ONLINE BOOKING SERVICES ASSISTED BY TECHNOLOGY TO IMPROVE CUSTOMER LOYALTY IN JORDANIAN FIVE-STAR HOTELS

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study's goal was to examine how customer satisfaction at Jordanian five-star hotels served as a mediator between the effects of website quality and e-trust on customer loyalty.

Design/methodology/approach: Questionnaires were the primary method used in the study for gathering data. The survey was created using data from earlier research and given to visitors staying at several five-star hotels in Amman, the country's capital. A convenience sample of 401 people received questionnaires from the researchers. The valid data was examined using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and SPSS V.25 (AMOS V.20).

Findings: The study found a favorable relationship between website quality and customer loyalty as well as a positive correlation between e-trust and consumer satisfaction. Additionally, there is a direct correlation between customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Research implications: Hotels should take steps to gain the public's trust if they want their websites to be regularly preferred by visitors. The website should also show a relationship between its target audience and the information and images about the hotel by consistently updating both. It has been demonstrated that users of online hotel booking websites exhibit higher levels of trust in websites. When a customer sees what to expect when staying at the hotel, their sense of risk reduces.

Originality/value: In order to research the marketing function of hotel services, which today heavily rely on online hotel reservations, this study is a ground-breaking endeavor to improve the worldwide tourism industry. The results should spur Jordanian hotels to research the factors that influence customer loyalty for online reservations.

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SERVIÇOS DE RESERVAS ONLINE ASSISTIDOS POR TECNOLOGIA PARA MELHORAR A LEALDADE DO CLIENTE NOS HOTÉIS CINCO ESTRELAS DA JORDÂNIA

ABSTRACT

Objetivo: O objetivo deste estudo era examinar como a satisfação do cliente nos hotéis cinco estrelas da Jordânia servia como um mediador entre os efeitos da qualidade do website e a confiança eletrônica na fidelidade do cliente.

Design/metodologia/abordagem: Os questionários foram o principal método utilizado no estudo para a coleta de dados. A pesquisa foi criada usando dados de pesquisas anteriores e dada aos visitantes hospedados em vários hotéis cinco estrelas em Amã, a capital do país. Uma amostra de conveniência de 401 pessoas recebeu questionários dos pesquisadores. Os dados válidos foram examinados utilizando Modelagem de Equações Estruturais (SEM) e SPSS V.25 (AMOS V.20).

Conclusões: O estudo encontrou uma relação favorável entre a qualidade do website e a fidelidade do cliente, bem como uma correlação positiva entre e-trust e satisfação do consumidor. Além disso, há uma correlação direta entre a satisfação e a fidelidade do cliente.

Implicações da pesquisa: Os hotéis devem tomar medidas para ganhar a confiança do público se quiserem que seus websites sejam regularmente preferidos pelos visitantes. O website também deve mostrar uma relação entre seu público alvo e as informações e imagens sobre o hotel, atualizando consistentemente ambos. Foi demonstrado que os usuários de sites de reservas de hotéis on-line exibem níveis mais altos de confiança em websites. Quando um cliente vê o que esperar quando se hospeda no hotel, seu senso de risco é reduzido.

Originalidade/valor: A fim de pesquisar a função de marketing dos serviços hoteleiros, que hoje dependem fortemente das reservas de hotéis on-line, este estudo é um esforço pioneiro para melhorar a indústria do turismo mundial. Os resultados devem estimular os hotéis jordanianos a pesquisar os fatores que influenciam a fidelidade dos clientes para as reservas on-line.

Palavras-chave: Fidelidade, Satisfação, Qualidade do website, E-Trust, Jordanian Hotel.

SERVICIOS DE RESERVA EN LÍNEA ASISTIDOS POR LA TECNOLOGÍA PARA MEJORAR LA FIDELIDAD DE LOS CLIENTES EN LOS HOTELES JORDANOS DE CINCO ESTRELLAS

RESUMEN

Objetivo: El objetivo de este estudio era examinar cómo la satisfacción del cliente en los hoteles jordanos de cinco estrellas servía de mediador entre los efectos de la calidad del sitio web y la confianza electrónica en la fidelidad del cliente.

Diseño/metodología/enfoque: Los cuestionarios fueron el principal método utilizado en el estudio para recopilar datos. La encuesta se elaboró con datos de investigaciones anteriores y se entregó a los visitantes alojados en varios hoteles de cinco estrellas de Ammán, la capital del país. Una muestra de conveniencia de 401 personas recibió los cuestionarios de los investigadores. Los datos válidos se examinaron mediante el Modelo de Ecuaciones Estructurales (SEM) y el SPSS V.25 (AMOS V.20).

Resultados: El estudio encontró una relación favorable entre la calidad del sitio web y la lealtad del cliente, así como una correlación positiva entre la confianza electrónica y la satisfacción del consumidor. Además, existe una correlación directa entre la satisfacción del cliente y la fidelidad.

Implicaciones de la investigación: Los hoteles deberían tomar medidas para ganarse la confianza del público si quieren que sus sitios web sean los preferidos por los visitantes con regularidad. La página web también debería mostrar una relación entre su público objetivo y la información e imágenes sobre el hotel, actualizando ambas de forma constante. Se ha demostrado que los usuarios de sitios web de reserva de hoteles en línea muestran niveles más altos de confianza en los sitios web. Cuando un cliente ve lo que puede esperar al alojarse en el hotel, su sensación de riesgo se reduce.

Originalidad/valor: Este estudio es pionero en la investigación de la función de marketing de los servicios hoteleros, que hoy en día dependen en gran medida de las reservas hoteleras en línea. Los resultados deberían incitar a los hoteles jordanos a investigar los factores que influyen en la fidelidad de los clientes para las reservas en línea.

Palabras clave: Fidelidad, Satisfacción, Calidad del Sitio Web, Confianza Electrónica, Hotel Jordano.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the largest and fastest-growing service sectors in the world, the hospitality sector greatly contributes to the economic and social advancement of many nations (Ghaith, Mutia, Ahmad, Enas, & Abdul Malek, 2018). Customer relations and their impact on loyalty have become crucial challenges for hotel management as a result of the emergence of customer-oriented sectors in the current era (Dieguez, Ly, Ferreira, & Silva, 2021).

The conventional hotel reservation process has been changed by the Internet. Therefore, potential customers may easily compare the rooms and costs of other hotels (Lv, Li, Xu, & Yang, 2020). To get a sense of what to expect when they visit, guests can use virtual tours to explore the hotel's interior and outside (Talwar, Dhir, Kaur, & Mäntymäki, 2020). Due to the ease with which customers can now learn about hotel rooms, costs, benefits, and promotions, hotels must compete fiercely to draw and retain guests (Myo, Khalifa, & Aye, 2019).

Technology in the service industry is meant to supplement labor, not to replace it. The role of technology should be that of a servant, not a master, according to Huws (2019). In fact, technology only improves a service organization's competitive edge if it can support the staff and increase their ability to provide exceptional customer service (Qiu, Jie, Wang, & Zhao, 2020). Technology gives a company a better way of doing things, which is advantageous to the company, its staff, and its clients.

However, technical faults or usability problems can occasionally make users' online experiences more difficult, which can have a detrimental impact on the associated websites' and their owners' bottom lines, particularly as the market grows more and more competitive. Inaccessible, out-of-date, or out-of-date information, unsuccessful, inaccurate, or incomplete transactions, and different usability traps that trap users in endless loops of navigation are all examples of poor online experiences (Wang et al., 2021). Online shoppers may become extremely frustrated by websites with subpar or non-existent pre- or post-sales customer services, including call centers and online reviews. Online travel and tourism service companies would benefit from knowing which aspects of the online customer experience irritate people because better user interaction has the potential to boost sales by 33 percent (Serenko & Stach, 2009).

However, clients now have to deal with more technologically challenging purchase processes, and because there isn't any human connection, it always takes a while for them to compare costs on other websites (Saddiqi, 2022). Additionally, when faced with uniform vacation packages from many online travel providers, customers' preferences quickly shift. They are less likely to remain committed to a specific travel agency (Kazandzhieva & Santana,

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2019). However, hotel management must uphold their function as a middleman and improve communication between clients and vendors (Filimonau & Naumova, 2020). These two issues can be grouped together under the topic of client loyalty. In fact, keeping consumers around is thought to be much more profitable than constantly looking for new ones (Deepak & Jeyakumar, 2019). Building consumer loyalty is more challenging, though (Cachero-Martínez & Vázquez-Casielles, 2021; Paparoidamis, Tran, & Leonidou, 2019). Accordingly, the purpose of this work is to uncover the variables that affect customer loyalty in online reservations using an empirical study of Jordanian hotels.

CUSTOMER LOYALTY

Customer loyalty is difficult to quantify because it is the outcome of a consistent positive emotional experience and the perceived value of a satisfactory experience (Abed, Nofal, Ghaith, & Enas, 2022; Alshammare, Mutia, Alali, & Ghaith, 2022; Ghaith, Junoh, & Aseel, 2016; Ghaith et al., 2018; Lee, Lee, & Kang, 2012). The intention of returning and recommending the hotel to prospective customers serve as proxies for customer loyalty in this study as a measure of organizational effectiveness.

According to Kotler and Keller (2013) the definition of loyalty was a firmly held commitment to make a subsequent purchase or continue to subscribe to a particular good or service in the future despite the impact of the circumstance and marketing initiatives that might potentially cause the transition behavior. According to Griffin and Herres (2002) , a consumer is said to be loyal or disloyal when their purchasing patterns are consistent or there is a requirement that they make a purchase at least twice within a specific time frame.

In essence, loyalty is a person's innate fondness for a good or service and the people who provide it (Abed et al., 2022; Kotler & Keller, 2013). According to Gremler and Brown (1999), claim that customer loyalty is demonstrated by recurring business, a favorable attitude toward the service provider, and a propensity to only use a service from the same business when necessary. It is a psychological function that some decision-making units exhibit over time in relation to their purchasing behavior when faced with one or more brand alternatives (Alshammare et al., 2022; Rundle-Thiele & Bennett, 2001). Customer satisfaction, good attitudes toward the service provider, and a propensity to only employ products and services from the same business are all indicators of customer loyalty.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Satisfaction is defined as "a fairly temporal post-usage state for one-time consumption or a repeated experienced state for ongoing consumption that reflects how the product or service has fulfilled its purpose" (Oliver, 1999b). Building relationships with clients in the service sector is especially important for securing long-term commitment since it increases customer satisfaction (Al Muala & Ghaith, 2022; Belás & Gabčová, 2016). Customers feel important and safe when strong, lasting relationships are built, which increases customer satisfaction (Nakip & Özçiftçi, 2015).

Client pleasure is generally regarded as a crucial predicator of customer loyalty. In other words, customer happiness directly affects how loyal a consumer is (Sasser, Schlesinger, & Heskett, 1997). Furthermore, it has been noted by Martín-Consuegra, Molina, and Esteban (2007) as well as Wong and Zhou (2006) that one of the most important elements that influences customer loyalty is satisfaction. Additionally, Wong and Sohal (2003) claimed that meeting greater customer expectations during a service increases a company's likelihood of repeat business. Most studies have shown that satisfied customers are more likely to make repeat purchases and speak favorably of a business (Blodgett & Anderson, 2000; Maxham & Netemeyer, 2002). The majority of the studies (Jones & Sasser, 1995; Oliver, 1999a; Reichheld, 1996; Seiders, Voss, Grewal, & Godfrey, 2012) unmistakably established a positive relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, despite the observations of some researchers (Al Muala & Ghaith, 2022; Anderson, 1996; Anderson, Fornell, & Lehmann, 1994; Fornell, 1992; Ping Jr, 1993; Rust & Zahorik, 1993).

WEBSITE QUALITY

Researchers and academics have made an effort to comprehend and articulate the value that information systems provide to supply-side businesses as well as to consumers. A website is more than just an information system, according to (Giao, Vuong, & Quan, 2020) as they noted. It also acts as a vendor's interface. Aladwani and Palvia (2002), made the case that in order to overcome the major obstacles standing in the way of an organization's ability to survive and flourish, information systems function must be improved. Some scholars (Herrada-Lores, Iniesta-Bonillo, & Estrella-Ramón, 2022) suggested that "it is vital to the success of an e-commerce company to assess the quality of their website in order to improve and understand the competition and industry benchmarks in an effort to improve their position in the online channel". "In the e-commerce context, website quality is considered as an important internal factor for consumers to evaluate criteria of online retailers" (Jundrio & Keni, 2020). Website

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quality helps increase consumer buying interest (Hidayah & Suliyanto, 2019) and motivate them to shop online (Dapas, Sitorus, Purwanto, & Ihalauw, 2019). Website quality is "the perception of how a user judges a website for its features satisfying their demands," according to Aladwani and Palvia (2002). Website quality is also "the consumer's assessment of a specific site's overall excellence and suitability for use in assisting with the job or objective of making an online purchase," according to another definition (Rahi & Ishaq, 2020). Given the low percentage of website visitors who make purchases and the need of raising this figure, website quality ought to be a top business priority, especially from an ecommerce standpoint.

A website's quality is crucial for both bringing in new clients and keeping hold of current ones. The primary factor influencing a customer's decision to make an online purchase of items is a website's quality (Rita, Oliveira, & Farisa, 2019) Customers are more likely to have faith in the item's vendor if they believe the website they viewed contains comprehensive, high-quality information. According to Rasli, Khairi, Ayathuray, and Sudirman (2018) in their article "The Impact of E-Business Website Quality on Customer Satisfaction," there are five concept models that make up website quality: website design, information quality, security and privacy, transaction and payment capability, and delivery service.

E-TRUST

A cross-disciplinary concept, trust integrates ideas from business, marketing, psychology, strategy, information technology, and organizational behavior. In earlier literature, it has been branded in a variety of ways. The consumer's assessment that the online vendor is reliable and will keep their word is what constitutes trust (Goutam, 2020; Miao, Jalees, Zaman, Khan, & Javed, 2021). Trust was outlined as confidence in the exchange partner by Morgan and Hunt (1994). The goal of comparing susceptibility based on the positive expectations and objectives is what is known as trust (Goutam, 2020). Trust is defined by the author of this study as the consumer's faith in e-commerce-based businesses. A few researches claimed that there is a lack of confidence in ecommerce services, particularly in B2C services, and that this is one of the main reasons why online shoppers avoid making purchases from e-commerce websites (Wagner Mainardes, de Almeida, & de-Oliveira, 2019).

E-trust is important from an e-commerce perspective because there is little interaction between online players and online shoppers. Only when customers have confidence in an online retailer will they return there to make additional purchases. In the context of online booking, very few academics have placed an emphasis on loyalty and trust (Amin, Ryu, Cobanoglu, & Nizam, 2021). When interdependence, insecurity, and risk are present, trust is considered to be

one of the most important factors in creating online transactions and associations (Raman, 2019), as well as a major driver of online consumer visitation and online booking with a specific e-commerce website (Syed & Suroso, 2018). Since online consumers and e-commerce participants do not connect, trust is crucial in the e-commerce environment. Only if customers have faith in an online store will they return to make additional purchases. E-trust, according to Kozakiewicz and Lienstromberg (2022), depends not only on the perceived trustworthiness of any service-based businesses but also on the usability, functionality, and dependability of the online channels. The higher the level of consumer purchase intent at an e-commerce website, the greater the level of consumer trust in the website (Rosário & Raimundo, 2021).

Previous studies had found that website quality, and e-trust had a positive impact on customer loyalty. At the same time, earlier studies also found that website quality, and e-trust have a positive impact on satisfaction. Therefore, based on the previous studies described above, the authors develop the following hypothesis in this study:

H_1: Website Quality has significant effect on Customer Loyalty.

H_2: E-Trust has significant effect on Customer Loyalty.

H_3: Website Quality has significant effect on Customer Satisfaction

H_4: E-Trust has significant effect on Customer Satisfaction

H_5: Customer Satisfaction has significant effect on Customer Loyalty.

H_6: Customer Satisfaction mediates the relationship between website quality and Customer Loyalty.

H_7: Customer Satisfaction mediates the relationship between e-trust and Customer Loyalty.

RESEARCH METHOD

The elements influencing the issue between two or more variables are examined in this study using an associative-quantitative methodology. This study's quantitative data, objective measurements, and statistics were derived using research-related scientific calculations, commencing with the data collection and processing stage and continuing until a study conclusion that could resolve the problem formulation was reached. The sample was chosen using a convenience sample technique and nonprobability sampling. People who make hotel reservations online in Jordan were the survey's target audience. A total of 420 respondents participated in this research, in which, based on further assessment, a total of 19 questionnaires need to be omitted, thus ensuring that a total of 401 questionnaires will be used and analyzed

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in this study. After gathering all of the data needed in this study, all of the data then were analyzed using AMOS method.

RESULT

A total of 420 responses were collected in this study. However, 19 respondents indicated that they are not using the online booking system and they have been requested to not proceed with answering the questionnaire. Thus, the valid response to be used is 401. This section examines the data before proceeding to descriptive and multivariate analysis. The section discusses the missing value, outliers, normality, and multicollinearity. Table 1 shows the result of normality analysis. The table shows that the value of Skewness ranged between -.088 to -.702. These values are less than ±1. In addition, the values of Kurtosis ranged between -.100 and -.553 which are below ±1. This indicates that the data is normally distributed.

Table 1: Normality Analysis

	N	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Customer Loyalty	401	-.088	.122	-.553	.243
Customer Satisfaction	401	-.702	.122	-.301	.243
Website quality	401	-.467	.122	-.528	.243
E-trust	401	-.577	.122	-.100	.243

First, the variation inflation factors (VIF) should be less than 10 and the second is the tolerance must be greater than 0.10. Hair et al. (2017) reduced the acceptable value of VIF to less than 5 and the tolerance greater than 0.20. In this study, the VIF and tolerance were checked using SPSS. The findings in Table 2 show that the VIF for all the variable is less than 5.

Table 2: Result of Multicollinearity Analysis

Variables	Tolerance	VIF
Customer Satisfaction	.372	2.688
Website quality	.275	3.632
E-trust	.473	2.112

Dependent variables: Customer Loyalty

This study is using AMOS version 24.0 to analyze the data. Awang (2014) and Hair et al. (2010) suggested that when deploying AMOS for data analysis, researchers are suggested to examine the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and the structural model. The purpose of CFA is to assess the loading between each factor and observed variables and it examines it the construct reliability and validity (Hair, Anderson, Babin, Black, 2010). CFA measures the concept of the constructs in reliable and valid way. However, it does not assess the relationship

between the constructs (Harrington, 2009). For this reason, there is a need for the structural model to assess the causal relationship among the variables.

The factor loading (FL) of the items must be greater than 0.60 (Awang, 2014; Hair et al., 2010). In addition, the Cronbach's Alpha (CA) (calculated using SPSS) and the Composite Reliability (CR) must be greater than 0.70. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE), which expected to be higher than 0.5 to consider the variable has acceptable convergent validity (Hair, Anderson, Babin, Black, 2010; Hair et al., 2017; Lowry & Gaskin, 2014). The AVE and CR was calculated using Excel sheet recommended by Lowry and Gaskin (2014). The reliability was also achieved as the internal reliability of the variables are higher than the recommended value of 0.7. Table 3 shows the factors loading of variables along with the Cronbach's Alpha, CR, and AVE.

Table 3: Factor Loading, Reliability and Convergent Validity of the Variables

Variable	Items	FL	CA	CR	AVE
Customer loyalty (CL)	CL1	.841	0.930	0.949	0.789
	CL2	.843			
	CL3	.879			
	CL4	.878			
	CL6	.916			
	CL7	.924			
Customer satisfaction	CS1	.844	0.957	0.962	0.759
	CS2	.896			
	CS4	.880			
	CS5	.891			
	CS6	.906			
	CS7	.882			
	CS10	.774			
	CS9	.890			
Website quality (WQ)	WQ5	.928	0.943	0.962	0.864
	WQ3	.949			
	WQ2	.898			
	WQ1	.943			
E-trust (ET)	ET1	.909	0.941	0.947	0.816
	ET2	.890			
	ET3	.885			
	ET4	.929			

It can be seen from Table 3 that all the criteria of measurement model were achieved.

In this level, the hypothesis is tested and the r-square of the model is presented. Three variables are considered as dependent variables in this study. The analysis showed that the r-square of the two variables ranged between 0.65 for customer loyalty, and 0.737 for customer satisfaction. As shown in Table 4 indicates that 65% of customer loyalty, and 73.7% of customer satisfaction, can be explained by CSFs.

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Table 4: R-Square

Independent variable	Dependent variable	R-square
CSFs	CS	.737
CSFs	CL	.650

Direct effect hypotheses were developed in this study. Table 5 presents the results of hypotheses testing for direct effect hypotheses.

Table 5: Results of Direct Effect Hypotheses

H	DV	Path	IV	Estimate (B)	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
	D.V: Customer loyalty (CL)							
H1	CL_	<---	WQ	.121	.046	2.630	.009	Supported
H2	CL_	<---	ET	.100	.060	1.653	.098	Rejected
	D.V: Customer satisfaction (CS)							
H3	CS	<---	WQ	.043	.035	1.239	.215	Rejected
H4	CS	<---	ET	.103	.046	2.245	.025	Supported

Two hypotheses were proposed to examine the effect of CSF on customer loyalty (CL). For the first hypothesis "H1, "H1: Website Quality has significant effect on Customer Loyalty" the effect of website quality (WQ) on the CL is positive and significant (B=0.121, P<0.05). Accordingly, H4 is supported. For the second hypothesis, H2, "H2: E-Trust has significant effect on Customer Loyalty", the effect of e-trust was found positive but insignificant at significance level of 0.05 (B=0.100, P>0.05).

CSF consisting of seven hypotheses were proposed to be directly and significantly related to the customer satisfaction. For H3: Website Quality has significant effect on Customer Satisfaction". The findings in Table 5 indicated that the p-value of the relationship is greater than 0.05 and the hypothesis (H3) is rejected. For H4, E-trust proposed in H4 to be significant associated with CS "H4: E-Trust has significant effect on Customer Satisfaction". The result of hypotheses testing supported this claim and showed that the effect of ET on CS is positive and significant (B=0.103, P<0.05). Thus, H4 is supported.

Customer satisfaction was proposed to affect the customer loyalty. "H5: Customer Satisfaction has significant effect on Customer Loyalty". The effect of customer satisfaction on customer loyalty is positive and significant (B=0.637, P<0.001). Therefore, H5 is supported.

The direct effect is 0.77 while the indirect effect is (.86*.13= 0.112). In comparison between the direct and the indirect effect, it can be seen that there is no mediation of customer satisfaction between website quality, e-trust, and customer loyalty. This is because the indirect effect is less than the direct effect.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results presented in the previous section, it could be concluded that website quality plays an important and significant role in affecting customer loyalty, directly and indirectly toward satisfaction. Moreover, it was also revealed that satisfaction had a greater and stronger role in mediating the impact of website quality toward loyalty as compared to e-trust. Future studies on behavioral intention in the setting of online reservations might find this study to be a helpful source of information. Second, this study demonstrated that e-trust, satisfaction, and website quality were the primary drivers of individual users' commitment to positive online word of mouth. This study supported earlier research on consumers' trust in online booking, and this connection also supported the significance of online booking in Jordanian hotels. Here is a recommendation based on the research that has been done to enhance the quality of current websites, namely in terms of website appearance or design, and to make it simpler for users to navigate and identify products that consumers want to find. Hotels in Jordan may think about offering complimentary transportation to clients in an effort to boost client happiness and foster client loyalty. It is anticipated that further researchers will carry out or review this research and include independent variables like information systems and service quality that were not included in this study.

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