



The influence of website quality dimensions on e-purchasing behaviour and e-loyalty: a comparative study of Egyptian travel agents and hotels

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ABSTRACT

Websites have become a channel for tourism enterprises to market and sell their services online. These enterprises are committed to improving their online services to retain customers and improving their competitiveness. This study aims to measure the effect of website quality dimensions on customer purchasing behaviour, and how this behaviour affects customer electronic (e)-loyalty. It compares the perceptions of 275 customers of travel agencies and 355 hotels using structural equation modelling. Findings revealed that website quality dimensions significantly affect the customer purchasing behaviour. The study highlighted the dimensions with a negative effect to help managers improve their website quality.

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Introduction

The improvement of website services is rising rapidly across all industries, particularly the tourism and hospitality industry. In recent times, online purchasing has witnessed a remarkable leap forward (Chiu, Wang, Fang, & Huang, 2014; Luo, Ba, & Zhang, 2012). Tourism enterprises use the internet as a part of their marketing efforts to effectively communicate with customers (Díaz & Koutra, 2013; Sigala, 2003; Yang & Lin, 2014), and increase their sales (Bilgihan & Bujisic, 2014). As a result websites have become an important distribution channel for many enterprises (Chiu et al., 2014), and worldwide retail online sales had already reached approximately US\$ 1 trillion by the end of 2010 (Goldman, 2011). The estimation of Forrester Research (2012) indicates that online shoppers will spend US\$ 327 billion in 2016 in the United States (US).

A review of the extant travel and tourism literature reveals that the internet has recently become the most important source of travel information for tourists (Pan & Fesenmaier, 2006; Park, Wang, & Fesenmaier, 2011) as it allows potential guests to gather information about travel services and facilities, compare prices without contacting sales representatives or travel agents, and prepare their travel itineraries while looking at a screen (Runfola, Rosati, & Guercini, 2013). In response to the increasing demand for e-services (Lim, Abou-Shouk, & Megicks, 2013) many tour-

ism enterprises have established websites to promote their services and have gained an increased share of the online market (Lim et al., 2013; O'Connor & Frew, 2002; Phelan, Christodoulidou, Countryman, & Kistner, 2011).

Where a high-quality website is a critical success factor for enterprises in a time when tourists are increasingly searching for and purchasing services online (Bieger & Laesser, 2004; Dickinger & Stangl, 2013; Park et al., 2011), well developed and innovative websites have been said to equal traditional distribution channels in the international tourism markets (Lim et al., 2013). Furthermore, electronic (e)-commerce in hospitality and tourism has progressed in recent years (Inversini & Masiero, 2014; Salavati & Hashim, 2015). However, during this progress it is noticeable that online travel portals have fallen behind when it comes to creating a pleasant online environment for customers (Hassan, 2013). Therefore, Bilgihan and Bujisic (2014) hypothesized that developing compelling and useful online shopping portals would help e-commerce enterprises build and maintain relationships with their customers, and the customer commitment in the online environments will be established.

In addition, regardless of the rapid growth in online shopping, many customers indicate that they are dissatisfied with their online purchase experiences; this leads to the need for research to better understand the factors that affect customers' evaluations of their online purchas-