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MEASURING e-SERVICE QUALITY (EXPECTATION VS PERCEPTION) FROM TRAVEL AGENCIES' PERSPECTIVE: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON EGYPTIAN HOTEL WEBSITES

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to evaluate e-service quality from the Egyptian travel agencies' perspective, and to examine the discrepancies in e-service quality dimensions between customer's expectations and perception of hotel e-service quality, in order to examine the fifth gap in service quality model in the context of hotel websites, which, in turn, is a crucial point of debate among researchers and an assumption that is inconclusive, contradictory, and inconsistent in the extant literature. Data was collected via questionnaire from random samples drawn from the population of travel agencies as customers using e-hotel service in Cairo. The constructs in this study were developed by using measurement scales adopted from prior studies. The instrument was evaluated for reliability and validity. The techniques for the data analysis included descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and paired-samples *t*-tests. The results in this study indicate that there is a real gap between customer expectation and customers' perceived service quality. This study and its results have several limitations but they also indicate directions for further research.

Keywords: Internet Marketing, E-Service Quality, Egyptian Hotels, WEBQUAL, E-Marketing

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, with the rapid development of information, communication technology and the globalization of markets, Internet and World Wide Web (WWW) have become important tools in business. With the vanishing of distance and time barriers, the world is becoming an integrated community of buyers and sellers interacting via Internet (Chiu *et al.*, 2014; Luo, Ba and Zhang, 2012). Internet has significantly revolutionized hotel industry in the last decade (Yang and Lin, 2014; Diaz and Koutra, 2013; Thakran and Verma, 2013). Products and services are radically shifted to digital form and delivered through Internet. Additionally, Internet offers an interactive function with its customers (Khalifa and Abou-Shouk, 2014; Santos 2003) and enables electronic service (e-service) to move to the forefront of technology priorities (Khalifa and Abou-Shouk, 2014). Today, Internet represents one of the largest e-platforms for business in the B2C sector, offering not only tremendous opportunities for marketers, but also an innovative and dynamic way of conducting marketing and approaching consumer markets (Hassan, 2013; Luo, Ba and Zhang, 2012; Pitt *et al*., 2002; Sharma and Sheth, 2004; Vargo and Lusch, 2004). Consequently, this makes Internet marketing an indispensable reality of modern business, as well as an exciting area of research (Sharma and Sheth, 2004).

Most lodgings in the developed world and some in the developing world are currently offering web hospitality administrations with different levels of complexity. A corporate site is a helpful instrument for tending to clients on the Internet and for molding clients' web-based shopping knowledge (Yang *et al.*, 2003; Parasuraman and Zinkhan, 2002). The quality of the site assumes a noteworthy part in forming the customer's web experience (Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Malhotra, 2002). In addition, it can influence a site guest's choice to return to the site and in the end purchase from the organization (Loiacono, Watson and Goodhue, 2002; Piccoli *et al.,* 2004). Thus, site quality is essential for successful Internet showcasing. As it were, promoting execution of the site depends on its capacity to convey quality client benefits (Khalifa and

Hewedi 2014; Iliachenko, 2006).

An empirical study finds that the variables of the web design are solid indicators of clients' quality judgments, fulfillments, and loyalties for the Internet retailers (Wolfinbarger and Gilly, 2003). Extensive development potential is estimated for the arrangement of items and administration by means of electronic channels (Cristóbal-Fransi, Hernández-Soriano and Marimon, 2017; Al-Nuaimi *et al.,* 2016; Majid *et al*., 2016). Organizations acknowledged and received the new information and communication technology in the performance of their activities to bolster not only customary exercises, but also those emerging from new avenues, especially from the Internet (Al-Nuaimi et al., 2016). Electronic service quality (E-SQ) is another creative zone of research, which has key significance for organizations endeavoring to address clients in the electronic commercial center (Swaid and Wigand, 2009; Rahman, Khan and Haque, 2012; Winnie 2014; Al-Tarawneh, 2012). Parasuraman and Zinkhan (2002) maintain that electronic service contributes two key favorable circumstances: data proficiency and exchange productivity. Electronic service quality is a fundamental necessity for the great execution of electronic channels (Barrutia and Galisanz, 2009).

Widespread research on traditional SQ has been conducted during the past years (Parasuraman and Zeithaml, 2002). In contrast, only a limited number of researches deal directly with how customers assess e-SQ (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Malhotra, 2005), and what are the appropriate dimensions of the quality of e-service delivery (Carlson and O'Cass, 2011). The paper addresses the e-service quality issue in the electronic marketplace. The present paper is to investigate e-service quality dimensions from customer's perspectives. The paper explores e-service quality dimensions based on the model of Loiacona, Watson and Goodhue (2007) to measure e-service quality dimension. It proposes a 12-dimension scale for measuring e-service quality.

Hotel Website and Internet Marketing

At the beginning when Web technology was presented, hotels began having sites primarily because "you need to have it", and it had no other utility than to demonstrate the organization's nearness on the Internet (Phelan *et al.,* 2011). These days, corporate sites have advanced into a crucial client touch-point and speak to another stage for client collaboration (Janita and Miranda, 2013; Bradshaw and Brash, 2001; Pitt *et al*., 2002; Zineldin, 2000).

Engaged by the Internet, buyers regularly utilize the Web not exclusively to look at data and analyze costs, additionally to reach service and goods suppliers (Bukhari *et al.,* 2013; Rust and Lemon, 2001). In this circumstance, corporate sites emerge as a vital promoting instrument for organizations to address their clients and seek after their purchasing expectations (Constantinides, 2004; Ariff *et al.,* 2013). It demonstrates that organization' sites, aside from essentially mirroring an Internet nearness and giving data about an organization and its items, form an indispensable correspondence and client contact point, satisfying the part of a "virtual office" and stage for Internet promoting. On a site, a client can get data, arrange items, and get support and administration. The site based promoting activities of organizations can, subsequently, assume an essential part in starting associations with potential clients, securing clients and seeking after clients' purchasing expectations (Khalifa and Shen, 2005; Abou-Shouk and Khalifa, 2017).

Drawing in potential clients is essential for business achievement (Gupta, Lehmann and Stuart, 2004; Abou-Shouk and Khalifa, 2017). In straightforward terms, corporate sites are the stages through which the underlying phases of provider-client connections can take place (Khalifa and Abou-Shouk, 2014). Later, website clients can be transformed into potentially loyal long-term clients (Phelan *et al.,* 2011; Khalifa and Shen, 2005)."Website marketing is, thus, an important part of the company's overall Internet marketing strategy. A critical success factor in Internet-based B2C marketing is the effectiveness of a commercial website. By having an effective website, a company gains global and permanent access to the market; and its marketing information is available to customers at any time"(Iliachenko, 2006).

Electronic Service Quality (E-SQ) of Websites

A corporate site is a valuable tool for tending to clients on the Internet and for forming clients' web based shopping experience (Poon and Lee, 2012; Yang *et al.,* 2003; Parasuraman and Zinkhan, 2002). Constantinides (2004) looks at how firms would be able to influence the result of virtual interaction and purchasing process by concentrating their promoting

endeavors on forming clients' Web experience. Superior client Web encounter can possibly impact clients' perceptions and attitudes, and drive extra activity to deals outlets. Constantinides (2004) recommends that the way to convey a predominant Web experience lies in the significant arrangement of Web experience components, and understanding their role as inputs in the online customer's decision-making process. This is the initial move towards creating and conveying an appealing online presence, which is probably going to have the most extreme effect on Web clients (Ibid.). The quality of the site assumes a noteworthy part in molding the customer's Web experience (Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Malhorta, 2002; Zeithaml, 2002). In addition, it can decide a site guest's choice to return to the site and, eventually, purchase from the organization (Loiacono, Watson and Goodhue, 2002; Piccoli *et al*., 2004).

Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Malhorta, (2002) state: "Evidence exists that service quality delivery through Web sites is an essential strategy to success, possibly more important than low price and Web presence". Grönroos *et al*. (2000), also, suggest:

- "A well-designed website creates an interest in the firm and its offerings, and it should also offer the users opportunities to reconstruct the website in their minds so that it matches their cognitive structures";
- A website "must link an individual to in-depth information about goods or services and promote his or her intentions to actually make the purchase";
- "Websites must continuously be adapted to changes in the marketspace";
- "The Internet offerings must be developed to stay on top of the continuous technological improvements that take place" (Ibid).

1. Website E-Services and Website E-Service Quality

Grönroos *et al.*, (2000) suggest companies' quality Internet offerings or website e-services are an essential strategy for addressing customers in an online environment. Internet offerings on a firm's website, or so-called e-services, bear a strong resemblance to services and are, in fact, services mediated by the Internet. Moreover, Grönroos *et al.*, (2000) state that "the offering of any physical good or service over the Internet is a service… Regardless of whether physical goods or services are purchased, buying on the virtual marketspace of the Internet can be characterized as service consumption. The Internet offerings that are consumed are processes and the consumption of them is process consumption" (Grönroos *et al.,* 2000).

Grönroos (1998) defines services as processes, and the consumption of services as process consumption. From his definition, it follows that Internet offerings (or website e-services) are processes that lead to an outcome (through a direct or indirect satisfaction of a customer's need or creation of customer value). Consumption and the outcome of an e-service process is mediated by the Internet, and the company's website is the platform for a customer's e-service consumption. Therefore, "the quality of an Internet offering is dependent of the perceived quality of the process of using the Internet as a purchasing and sometimes also consumption instrument, as well as of the perceived quality of the outcome. Marketers who wish to use the Internet to offer their goods or services to customers should take care to design their offerings as service offerings which customers perceive and evaluate as services" (Grönroos *et al.,* 2000).

The literature presents a wide range of understandings of normally utilized terms, for example, site service quality or online service quality. This is a regular issue because of the absence of formal definitions (Ziethaml, Parasuraman and Malhorta, 2002). Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Malhorta, (2002) presented the idea of electronic servicequality (e-SQ) and inspected the service quality of sites and their part in service quality delivery to clients. They additionally gave the first formal definition of e-SQ in their working paper, "E-Service Quality: Definition, Dimensions and Conceptual Model ". They define website quality or e-SQ as "the extent to which a website facilitates efficient and effective shopping, purchasing and delivery of products and services" (Ziethaml, Parasuraman and Malhorta, 2002; Zeithaml, 2002,). This definition includes a client's total shopping knowledge and joins pre-site, on-site and post-site benefit viewpoints (Ibid.).

2. Factors Impacting on Website E-Service Quality

Website e-SQ is a novel zone of research, there is, thus, no understanding in the present research about what components impact e-SQ or what e-services reinforce organization sites. There are, a few components viewed as key for site e-SQ. Basically, these can be characterized as the site's capacity to address buyer

needs in the online condition and its capacity to increase the value of client operations.

Conceptual Model of E-SQ

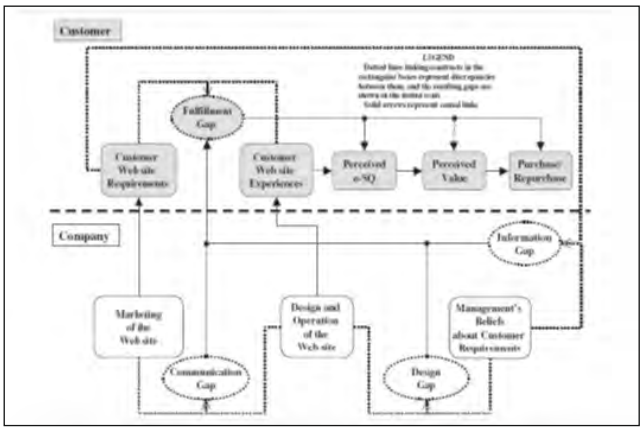
Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, (1985) built a conceptual model of service quality, recommending that service quality, as seen by clients, can be dictated by the magnitude and direction of the inconsistency between service expectations and perceptions, which is a component of four organizational gaps related with the design, marketing, and delivery of service. This is the alleged GAPs Model that hypothesizes that an inadequacy in client service quality is the consequence of a few deficits within the service provider's organization.

Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Malhorta, (2002) recommend that e-SQ is fundamentally the same as service quality in a way, that similar shortfalls in the service provider's organization can influence customers' perception of e-SQ, when communication between the organization and its clients happens through the Internet. Thus, e-SQ is affected by a few hierarchical and site inadequacies in data, design, and communication. The conceptual model of e-SQ proposed by them is portrayed in Figure 1.

The upper piece of the model ("Customer") depicts client evaluation of e-SQ and its outcomes, and the lower part ("Company") portrays hierarchical insufficiencies (GAPs) that can add to poor appraisal of e-SQ by clients. On the organization's side, there are three potential process detaches – information, design, and communication gaps. These gaps can happen during the time spent outlining, operating, and marketing sites and add to the "fulfilment gap " on the client side of the model (Ibid.).

Information gap: represents the differences between clients' requirements concerning the site and administration's beliefs about these prerequisites. For instance, "administration may overestimate the significance of including refined… 3D-designs that could undermine exchange productivity… that clients should seriously mull over to be much more critical than site attractiveness" (Ibid.). Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Malhorta, (2002) recommend: "The significance of the information gap with regards to e-SQ is elevated by the way that clients are probably going to covet an ideal level of execution that is neither too high nor too low on some Web webpage qualities. … "more" may not generally convert into higher saw e-SQ. Besides, the optimum performance level on any given characteristic may likewise change crosswise over clients and context (e.g., buy of uncommon versus promptly accessible things; a typical versus an issue tormented exchange). Without general regular monitoring of the marketplace to refresh the organization's knowledge about Web webpage attributes fancied by clients, some level of information gap will hold on".

Figure 1: Conceptual Model for Understanding and Improving E-SQ



Source: Adopted from Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Malhorta, 2002

Design gap: shows the organization's failure to completely join information about client requirements into the structure and functioning of a site. For instance, "management may know that their clients hope to get immediate individual support when an issue emerges with an e-exchange. However, for an assortment of reasons (e.g., perceived lack of resources or a propensity to see clients as being nonsensical), management may neglect to follow up on their mindfulness and start suitable Web website alterations" (Ibid).

Communication gap: is because of the absence of an exact comprehension of the site's features, capacities, and confinements by the organization's marketing workforce. There are diverse reasons for this gap as announced by Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Malhorta, (2002), for example, an absence of powerful communication between the marketing workforce offering guarantees to purchasers and the staff in charge of designing and operating the site that satisfies these guarantees, obliviousness for a deficiency in the system or infrastructure underlying the website, and over-promising or giving wrong guarantees to shoppers

through various media (TV, print, the Web).

A client's Web encounters "fallingshort" regarding his or her site requirements incited by the organization's advertising brings about the client's satisfaction gap. *Fulfillment gap* speaks to the overall discrepancy between the client's expectation and experience, and results from the gaps on the organization's side. A fulfillment gap has two structures: one coming about because of advertising guarantees that incorrectly mirror the reality of the web design and operation, and the other coming about because of general inadequacies of the site in satisfying clients' needs (e.g., a site's failure to give an e-exchange function).

The model proposed by Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Malhorta, (2002) additionally places some on-site client experience, including a pleasant surprise-impact concerning website characteristics that will directly affect perceived e-SQ by a client. The authors propose that a direct connection exists between perceived e-SQ, perceived client value and buy/re-buy intentions, where perceived value comes about because of an exchange between the advantages received and sacrifices persevered by the clients.

Measuring E-Service Quality of Websites

One of the essential duties of a modern marketing manager is to guarantee the hotel's website complies with the quality criteria of the organization's clients. An approach to do that is to measure the e-SQ of a site. One of the real issues in deciding a company's Internet marketing effectiveness is that there are no settled criteria for judging the accomplishment of business websites. The measurement of the e-SQ profile of business sites of firms is in its underlying stages, and there are few approved instruments for measuring website e-SQ (Parasuraman, 2004; Gounaris and Dimitriadis, 2003). There are various strategies that permit the measurement of a site's e-SQ profile as perceived by its on-going clients (Loiacono, Watson and Goodhue, 2002; Loiacono, Watson and Goodhue, 2007; Zeithaml, 2002). The best-known instruments are, for instance, WEBQUAL, created by Loiacono, Watson and Goodhue, (2002); E-SERVQUAL, created by Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Malhotra, (2002); and e-TailQ, created by Wolfinbarger and Gilly (2003). Other estimation instruments utilize the business execution of a site, measured by the quantity of snaps or buys created by the site (Wöber *et al.,* 2002).

1. *WEBQUAL* Technique

Loiacono, Watson and Goodhue, (2002) propose a novel technique for assessing site quality utilizing the instrument WEBQUAL. WEBQUAL concentrates on the site interface and is proposed to be one the most observationally grounded e-SQ scales (Wolfinbarger and Gilly, 2003). WEBQUAL is created in view of the theoretical foundation of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). The primary thought behind the utilization of WEBQUAL is that it is conceivable to foresee the re-visit/re-use behavior of web clients in the light of their perceptions of general website quality. The instrument comprises of four dimensions, namely, usefulness, ease of use, entertainment, and complimentary relationship, which incorporate a scope of website measurements, each of which is assessed by a website guest as per his/her impression of site quality (Loiacono, Watson and Goodhue, 2002; Loiacono, Watson and Goodhue, 2007).

Informational fit-to-task refers to the quality of the information offered on the website, its appropriateness, and the method of presentation. Usefulness includes informational fit-to-task, interactivity, trust and response time measurements. Interactivity is the site's capacity to permit distinct streams of communication between the webpage's clients and the organization's workforce, intelligent look for data, and exchanges through the site. The trust measurement alludes to keeping up the security of client data given through the site. Response time is the site's specialized qualities in connection to stacking time in a client's program and the time required to finish exchanges with the site. Usability (Ease of use) incorporates simplicity of understanding and natural operations measurements.

Table 1: Original WEBQUAL Items by Construct.

Area of concern	Recommended action
Ease of understanding	Design the pages that are easy to read and understand.
Intuitive operations	Develop an intuitive navigation system that is easy to learn and master.
Informational fit-to-task	Undertake market research to determine what information consumers want on the Web site.
Tailored Communications	Support consumer interaction via the Web site and the capability to receive tailored information.
Trust	Adopt and promote security and privacy policies and procedures that make customers feel secure in dealing with the company.
Response time	Have sufficient hardware and communications capacity to meet peak demand and avoid large graphics.
Visual appeal	Use colors, graphics, and text that are pleasing to the consumer's eye and avoid cluttered pages.
Innovativeness	Use a creative and differentiating approach to the Web site.
Emotional appeal	Design the Web site to provoke a positive customer experience.
On-line completeness	Allow customers to conduct important business functions over the Web.
Relative Advantage	Make the Web site just as easy, if not easier, for customers to use than other forms of interacting with the company.
Consistent image	Design the Web site to reflect the company's image.

Source: Loiacono, Watson and Goodhue, (2007)

Ease ture and UI, for example, Web design, website chain of command of pages, and so on. Intuitive operations refer to the capacity to figure out how to work the web rapidly and without extraordinary effort. Moreover, the entertainment dimension comprises of the visual appeal (introduction designs and content), innovativeness ("aha"/shock component related with inventiveness and uniqueness), and flow-emotional appeal (the site's capacity to convey pleasant and immersing encounters for clients) measurements. At last, complimentary relationship construct incorporates consistent image (the site's capacity to precisely mirror the organization's picture advanced through other correspondence channels), on-line completeness (the site's general capacity to suit clients in their operations), and better-than-alternative-channels (the site's capacity to follow up on a similar level or superior to anything elective showcasing channels) measurements (Ibid.). Original WEBQUAL items are displayed in Table 1.

Generally, in view of a survey of the WEBQUAL items, one might say that with WEBQUAL a site is judged for its capacity to fulfill client needs. One vital restriction of the WEBQUAL-instrument is that its development was based on the responses of undergraduate students, who assessed a few chosen e-retailing sites. Another vital limitation is that the respondents likewise were not on-going clients of the websites they were assessing. Therefore, further confirmatory research is needed with broad samples of "real" customers of websites (Loiacono, Watson and Goodhue, 2007). The current study is a confirmatory research to cover the above-mentioned limitation by measuring e-SQ through hotel's real customers.

METHODOLOGY

A questionnaire was developed in English and then translated into Arabic language by language specialists based on WEBQUAL model. To verify the accuracy of the translation, the questionnaire was then translated back to English by a native Egyptian, who was proficient in both English and Arabic languages. The two versions were compared, and certain discrepancies were addressed. During this process, the researchers tried to ensure consistency between the Arabic and the English versions of the survey. Then, these items were presented to e-marketing and e-tourism professionals to see if any further items could be identified and whether they were likely to be appropriate for evaluating tourism e-service quality. Thirty-six items in the measurements with twelve constructs were selected through these procedures. Furthermore, a pretest was conducted using a group of 40 people.

To determine the quality characteristics of the hotel websites' e-SQ scale, the travel agencies survey (mail and e-mail survey) was performed to test the scale's reliability. The travel agencies survey used a sample of travel agency employees in greater Cairo. Every representative was asked to fill two copies of the questionnaire one before visiting the selected websites and the second after navigating the selected websites.

The data gathered in the travel agencies survey of hotel websites was analyzed with the primary purpose of testing the underlying structure of the data. The reliability of the scale data was checked using a reliability data analysis. To reject a nil-hypothesis about the population homogeneity, i.e., to discover the existing differences in the sample —the data was analyzed using the series of ANOVA (analysis of variance) tests to detect possible perception differences amongst the respondents based on their demographics and Internet use patterns. Finally, the respondents' comments were analyzed as a complementary method. The analysis of customer complaints and comments is a known method in service quality studies ((Finn, Elliott-White and Walton, 2000; Chebat and Slusarczyk, 2005).

Research problem and objectives

E-SQ is generally addressed inside an industry. For instance, the larger part of recent research tending to the territory of electronic service quality and its consequences for online customer behavior highlights a particularly modern setting, especially retailing (Loiacono, Watson and Goodhue, 2007; Ziethaml, Parasuraman and Malhorta, 2002). For the convenience of the present research, the setting of tourism and accommodation services is picked. There are a few purposes behind this choice:

- Tourism and hospitality is one of the greatest and quickest developing worldwide industries.
- The tourism and hospitality industry has information-intensive product that is practically perfect for promoting over the Websites.
- There is a developing acknowledgment of Internet

marketing and the requirement for improving tourism and hospitality site e-SQ among tourism practitioners.

The present research explores the field of website e-service quality in the hotel e-marketing context. 33 five-star hotels are located in Cairo (The Egyptian Hotel Association, 2015). By reviewing the main theories and findings of previous studies in the area of e-SQ and Internet tourism marketing, it will strive towards obtaining a better understanding of this phenomenon. Throughout the stages of the research process, the fundamental characteristics of e-SQ of hotels' websites and the main aspects affecting hotel website e-SQ will be identified. The objectives of the research are as follows:

The present research investigates the field of website e-service quality in the lodging e-marketing setting. By assessing the main theories and findings of past studies in the zone of e-SQ and Internet tourism marketing, it will endeavor towards getting a superior comprehension of this phenomenon. All through the phases of the examination procedure, the principal attributes of e-SQ of inns' sites and the fundamental angles influencing hotel site's e-SQ will be identified. The objectives of the examination are:

- Study of the e-SQ phenomenon in a specific industrial context: to highlight the aspects of e-SQ in the context of hotel industry.

- Hotel e-SQ scale application: to measure the gap between expected and perceived e-SQ in the Egyptian hotel industrial context by testing a reliable and valid instrument for assessing the e-SQ of hotel websites, that are used by hospitality practitioners.

Population and sample

The population of the current survey is travel agencies as customers to Egyptian hotel's websites. The sample frame was the directory of 500 travel agent's category 'A'. These customers were targeted through a sampling of local travel agency employees. For this paper, a total of 500 internal postal questionnaires (two copies) were sent to a random sample of the population of employees of travel agencies. Employees' grades were chosen because these represent an important depository of knowledge for any organization and are essential to the smooth operation of travel agencies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Reliability Analysis Results

As aforementioned, the main purpose of the reliability analysis of the data is to determine whether the data is trustworthy. With this purpose, the survey data were subjected to the analysis using the measure of internal consistency.

To test the measurement model, Table 2 outlines the construct loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), Cronbach's alpha, and composite reliability (Com. Rel.). Looking at AVE statistics, the revealed values of all constructs are greater than 0.50, which is evidence of convergent validity. Discriminant validity is confirmed where square root of AVEs is greater than the correlations among constructs. Therefore, from Tables 2 and 3, both convergent and discriminant validity are evident, confirming the validity of this model. Considering Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability statistics, all values of Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability are greater than 0.70 and the findings of the model are reliable (Nunnally, 1978; Hair *et al.,* 2010).

Table 2: Reliability Analysis

Dependent (reflective)	Constructs	Loadings	AVE	Cronbach's alpha	Com. Rel.
Information fit to task	INFO1	0.793			
	INFO2	0.884	0.597	0.753	0.851
	INFO3	0.470			
Tailored communication	TC1	0.748			
	TC2	0.785	0.663	0.741	0.855
	TC3	0.898			
Trust	TRU1	0.806			
	TRU2	0.876	0.691	0.775	0.870
	TRU3	0.810			
Responsiveness	RES1	0.803			
	RES2	0.788	0.631	0.707	0.837
	RES3	0.791			
Ease of understanding	EOUS1	0.760			
	EOUS2	0.899	0.664	0.743	0.855
	EOUS3	0.779			
Intuitive operations	INOP1	0.880			
	INOP2	0.864	0.725	0.810	0.888
	INOP3	0.808			
Visual appeal	VAPP1	0.869			
	VAPP2	0.930	0.638	0.801	0.873
	VAPP3	0.621			
Innovativeness	INN1	0.661			
	INN2	0.908	0.659	0.733	0.851
	INN3	0.845			
Emotional appeal	EAPP1	0.885			
	EAPP2	0.885	0.783	0.723	0.878
	EAPP3	0.740			
Consistent image	CI1	0.917			
	CI2	0.917	0.841	0.811	0.914
	CI3	0.872			
Online completeness	ONC1	0.742			
	ONC2	0.829	0.633	0.811	0.823
	ONC3	0.767			
Relative advantage	RA1	0.671			
	RA2	0.774	0.791	0.778	0.888
	RA3	0.835			

Personal data and Internet usage patterns

The majority of the respondents were in the age group of less than 25 years. The next most represented age groups were those between 25-34 and 35-44 years old, respectively. The education backgrounds of the respondents were mixed, with the majority of the respondents having university bachelor degrees. Egyptian nationality was over-represented (100% Egyptian respondents).

This is due to the fact that the survey was conducted on the Egyptian travel agencies. The demographic data of the respondents is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Personal data and Internet usage patterns

1. *Gender:*	Male	53.6%
	Female	46.4%
2. *Age:*	Under 25 years old	44.3%
	25 to 34 years old	29.6%
	35 to 44 years old	22.4%
	45 to 54 years old	3.6%
	55 years old or over	0%
3. *Education:*	Secondary or Technical education	11.6%
	University education	77.6%
	Post-graduate study	10.8%
4. *Nationality:*	*Egyptian*.....	100%
5. *How often you use a computer/the Internet:*	On a regular basis (more than 4 times a week)	53.6%
	Often (3-4 times a week)	24%
	Rarely (1-2 times a week)	18.8%
	Very rarely (0-1 times a week)	3.6%
6. *Number of years you have been using the Internet:*	Less than 3 years	22.4%
	3-5 years	18%
	More than 5 years	59.5%
7. *How would you characterize yourself as an Internet user?*	Beginner	22.4%
	Experienced user	77.6%
	Advanced user	0%

In summary, the majority of the respondents reported to be frequent users of the Internet (53.6% of the respondents use the Internet regularly, i.e., more than 4 times a week; only 3.6% of the respondents use the Internet less than once a week), and have a good experience with the Internet (59.5% have been using the Internet over 5 years; there was only small percentage of beginners in the sample). This was expected, considering the popularity and availability of the Internet. The majority of respondents (77.6%) also regarded themselves as experienced users. The respondents' Internet usage patterns are presented in Table 3.

Customers' expectation and perception of e-SQ

The research considers means and paired sample T-test to evaluate service quality dimensions and to measure the gap between customers' quality expectation and their quality perception of hotel websites' services.

Table 4: WEBQUAL dimensions' differences between expectations and perceptions

	Websites quality dimensions	**Expectation e-quality Means**	**Perception e-quality means**	**Means differences**	***T*-value**	***T*-sig.**
1	Information fit to task	4.45	3.14	-1.31	-27.51	0.00
2	Tailored communication	4.51	2.97	-1.54	-30.14	0.00
3	Trust	4.52	2.91	-1.61	-30.72	0.00
4	Responsiveness	4.63	2.97	-1.66	-30.28	0.00
5	Ease of understanding	4.62	3.09	-1.53	-31.79	0.00
6	Intuitive operations	4.47	2.88	-1.59	-26.46	0.00
7	Visual appeal	4.31	3.34	-0.97	-19.77	0.00
8	Innovativeness	4.44	3.28	-1.15	-20.21	0.00
9	Emotional appeal	4.31	3.20	-1.11	-20.23	0.00
10	Consistent image	4.48	3.19	-1.28	-24.29	0.00
11	Online completeness	4.57	3.30	-1.27	-28.54	0.00
12	Relative advantage	4.59	3.07	-1.52	-31.65	0.00
E-service quality differences		**4.49**	**3.11**	**-1.38**	**31.19**	**0.00**

Every WEBQUAL dimension is measured by knowing the difference between employees' e-service quality expectations and their perceptions of e-service quality. For example, information fit to task dimension is measured by knowing the difference between the first three variables from the expectation list and the first three variables from the perception list. Table 4 illustrates these dimensions' means and its differences.

Results highlight that, WEBQUAL dimensions' differences between the expected e-service quality by respondents and the perceived one are negative for all e-service quality dimensions; which mean that most of these dimensions' variables are not satisfying hotel websites' customers.

Statistically, paired sample *T*-test shows that all e-service quality dimensions' *t*-sig are less than 0.05 ($P<0.05$), which mean that the previous e-service quality dimensions' differences are significance and there is a real gap between what hotel websites' customers expect and what they perceive about hotel e-service quality. Also, all coefficient alphas are greater - ndings from table 4:

- The difference between the grand means of expectation (4.49) and perception (3.11) is negative (-1.38); which mean that the studied level of hotel e-service quality is low. This result highlights a shortage in the delivered hotel e-service quality from to the viewpoint of travel agency employees.
- For every studied e-service quality dimension, the

negative difference between the perceived e-service quality and the expected one shows a shortage in e-service quality delivery for that dimension. For example, the highest differences are in the dimensions of responsiveness (-1.66) and trust (-1.61). On the other hand, the lowest difference is in the dimension of visual appeal (-0.97).

As mentioned by Tyran and Ross (2006) and based on the above findings, it appears that website service quality in all twelve areas could be improved, with the most improvement needed in the "Responsiveness, Trust and Intuitive operations" dimensions. While the gap scores provide a measure of how well website services were meeting the expectations of customers, these scores do not necessarily indicate the service areas of highest priority for the customers.

Fifth Gap Measurement

Fifth gap measured by taking the difference between all variables in the perceptions list and the same variables in the expectations list, drawn according to the travel agencies' employees' viewpoint. From table 4 we can calculate the fifth gap as follow:

$$\textbf{Fifth Gap} = 3.11 - 4.49 = -1.38$$

Fifth gap value (1.38) highlights that 30.7% of hotel websites' customers' expectations of hotel e-service quality are not accomplished. Paired sample *T*-test illustrate that *t*-value= 31.19 and *t*-sig= 0.00 *(P*<0.05) indicate a significant difference between customers' expectation and customers' perception of hotel e-service quality.

The above results are not coinciding with Tseng, (2009) who indicates that, "to successfully manage the challenges of globalization and intensive competition, firms need to notify the service quality expectation. Service quality is often conceptualized as the comparison of service expectations with actual performance perceptions".

Customers' problems with hotel websites

Most of the respondents' remarks were about their past encounters with hotel sites and the problems they experienced while doing so*. The most widely recognized remarks can be gathered into five noteworthy classifications, which describe the basic sorts of issues with hotel websites in Cairo as seen by the respondents:

•Technical •Information •Communication •Transactions •Visual design.

Complaints about the technical functioning of a site tended to such issues as long loading circumstances, bad connection, issues with Java script, technical issues during the booking, program problems, and so forth. The most basic complaints identified the inadequate instructiveness of hotel site, for example, it's outdated and seldom refreshed data, absence of a site web index, issues with data seek, non-attendance of data on costs, and absence of sufficient lodging data in Multilanguage. A major complaint referring to issues with respect to data on inn sites, is that the sites regularly fail to display the lodging items in general.

Communication with a tourism organization by means of its site could likewise be dangerous, as specified by one of the respondents. Here, a detailed issue was that the staff did not generally answer messages. Transactional function of a lodging site was another issue referred to by the respondents. For instance, it could be hard to submit an online request. Likewise, a portion of the respondents said they favored having separate reservation and installment frameworks. Finally, a few remarks concerned the visual interest and outline of hotel sites. Here, one of the basic reasons for respondents' disappointment was a lodging site's failure to pull in the guest with quality pictures and a decent Web outline. Adding to these variables was the wrong selection of textual styles ("pages are… hard to read") and hues.

CONCLUSIONS

On the Internet, organizations advertise their e-intangible value propositions/value offerings; and marketing is about imparting this strategic offer to the client. It is done through separating strategies and by increasing the value of clients' operations. The fundamental capacity of advertising in a firm is to reach the clients, make them mindful of the company's offering and influence them to buy it. On the Internet, where buyers can't see the genuine item, regardless of whether it is a physical good or service, organizations can separate themselves and take an upper hand by offering e-benefits that include client value, encouraging the shopping procedure and incrementing the productivity of shopping-related client operations on sites. Obviously, things like communication, word of mouth, product, people, place, promotion and price of the

product significantly matter. However, with the clients being progressively mindful of the decisions and item substitutes and the weight of rivalry from the worldwide market space of the Internet, organizations can't depend on just these assets. They should exceed expectations in electronic service quality if they are to gain competitive advantage (Khalifa and Hewedi, 2014; Abd-Elaziz *et al*., 2015; Piccoli *et al*., 2004; Grönroos *et al*., 2000; Zeithaml, 2002). It is, hence, essential for organizations to offer quality e- services on their sites (Khalifa and Hewedi, 2014; Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Malhotra, 2002; Parasuraman and Zinkhan, 2002; Parasuraman, 2004; Piccoli *et al*., 2004).

Electronic service quality (e-SQ) is a novel and fast developing area of research. Although the principal reasonable investigation here was published in 2002, much research has as of now been done with a specific end goal to encourage our comprehension of the idea of e-SQ. However, many issues merit further consideration. For instance, there is little accord on how distinctively e-service impact the way clients see the nature of a site and how uniquely profiles of e-service carry on in various industrial contexts. Most of the writing on site e-SQ investigates purchaser conduct in the e-retailing setting. The present investigation addresses website e-SQ with regards to hotel industry. Hospitality is one of the industries which, because of its data escalated nature, can profit significantly from the utilization of web marketing procedures to distinguish target markets; and hotelenterprises have as of late understood the significance of conveying better e-SQ to consumers (Abou-Shouk and Khalifa, 2014; Khalifa and Hewedi, 2014; Sigala and Sakellaridis, 2004). By enhancing the delivering of e-SQ to shoppers, accommodation organizations can accomplish a solid competitive advantage and separate themselves. A similar example is likewise reflected by the viable information shown by industry specialists. Hospitality advertisers need comprehension of what contains e-SQ and ideas identified with online shopper choice and conduct. The present research offers important practical implications for meeting online needs of hotel consumers and measurement of consumer perceptions of e-SQ of hotel websites. In the present study, the profiles of 33 hotel website e-services were tested on the sample hotel websites' customers' (travel agency employees) located in Cairo. The empirical data during the main part of the study was gathered during a 5-months customer survey and analysis. As previously discussed throughout the research, thedifferent issues concerning the problem being studied and the findings obtained include:

- Quality profile of a hotel website can be based on the 36-implemented e-services, which can guarantee a certain level of customer satisfaction with the website.
- Hotel websites in the study accomplish only 69.3% of their customers expectation for e-SQ. This means that there is a gap between the customers' expectations and their perceptions of hotel e-SQ amounting to 30.7%.
- Customer demographics may significantly affect the way customers perceive the quality of a hotel website.
- Hotel website-buyers can be different from non-buyers in their perceptions of website quality features.

Most important hotel website e-services as expected by respondents are related to responsiveness, design appeal, viable substitute, business process, trust, and interactivity. These are: hotel information, product information, online reservation and payment, safety and security, customized product search, website interaction, and direct links. This finding is to a great degree consistent with the literature. The informativity of a hotel website, i.e., its ability to provide a consumer with relevant and timely information about services and other relevant information, is regarded as a vital quality criterion. Further, earlier studies have found that transaction-related e-services, such as reservation and payment, are important for boosting customer satisfaction with a hotel website. Website interactivity is another important aspect that should be considered by hotel practitioners. Least important e-services for hotel websites were related to flow–emotional appeal and visual appeal services.

In general, responsiveness and ease of understanding e-SQ features of a hotel website were found to be of greater importance to the respondents (they can be regarded as primary triggers of customer satisfaction with a website), than flow–emotional appeal service in the context of a buying situation.

Some of the e-SQ dimensions – Design, and to some extent, the Innovativeness aspects of a hotel website – were also found to influence the frequency of online purchases by tourism consumers. Generally, these findings are consistent with the claims of previous

studies suggesting that demographics may affect the consumers' perceptions of the quality of a website. Internet users also differ in their technology readiness which'\ affects their online buying behavior and attitude towards the use of the Web (Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Malhotra, 2002; Parasuraman, 2004).

The investigation of the respondents' comments has demonstrated that hotel websites regularly neglect to address client issues in several important areas: technical, information, communication, transactions, and visual design. Most of the remarks concerned unacceptable information design of hotel websites. The normal complaints were about infrequently updated or outdated information, issues with information search, nonappearance of the data on costs, and absence of the sufficient data in Multilanguage. A prominent complaint amongst the most regular dissensions was that hotels' websites neglect to exhibit the visitor destination. The findings of this study demonstrate that information on a hotel website has essential significance for potential hotel service customers. This is also relatable with the literature. Past studies propose that information quality of a hotel site plays a significant role in advancing buyer fulfillment with the website. Hence, disappointment in this domain can cause genuine client dissatisfaction. Complaints in the other areas – transactions, communication, technical, and visual design – were less frequent, indicating, however, that there is still room for improvement.

It must be conceded that this examination has a few limitations. One limitation is the need to conduct interviews to completely understand how clients perceive the negative parts of the online hotel service. Another confinement is the failure to measure the causal relationship between e-SQ and behavioral intentions of travel agencies. Future research studies will look at behavioral intentions of travel agencies. In addition, comparisons will be conducted between two distinct classes of lodgings in Egypt, like three and four-star inns. The quantitative-qualitative approach would be valuable in future investigations to completely comprehend the subject of the study.

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