

Sustainable E-Service Quality for Travel Websites

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E-service quality is becoming increasingly important for businesses to attract and retain customers in the current technological environment. As a corollary, e-retailers aim to deliver the highest quality products and services available to their clients. Additionally, due to increasing competition, a travel website must prioritize improving electronic service quality (e-SQ) to remain competitive. E-SQ is crucial to electronic commerce.

e-service quality

sustainable e-services

tourism websites

1. E-Service Quality

Electronic services differ from conventional services since they are based on the exchange of information between clients and service providers. Many advantages and potential gains are associated with high-quality internet services ([1][2]). Therefore, the quality of e-services is a significant topic in marketing. E-service quality indicates how well a website enables the efficient and effective purchase and delivery of goods and services [3]. An increasing body of scholarly research has begun to examine the quality of e-services and consumer relationships, with a particular emphasis on online purchasing. E-service quality concepts are drawn from service quality constructs. However, various measures have been developed to assess the quality of various e-services according to user feedback (e-SQ). Some of the most influential e-SQ assessment scales of the new millennium include SiteQual [4], Website Service Quality (WebQual) [5], eTailQ [6], and E-S-QUAL [7]. Still, there are currently no approved models or criteria for the quality of electronic services or its measurement [8].

The provision of quality internet services is currently more important than it has ever been in order to keep existing clients [9]. In addition, many businesses face a significant impediment in the form of competition to enhance the quality of their customer service in order to both draw in and sustain clients [10]. However, previous attempts to assess e-service quality have taken varied approaches and yielded varying findings, reflecting the wide range of conceptualizations of electronic services. For quality planning and analysis, Juran and Gryna [11] consider four aspects: capability (can the product operate as expected), availability (is the product functional), reliability (is the product defect-free), and maintainability (is it easy to repair when broken). Several of the following quality scales reflect, at least in part, these generic product and service quality standards. This makes them an excellent idea to begin with when envisioning high-quality electronic services. Zeithaml et al. [12] established eleven criteria for e-service quality that include price knowledge, access, reliability, responsiveness, flexibility, ease of navigation, efficiency, assurance (trust), security (privacy), site aesthetics, and customization (personalization). Similarly, Kaynama and Black [13] highlighted seven dimensions to assess the service quality of online travel agencies that

include background, design, content, access, navigation, response, and personalization (customization), whereas Jun and Cai [14] highlighted seventeen criteria classified into three categories: customer service quality, banking service product quality, and online systems quality for assessing the service quality for online banking.

According to Parasuraman et al. [7], who provided the most extensive work on the quality of e-services, they experimented to evaluate the quality of online shopping services using a multi-item scale (E-S-QUAL). Two scales, they concluded, are required to evaluate the quality of electronic services. The E-S-QUAL scale has four dimensions of quality (efficiency, fulfilment, system availability, and privacy). Furthermore, this scale may be beneficial when consumers encounter “irregular interactions” with service recoveries, such as product returns or technical difficulties [7]. This scale has three tiers of quality (responsiveness, compensation, and contact). Furthermore, in 2006 Kim et al. identified nine criteria that include security, ease of use, finding low fares, valuable and relevant content, the speed of the website, the ability to book all travel services in a single transaction, booking flexibility, and sorting options, as well as the design of the website.

2. Sustainable E-Service Quality (SESQ)

Sustainable service quality is defined as the capacity to deliver a reliable service of exceptional sustained quality for an incredibly long time with no disruptions [15]. SESQ, as defined in part by Kandampully and Menguc [16], is the capacity to consistently deliver e-services of incredible quality over time that internal and external customers require and value in addition to the capacity to manage, maintain, and expand their pleasure and loyalty in order to maintain them as clients or delighted internal stakeholders. Furthermore, it has been stated that New Zealand enterprises use quality control, quality measurement, and service maintenance to assure service quality. In subsequent research, it should be determined which elements contribute to the sustaining of a higher level of service quality [16].

A previous study in the context of banking highlighted three types of “imperatives” (the quality of operational, resource, and marketing services) that are meant to ensure sustainable service provision for automated teller machine networks [17]. The research by Stamenkov and Dika [15] established a sustainable model for the quality of e-services that illustrates the interrelationships between elements and provides a research basis for further development in various contexts. In addition, it has been emphasized by Utomo et al. [18] that marketers should study crucial data on consumer behavior in online services before developing marketing strategies to support the company’s sustainable performance.

Due to the absence of a conceptual model of e-service quality in the reviewed studies, an empirical study is required to elucidate the specific drivers of e-service quality and their influence on consumers’ evaluations of travel websites, such as price and availability information ([19][20]). In this research, the relative importance of various parameters for evaluating the e-service quality of travel websites is determined through a hierarchical structure, which is the skeleton created by embedding the measurement tool established by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Malhotra [7] along with supplementary factors to measure service quality.

3. Sustainable E-Service Quality (SESQ) for Travel Websites

Electronic services (e-services) or services offered via electronic channels ^[21] are usually investigated with a focus on assuring service quality. E-services must improve in terms of meeting promises, delivering goods on time, responding to customer complaints, securing personal identities and banking information, and providing accurate product information ^[22]. In the past decade, the SERVQUAL model has been utilized to assess service quality in e-commerce settings (^[23]^[24]). Prior e-service research quality has focused on rewriting SERVQUAL measurement scales to comply with the conceptual framework. In addition, service researchers have revealed that e-service consumer assessments should be given a larger emphasis. This is significant because the mechanism for analyzing the quality of services differs between e-commerce and services delivered in physical markets ^[25]. Furthermore, van Riel et al. ^[26] argued for modifications to the SERVQUAL scale items to make them more relevant in the framework of online shopping.

Effective online platforms can delight and retain customers, resulting in desired behaviors such as word-of-mouth advocacy, readiness to pay a premium, and repurchase intent. Gronroos et al. ^[27] note that only a small percentage of websites are appealing to their target audiences, and an even smaller percentage provide significant value to both the client and the seller. Even though it has been determined that in order to enhance the quality of the online booking services that online travel service providers offer to their customers, online travel service providers should prioritize reliability, system availability, and responsiveness whilst still focusing on ease of use and trust, online travel service providers should prioritize trust and ease of use ^[28].

The SESQ evaluations are subjective assessments of the service quality and facilities offered on travel websites. The continuous enhancement of SESQ drivers illustrates how much travel businesses care about their passengers/customers, regardless of the economic environment. While service endurance is vital, there is little research on the subject in the literature to date. Researchers in the academic world have investigated the concept of service quality from a variety of standpoints, such as services marketing, information systems, and electronic commerce. In the middle of the second decade of the twenty-first century, there has been a shift in the focus of study away from service quality and toward alternative concepts, the most prominent of which are service value and value co-creation ^[29]. Every e-service context is unique, and a specific scale is required to measure e-SQ in said context. A measure which is important in a particular context, may not be an adequate measure in another context for measuring e-SQ. So, important measures of service quality in different e-service contexts must be identified ^[30]. Therefore, the present research attempts to provide significant information pertaining to consumer behavior in online travel services, which means that marketers can take this into consideration before deciding on marketing strategies to support the sustainable success of the organization. This research aims to ascertain the leading attributes of selected travel websites based on sustainable e-service quality (SESQ).

Indeed, the drivers of SESQ can elucidate the most critical service challenges. To ensure a pleasant trip, one must ensure that the SESQ tools utilized can meet all consumer requirements. Recent emphasis has been placed on decision-making regarding the evaluation and maintenance of SESQ drivers. While each factor is critical for the

growth, sustainability, and maintenance of the high-quality customer service of travel websites, the proliferation of criteria makes evaluating and ranking travel websites more challenging.

Even though there have been a lot of studies on online travel agencies in the past decade, not much has been written about how e-service quality applies to online travel agencies. Previous research on online travel agencies has mostly focused on acceptance [31] and choosing preferences [32]. However, a few tourism researchers have looked into how users feel about the quality of e-services for online travel agencies (e.g., [33][34]), measuring e-service quality ([28][35]) and analyzing the dimensions of e-service quality [36], customer satisfaction and behavior for these agencies [37], and e-service quality and e-satisfaction ([38][39]). Other studies have identified cultural variables, particularly uncertainty avoidance and individualism/collectivism, that affect the impact of service quality aspects on visitors' experiences with their online purchases [40]. However, not much real-world research has been conducted to find out *what drives sustainable e service quality for travel websites*.

A previous study discussed and proposed a conceptual sustainable e-service quality model towards a 'sustainability paradigm' ([15][29]) and related consumer behavior with e-service quality and sustainable performance within online shopping in general ([9][17][18]).

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