies that reported a significant direct effect of brand image on booking intention (Aryanti & Tjokrosaputro, 2024; Touni et al., 2022; Witarsana et al., 2024). This divergence suggests that the influence of brand image on booking behavior may be highly context-dependent, particularly in markets where customers have become accustomed to comparing value across multiple digital channels, including OTAs, before making a reservation decision.

Membership, on the other hand, shows a positive and significant direct effect on direct booking intention (β = 0.494; p = 0.000), reinforcing its role as the strongest predictor in the model (f^2 = 0.314). This result aligns with Kim et al. (2026) and Touni et al., (2022), who demonstrated that subscription-based membership and customer–brand relationships significantly drive booking behavior. The tangible and immediate nature of membership benefits such as exclusive rates, reward points, and personalized service appears to provide customers with a concrete incentive to book directly, distinguishing it from the more abstract, perception-based influence of brand image.

Both brand image (β = 0.272; p = 0.000) and membership (β = 0.415; p = 0.000) significantly and

positively influence perceived value, confirming H3 and H4. These results support Fazal-e-Hasan et al., (2024) and Rini (2017) , who found that brand perception and membership benefits are key antecedents of perceived value in the hospitality context. Membership's stronger effect on perceived value compared to brand image suggests that customers place greater weight on concrete, experienced benefits than on abstract brand perceptions when evaluating the overall worth of engaging with the hotel's official channel.

Perceived value significantly influences direct booking intention ($\beta = 0.243$; $p = 0.001$), supporting H5 and reinforcing the findings of Fazal-e-Hasan et al., (2024) who identified perceived value as a central determinant of online booking intention. This confirms Perceived Value Theory by Zeithaml (1988) which posits that purchase decisions are driven more by the net value customers perceive than by brand attributes alone.

The mediation analysis reveals two distinct mechanisms through which perceived value operates. First, perceived value fully mediates the relationship between brand image and direct booking intention (indirect effect: $\beta = 0.066$; $p = 0.009$), consistent with the indirect-only mediation pattern reported by Lien et al., (2015), Roy et al., (2022) and Salsabila et al., (2025) . This finding can be explained through Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) Theory: brand image functions as an external stimulus that customers must first process internally evaluating whether the hotel's reputation translates into genuine benefit before it can influence booking behavior. Signaling Theory further supports this pattern, as brand image serves merely as an initial quality signal that requires interpretation through a cost–benefit evaluation before shaping behavioral intention (Ryu & Jang, 2008; Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). This explains why hotels with strong brand recognition, such as Jayakarta Hotels & Resorts, may still experience low direct booking contribution if customers do not perceive tangible value in booking directly compared to using an OTA.

Second, perceived value partially and complementarily mediates the relationship between membership and direct booking intention (indirect effect: $\beta = 0.101$; $p = 0.004$), as both the direct and indirect paths are significant. This indicates that membership operates through two simultaneous mechanisms: a direct pathway, where tangible benefits immediately encourage booking behavior, and an indirect pathway, where those benefits are first evaluated and internalized as perceived value before reinforcing booking intention. This dual-pathway pattern extends Relationship Marketing Theory by demonstrating that loyalty programs do not merely retain customers but actively convert perceived value into measurable behavioral outcomes (Utomo & Indriani, 2024; Wisker et al., 2025).

Collectively, these findings extend the application of SOR Theory to the hospitality distribution context by demonstrating that marketing stimuli do not uniformly influence behavioral responses; rather, the pathway depends on the nature of the stimulus itself. Symbolic stimuli such as brand image require full cognitive-affective processing (organism) before producing a response, whereas functional stimuli such as membership can influence behavior both directly and through the same evaluative process. This distinction offers a theoretical contribution by clarifying boundary conditions under which perceived value operates as a full versus partial mediator an aspect that has received limited empirical attention in prior hospitality marketing literature.

From a managerial perspective, these findings suggest that Jayakarta Hotels & Resorts should not rely solely on brand-building activities to increase direct bookings. Instead, brand communication must be paired with tangible evidence of value such as best-rate guarantees,

simplified reservation processes, and transparent information to ensure that a favorable brand image is genuinely translated into perceived value. Simultaneously, the membership program should be further strengthened, as it already demonstrates the strongest direct influence on booking behavior; enhancing benefit exclusivity, personalization, and integration with the official website could amplify both its direct and value-mediated effects.

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the research was confined to three resort properties under a single hotel network, limiting the generalizability of the findings to other hotel segments or business models. Second, only four variables were examined, while other potentially relevant factors such as website quality, trust, electronic word of mouth, perceived risk, and price fairness were not included in the model. Third, the cross-sectional design captures customer perceptions at a single point in time and cannot account for how these perceptions evolve. Future research is recommended to incorporate additional mediating or moderating variables and to adopt a longitudinal design to better capture the dynamic nature of customer booking behavior.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the influence of brand image and membership on direct booking intention, with perceived value as a mediating variable, among 180 members of Jayakarta Hotels & Resorts. The findings reveal that brand image has no significant direct effect on direct booking intention, whereas membership exerts a strong and significant direct effect. Both brand image and membership significantly enhance perceived value, which in turn significantly drives direct booking intention. Mediation analysis further demonstrates that perceived value fully mediates the relationship between brand image and direct booking intention, while it partially and complementarily mediates the relationship between membership and direct booking intention. These results confirm that customers do not translate a favorable brand image into direct booking behavior unless they first perceive tangible value, whereas membership benefits are capable of influencing booking behavior both directly and through enhanced perceived value.

This study contributes theoretically by extending the application of Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) Theory to the hotel distribution context, demonstrating that the pathway from marketing stimuli to behavioral response is contingent on the nature of the stimulus: symbolic stimuli such as brand image require full cognitive-affective processing before influencing behavior, while functional stimuli such as membership can operate through both direct and mediated pathways. The study also reinforces Signaling Theory, Perceived Value Theory, and Relationship Marketing Theory by empirically distinguishing full mediation from complementary partial mediation within a single integrated model an aspect that has received limited attention in prior hospitality marketing research. The novelty of this study lies in testing this integrated mediation model at the resort hotel level, an empirical context that has been largely overlooked in favor of OTA-focused or urban hotel settings.

Practically, the findings suggest that hotel management should not rely on brand-building efforts alone to increase direct bookings. Brand communication needs to be reinforced with tangible evidence of value, such as best-rate guarantees, simplified reservation processes, and transparent information, so that positive brand perceptions are genuinely converted into perceived value. At the same time, membership programs should be prioritized and further strengthened, given their strong direct influence on booking behavior, through more exclusive and personalized benefits integrated seamlessly with the hotel's official digital channels. These

strategies are expected to help hotel networks such as Jayakarta Hotels & Resorts reduce their structural dependence on OTAs and strengthen their direct distribution channel.

This study is limited to three resort properties under a single hotel network, uses only four variables, and adopts a cross-sectional design, which may constrain the generalizability and temporal validity of the findings. Future research is encouraged to test this model across different hotel segments and business models, to incorporate additional variables such as website quality, trust, electronic word of mouth, and perceived risk, and to employ a longitudinal design to capture how customer perceptions and booking behavior evolve over time.

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