The Influence of Aviation Companies’ Perceived Websites Quality on E-Trust: An Exploratory Study

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ABSTRACT

In this study the researchers identify different perceived website quality dimensions. They empirically explore the influence of perceived Website quality dimensions (content, design, use and interactivity, privacy, security and customization) on E-trust: 247 students, instructors, and employees passengers from 12 nationalities in Jordanian, Arabian and American universities were the respondents of this study. A questionnaire was used to explore their perceptions of the last aviation company’s website quality (each of them traveled on) and their E-trust level. Multiple regression analysis was used to test the proposed model. The results indicated that while constructs use and interactivity and design were found to be predictors of E-trust, the constructs for security, customization, content and privacy were not. Perceived quality of website use and interactivity was the strongest predictor of E-trust. This knowledge can provide the website administrators in aviation companies with ways to increase trust in e-transactions among their passengers’ customers.

Keywords: Aviation Websites, E-Trust, Multiple Regression Analysis, Website Design, Website Quality

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the studies in the areas of E-trust, website characteristics have emerged as important research themes in information systems (Boudhayan et al., 2009; Hallerman, 2009; Hernández et al., 2009; Tarafdar & Zhang, 2008; Palmer, 2002; Benbunan-Fich, 2001; Liu & Amett, 2000). Many researchers found that lack of trust in e-transactions was the main reason for avoiding online shopping (Boudhayan et al., 2009; Grabner & Kaluscha, 2003). Therefore trust establishment in customers’ minds is an important step in the process of creating business relationships with them (Thakur & Summey, 2007). But, it is quite difficult to find a definition of “trust” that fits every case (McKnight and Chervany, 2001). When related to business, trust is built on the different aspects of how the firm presents itself, how it manages its brand image and its behavior in its relationships with its customers.
(Thakur & Summey, 2007). In e-Business, trust has been defined as “the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor and control the other party” (Mayer, Davis and Schoorman 1995, p. 712). Research has shown that in e-Business, it is very difficult to trust one’s partner because of the inability of partners to know each other on a personal basis (Morgan and Hunt 1994). Trust is a subjective matter and may differ from customer to customer (Thakur & Summey, 2007). So, e-trust is a matter of perception and is built around key important components such as security, company policies, and company publicity of those privacy policies that help them to safeguard customers’ confidential information (Boudhayan et al., 2009; Van Dyke et al., 2007; Pan and Zinkhan 2006; Pollach 2005; Hong-Youl 2004). Other researchers classified the factors as website factors, customer factors and vendor factors (Boudhayan et al., 2009). Accordingly, the focus of this study is on the website quality dimensions and their influence on e-trust. Nevertheless, the researchers do not reject the significance of other factors affect e-trust level but believe the website quality can explain respondents’ e-trust level. This is especially important because aviation companies’ websites are important sources of information for students, instructors, employees and general visitors. Therefore special efforts should be devoted to enhance their websites’ quality in order to increase e-trust.

On another hand judging the quality of a website is very personal and very complex because individual users are looking for information that suits them and their circumstances (Tarafdar & Zhang, 2008). Therefore the researchers believe that adapting a relative construct ‘perceived website quality’ for the purpose of this study is more relevant than adapting an absolute construct ‘website quality’. The researchers also adapted a “pull strategy” to empower the respondents to judge the quality of aviation companies’ websites and its influence on their E-trust level.

Even though an understanding of perceived website quality is important for e-Trust, there have been only a few scholarly studies done on the subject and none of the studies in Jordan have examined how perceived website quality might lead to e-Trust. Therefore this study proposes a model that explains website quality dimensions which contribute to e-Trust. Specifically, the paper tried to answer a main research question: Which of perceived aviation companies’ websites quality dimension/s has/have a/ significant influence/ influences on E-trust?

The study is structured as follows. First, it briefly reviews existing literature on website quality and e-Trust to propose the research’s hypotheses and model. After that research methodology, results and analyses are presented and discussed.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

To success in e-commerce, retailers need to provide high quality websites that attract and retain shoppers (Kim & Lee, 2006; Loiacono et al., 2000). Barnes and Vidgen (2002) conducted a series of studies to develop an effective instrument to measure the quality of various websites. When applied to three online auction sites, the instrument incorporated three quality dimensions: information quality, interaction quality and site-design quality (Barnes and Vidgen, 2001). Other studies have described different characteristics related to websites such as information quality and quantity (Alba et al., 1997), user trust (Gefen & Straub, 2000) and website quality (Iwaarden et al., 2004). Hernández et al., (2009) have studied accessibility, speed, navigability and content features. Previous scholars identified trust to be a key factor in building long term relationships with customers and business partners (Brown & Pritchard 2006; Renner & Tyran 2004). Other studies have shown that timely delivery and accurate information lead to a high level of trust (Thakur & Summey, 2007). McAllister (1995) suggested that the customer’s decision
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