Electronic Service Quality (e-SQ) in Tourism: A Comparative Study.

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Abstract:

Electronic service quality (e-SQ) is a new developing area of research, which has strategic importance for businesses striving to address consumers in the electronic marketplace. It is known that consumer behavior in an online environment may differ substantially from the one displayed in the physical world. Therefore, it is important for practitioners to understand customer needs that are amenable to fulfillment in an online environment and strive to meet them.

E-SQ is what differentiates a good quality website from a customer point of view and facilitates the process of bringing customer and company together. This paper addresses E-SQ in the tourism context, and aims to evaluate e-service quality of air transport websites as a major sector of tourism industry. Egypt Air and Oman Air are selected to be comparative case studies. Empirical data are gathered through a survey of potential inbound and domestics tourists in Egypt as well as in Oman.

The results indicate that both companies present electronic services that fulfill online customer needs and can, therefore, form a positive customer perception and satisfaction. Further findings indicate that there is no significant difference between both airlines websites performance except reliability and empathy. For both companies, it is recommended to improve the overall e-service quality regarding constructs and items related to: ease of use, website design, reliability, system availability, privacy, responsiveness, empathy, experience, and trust.

Key words: Electronic Service Quality (e-SQ), Tourism, Egypt Air, Oman Air, Customer Satisfaction, Website Performance.