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Measurement of E-service Quality: An Empirical Study in Online Travel Service

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MEASUREMENT OF E-SERVICE QUALITY: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON ONLINE TRAVEL SERVICE

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Abstract: Information communication technologies (ICTs) have significantly revolutionized travel industry in the last decade. With an increasing number of travel companies participating in the Internet market, low price has become a minimum qualification to compete in the Internet market. As a result, e-service quality is becoming even more critical for companies to retain and attract customers in the digital age. This study focuses on e-service quality dimensions in the Internet market with an empirical study on online travel service. The purpose of this study is to develop a scale to evaluate e-service quality from the perspectives of both online companies and customers, which provides fresh insight into the dimensions of e-service quality. The results in this study indicate that trust from the perspective of customer and ease of use from the perspective of online company are the most critical and important facets in customers' perception of online travel service quality, while reliability, system availability and responsiveness have influence on customer's perception of online travel service quality as well, but the influence is not so strong as that of trust and ease of use. Online travel service companies should pay attention to the facets of reliability, system availability and responsiveness while focusing on the facets of ease of use and trust in order to improve their online travel service quality to customers.

Key words: E-service, Quality, SERQUAL, Online Travel Service.

1 INTRODUCTION

With the rapid development of information and communication technology, Internet and World Wide Web (WWW) have become important tools in business, which has a major impact on business world. Internet has significantly revolutionized travel industry in the last decade. In the early stage of Internet market, online travel service companies had competed with traditional travel service companies by providing travel service at lower prices. With an increasing number of travel companies participating in the Internet market, the initial price advantages in online travel service has nullified, and low price has become a minimum qualification to compete in the Internet market (Sohn and Tadisina 2008). Therefore, travel companies operating in the Internet market need to find something else to attract customers to their online travel service. Oliveria et al. (2002) state that electronic service (e-service) might be the key to long-term advantages in the digital times, and e-service quality is becoming even more critical for companies to retain and attract customers in the digital age (Oliveria et al. 2002).

Though e-service is very important in the Internet market, most online travel companies seem not to focus on their online service to customers. They do not recognize that the competition among online travel companies relies mainly on their online service, and they do not have the motivation to adopt some strategies to develop or improve their online travel service to customers. Even though some companies have realized the importance of online travel service to customers, they seem not to understand customer's perception of online travel service and how customers assess their online travel service quality.

Currently, despite many studies concerning traditional service quality, relatively few studies have been conducted in the Internet market, and even less on online travel service quality. This study focuses on e-service quality dimensions in the Internet market with an empirical study on online travel service. The purpose of this study is to develop a scale to evaluate e-service quality, which provides fresh insight into the dimensions of e-service quality. Internet-based travel companies mainly provide intangible service to customers. Thus, in this study the meaning of e-service indicates any intangible product-related services over the Internet provided by Internet-based travel companies.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Following the introduction, the second section provides a relative literature review on both service quality and e-service quality construct. The third section presents the research hypotheses and research model. The fourth section is on empirical data analysis, and the fifth section discusses the results and the findings of this study. Finally, the study concludes with a discussion of the limitation of the study, and the future research in this field is presented as well.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Service Quality

Traditional service quality refers to the quality of all non-Internet based customer interactions and experiences with companies (Parasuraman et al. 1988). Service quality is determined by the difference between expected service and perceived service from companies (Zeithaml 1998). Parasuraman et al. conduct empirical studies in different service industries to develop and refine the service quality instrument (SERQUAL) to assess companies' service quality (Parasuraman et al. 1988, 1991, 2005). They aim at providing a generic instrument for measuring service quality across a broad range of service categories. The widely used SERVQUAL instrument is composed of five dimensions (Parasuraman et al. 1988), which is based on the original ten dimensions of service quality put forward by Parasuraman et al. (Parasuraman et al. 1985). The five dimensions of SERVQUAL are:

- Tangibles: The appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication materials;
- Reliability: The ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately;

- Responsiveness: The willingness to help customer and provide prompt services;
- Assurance: The knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence;
- Empathy: Care and individualized attention provided to customers.

The five dimensions of SERVQUAL was initially used to measure service quality in various service companies, including banks, credit card companies, telephone companies and travel companies, and was found to be valid in the traditional service market. Some academic researchers applied the SERVQUAL scale to measure service quality in the context of e-service. However, SERVQUAL has been considered problematic and may not be quite appropriate for e-service quality evaluation. The reason is that e-service is different from traditional service with three aspects standing out: the absence of sales staff, the absence of traditional tangible element, and self-service of customers. In this light it is clear that the SERVQUAL is not suitable for measuring e-service quality, and it is meaningful to develop an instrument for measuring e-service quality.

2.2 Development of E-service Quality Measures

With the increase of e-service adoption in business field, the importance of measuring and monitoring e-service quality in the virtual world has been recognized, and e-service quality posits to be a hot topic in research field. Some academic researches have already been conducted to develop e-service quality measurement. From the existing literature, it is evident that these studies have been conducted mainly in the domains of online retailing service, online shopping website quality, and e-service quality. There has been limited attention on online service sector.

Much of the studies in e-service quality take a combination of traditional service quality dimensions and web interface quality dimensions as the starting point. Dabholkar (1996) conducts a research work on the dimensions of e-service quality focusing on website design, and he argues that 7 dimensions of e-service quality can be illustrated as the basic parameters in the judgement of e-service quality, including website design, reliability, delivery, ease of use, enjoyment and control (Dabholkar 1996). Yoo and Donthu (2001) develop a 4-dimension scale called SITEQUAL to measure online service quality of website, and the four dimensions are ease of use, aesthetic design, processing speed, and interactive responsiveness (Yoo and Donthu 2001). Cox and Dale (2001) set up 6 dimensions of online retailing service quality with the comparison of the traditional dimensions of service quality, and the six dimensions are website appearance, communication, accessibility, credibility, understanding and availability (Cox and Dale 2001). Wolfenbarger and Gilly (2002) develop an e-service quality scale which was initially titled COMQ and later was progressed to eTailQ with the following four dimensions: website design, reliability, security and customer service (Wolfenbarger and Gilly 2002, 2003). Lociacono et al. (2002) develop an e-service quality scale called WEBQUAL, which is composed of 12 dimensions (Lociacono et al. 2002).

There is growing recognition of different variability in the outcome of e-service quality studies in terms of the quality dimensions (Waite 2006; Kim et al. 2006). Recently research on e-service quality shows more different dimensions in e-service quality (Madu and Madu 2002, Surjadaja et al. 2003; Santos 2003; Yang et al. 2003, 2004; Field et al. 2004; Kim and Stoel 2004; Yang and Fang 2004; Long and McMellon 2004; Gounaris et al. 2005; Lee and Lin 2005; Kim et al. 2006; Fassnacht and Koese 2006; Cristobal et al. 2007). Madu and Madu (2002) develop a 15 dimensions scale of e-service quality based on better understanding of customer and providing services to meet the needs and expectations of customers (Madu and Madu 2002). Santos (2003) argues that both active and incubative dimensions are important in e-service quality, and both of the dimensions should be taken into account in e-service quality assessment. An 11 sub-dimensions scale is put forward based on the two dimensions of e-service quality (Santos 2003). Field et al. (2004) develop a process model for assessing and improving service quality by identifying e-service system entities and transactions between those entities and mapping key quality dimensions onto them (Field et al. 2004). Gounaris et al. (2005) argue that the dimensions of perceived e-service quality are influenced by different

antecedents (Gounaris et al. 2005). Yang (2002) identifies the differentiation among dimensions between online-purchaser and non-purchaser (Yang 2002). Yang and Fang (2004) further examine the differentiation of dimensions to online service satisfaction and dissatisfaction. They suggest that there are four salient quality dimensions leading to both satisfaction and dissatisfaction: responsiveness, reliability, ease of use and competence (Yang and Fang 2004). Zeithaml et al. (2000, 2002) and Parasuraman et al. (2005) carry out a study on Internet service quality based on their earlier research on service quality in the traditional distribution channels, and develop an E-S-QUAL scale based on the 7 dimensions proposed by Zeithaml (Zeithaml 2000, 2002; Parasuraman et al. 2005). The E-S-QUAL scale comprises 11 dimensions in e-service quality, and later Parasuraman et al. (2005) develop the E-S-QUAL into to a seven dimensions scale (Parasuraman et al. 2005). Kim et al. (2006) extend the dimensions developed by Parasuraman et al. (2005) into a 9 dimensions scale in e-service quality in order to use them for content analysis and evaluation of websites in the apparel retailing sector (Kim et al. 2006). Sohn and Tadisina (2008) put forward a 6-dimension model for e-service quality assessment based on their empirical study in Internet-based financial institutions (Sohn and Tadisina 2008).

There are some other significant discussions related to e-service quality as well, for example, in the contexts of technology readiness, service experience, customer satisfaction and web site loyalty. Yen (2005) articulates that the importance of attributes of online customer's satisfaction is dependent on technology readiness (Yen 2005). Research on the antecedents to e-service adoption also suggests that e-service experience has impact on customers' perception and evaluation of e-service quality (Yang and Jun 2002; Rowley 2006). Cristbal et al. (2007) suggest that the perceived quality of a web site or the degree of customer's satisfaction to a web site is especially relevant to customer's loyalty to a web site, and propose a four dimensions scale of e-service quality based on customer's satisfaction and web site loyalty (Cristbal et al. 2007).

3 RESEARCH MODEL AND HYPOTHESIS

Though studies on service quality and e-service quality have been conducted, and different scales have already been developed for measuring e-service quality, the existing research on e-service quality has been described as fragmented (Wolfenbarger and Gilly 2003). A comprehensive framework is needed to identify the dimensions of e-service quality. After combining and synthesising the existing construct of both service quality and e-service quality, a perceived e-service quality construct is proposed, which consists of the dimensions from both online companies' and customers' perspectives. The proposed e-service quality model comprises 9 dimensions: ease of use, website design, reliability, system availability, privacy, responsiveness and empathy from the perspective of online companies, and experience and trust from the perspective of customers (See Figure 1).

Ease of use

Ease of use is defined how easy it is for customers to use website. Website should be designed for customer's ease of use, including searching, navigating and use. Ease of use is an important determinant in the incubative dimension of e-service quality. Ease of use has been highly rated in customer's e-service quality measurement, and it has been noted by some researchers (Dobholkar 1996, Zeithaml et al. 2002, Yang 2001, Fassnacht and Koese 2006).

Website design

In the virtual environment of e-service, for customers website is the main access to online organizations and to a successful purchase process. The deficiency of website design can result in a negative impression of the website quality to the customers, and customers may exit the purchase process. Website is the starting point for customers to gain confidence. Website design can influences customers' perceived image of company, and attract customers to conduct purchasing online easily with good navigation and useful information on the website. Website should provide appropriate information and multiple functions for customers.

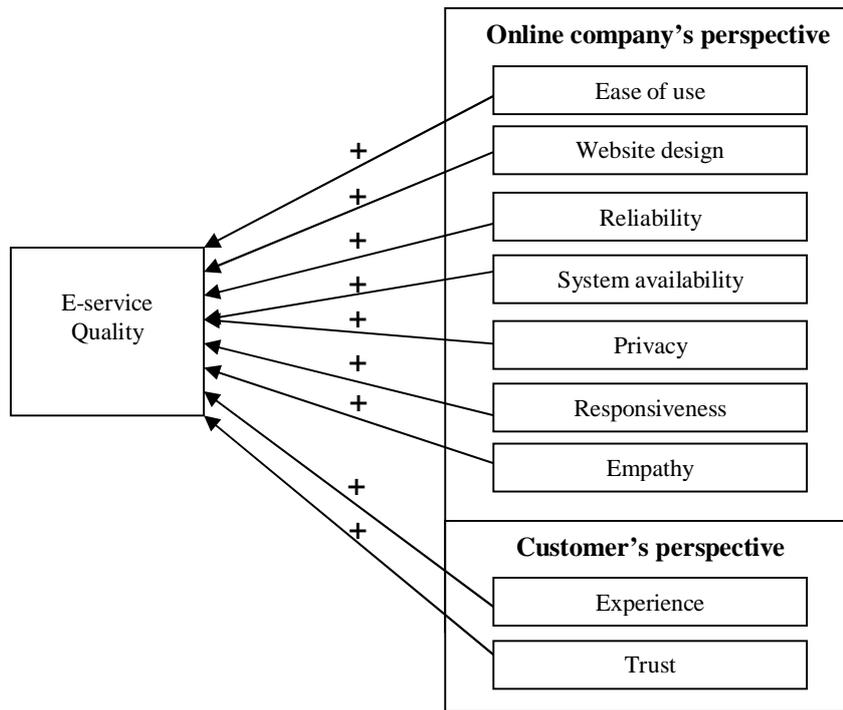


Figure 1. E-service quality model

Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency of performance and dependability of companies (Parasuraman et al. 1985, 1988). According to some empirical studies, reliability is the most important dimension of e-service quality. In the virtual environment, it is vital to make customers to trust that the company is going to perform what it promises to do. Reliability can make customers recognize the consistency and credibility of the company as well.

System availability

System availability refers to the correct technical function of the website. In e-service, the system availability makes customers always accessible to the online service offered by online companies, which can help customers to have a good image of online companies. If customers can not use the online system when they need online service, they will switch to some other online companies.

Privacy

Privacy refers to the degree to which the website is safe and customer information is protected. This dimension holds an important position in e-service. Customers perceive significant risks in the virtual environment of e-service stemming from the possibility of improper use of their financial data and personal data.

Responsiveness

Responsiveness refers to effective handling of problems and returns via the Internet. In e-service, company's prompt service to customers via the Internet can make customers feel more comfortable during purchasing and continue purchasing without interruption.

Empathy

Even though there is no direct human interaction in the virtual e-service process, some human contacts are involved in e-service, for example e-mail communication. Providing customer individual attention

shows empathy to customers. Response to customers should always be cognizant of customer's needs and show understanding of customer's needs. In the virtual environment of e-service, empathy is important in customer's perception of the e-service quality without face-to-face encounter. Accordingly, it is hypothesized that:

- H1: Ease of use positively relates to customer's perception of e-service quality.*
- H2: Website design positively relates to customer's perception of e-service quality.*
- H3: Reliability positively relates to customer's perception of e-service quality.*
- H4: System availability positively relates to customer's perception of e-service quality.*
- H5: Privacy positively relates to customer's perception of e-service quality.*
- H6: Responsiveness positively relates to customer's perception of e-service quality.*
- H7: Empathy positively relates to customer's perception of e-service quality.*

Experience

Experience is related to customers' previous e-service usage behaviour. Online experience is customers' total impression about the online company resulting from customers' exposure to a combination of virtual marketing tools. Customers' online experience embraces elements like searching, browsing, finding, selecting, comparing and evaluating information as well as interacting and transacting with the online company (Constantinides 2004). Customers' online experience can influence their future purchasing intentions, their attitude toward e-service and their satisfaction.

Trust

In the context of the Internet, trust toward online companies is often regarded as a key factor of e-commerce growth, online success and competitiveness (Gounaris et al. 2005). Trust in e-service is related to the buying and payment process, the reliability of the website, privacy and securities issues, order fulfilment, service delivery, after sales service and the reputation of the company. Customers' trust to online companies is critical for online companies' success. Accordingly, it is hypothesized that:

- H8: Experience positively relates to customer's perception of e-service quality.*
- H9: Trust positively relates to customer's perception of e-service quality.*

The definitions of the nine dimensions are illustrated in Table 1.

Construct	Definition
Ease of use	Easy for customers to use the website.
Website design	The website interface should be well designed and visually appealing.
Reliability	The consistency of performance and dependability of the website.
System availability	The correct technical function of the website.
Privacy	The safety of the website and the protection of customer information.
Responsiveness	Effective handling of problems and returns via the internet.
Empathy	Care and individualized attention provided to customers via electronic channels.
Experience	The impression about online companies resulting from customers' previous e-service usage behaviour.
Trust	Confidence among customers by providing prompt and information rich service.

Table 1. Definitions of e-service quality constructs

4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Data Sample

The empirical sample of this study was the customers of some online travel companies in China. The customers were asked to indicate the dimensions which influence their evaluation of online travel service quality. It is based on their previous experience of online travel service booking. The questionnaire was developed mainly based on the scales from previous researches. A five-point Likert-scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) was used to measure each item. The items for measuring the nine dimensions of e-service quality are built based on the instruments developed in previous researches as discussed in the literature review. Some modification and reword in the scale has been conducted to meet the requirements of this study.

The questionnaire was distributed to the customers by mail. Totally 1500 questionnaires were mailed to potential respondents, and 503 of the 1500 individuals replied. Among the 503 responses, 50 of them indicated that they have little or no experience of online travel service booking from online travel companies. The remaining 453 responses are the basis of this study. The 30% response rate can be considered acceptable since generally the response rate for questionnaires in information systems domains is between 8 and 15%. The age profile of the respondents represents most age groups with the majority (58%) being in the 18 to 35 age range and 62.7% of the respondents are male. The sample is considered to represent the Internet users in China. The demographic information of the respondents is shown in Table 2.

Demographic profile		Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	284	62.7
	Female	169	37.3
	Total	453	100.0
Age	18-25	121	26.7
	26-35	142	31.3
	36-45	138	30.5
	46-55	32	7.1
	56-65	20	4.4
	Total	453	100.0
Frequency of using Internet (hours per week)	Less than 5 hours	105	23.2
	5 to 10 hours	51	11.3
	More than 10 hours	297	65.5
	Total	453	100.0

Table 2. Demographic Information of Participants

4.2 Measurement Validity

The data analysis was performed using Partial Least Squares (PLS), PLS-Graph Version 3.0, to obtain estimates for the measurement and structural parameters in our structural equation model (Chin et al. 2003). PLS has enjoyed the increasing popularity in recent years because of its ability to model latent construct under the conditions of non-normality and that the theoretical framework is not fully crystallized (Chin 1998).

Convergent validity indicates the extent to which the measures of a construct that are theoretical related are also related in reality. Convergent validity can be evaluated by inspecting the factor loadings of the measures on their respective constructs (Chin 1998; Hulland 1999; Tenenhaus et al. 2005), and the reliability of the measures can be assessed using composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE). In this study most of the factor loading are satisfactory with the cut-off value above 0.7, except that the factor loading of three items are acceptable with the cut-off value

between 0.5 and 0.7 (Hair et al. 2006). In this study the values of composite reliability (CR) and average extracted variance (AVE) satisfy the threshold value of 0.7 and 0.5 respectively (See Table 3), which demonstrates good internal consistency and suggests good convergent validity and reliability of the measures in this study (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

Constructs and items	Loading	St. Error	t-value
Ease of use (EOU) $\alpha=0.789$ CR=0.869 AVE=0.693			
EOU1 It is easy to look for travel information.	0.906	0.011	82.245
EOU2 It is easy to move around the website.	0.900	0.009	94.034
EOU3 It is easy to do what I want to do, for example searching information, making an order.	0.669	0.068	9.784
Website design (WD) $\alpha=0.611$ CR=0.826 AVE=0.707			
WD1 The user interface has a well-organized appearance.	0.928	0.375	2.473
WD2 The pages load quickly.	0.743	0.339	2.189
Reliability (REL) $\alpha=0.774$ CR=0.860 AVE=0.672			
REL1 The delivery service is accurate.	0.817	0.048	17.029
REL2 The order service is complete.	0.804	0.055	14.608
REL3 Its online booking records are always accurate.	0.837	0.039	21.370
System availability (SA) $\alpha=0.742$ CR=0.839 AVE=0.637			
SA1 System is always available for business.	0.913	0.023	38.659
SA2 System does not crash.	0.740	0.040	18.222
SA3 System runs smoothly in the transaction process.	0.728	0.049	14.850
Privacy (PRI) $\alpha=0.718$ CR=0.826 AVE=0.615			
PRI1 It protects the information about customers' online shopping behaviour.	0.770	0.052	14.744
PRI2 It does not share customer's information with others.	0.887	0.038	23.193
PRI3 It protects customers' credit card information.	0.683	0.077	8.932
Responsiveness (RES) $\alpha=0.700$ CR=0.777 AVE=0.550			
RES1 Adequate responsive time.	0.535	0.128	4.177
RES2 Prompt service.	0.937	0.033	28.444
RES3 Timely response.	0.700	0.098	7.083
Empathy (EMP) $\alpha=0.887$ CR=0.947 AVE=0.898			
EMP1 Address complaints friendly.	0.956	0.004	227.916
EMP2 Consistently courteous.	0.939	0.007	131.981
Experience (EXP) $\alpha=0.711$ CR=0.831 AVE=0.621			
EXP1 I have arrived at most of my expectation in my last experience.	0.825	0.031	26.894
EXP2 My last online booking experience is positive.	0.771	0.031	24.680
EXP3 I have good impression of the online travel company I booked my travel service from last time.	0.767	0.029	26.144
Trust (TRU) $\alpha=0.634$ CR=0.843 AVE=0.730			
TRU1 I believe that the travel service provider can keep their promise.	0.892	0.020	45.844
TRU2 I believe that the travel service provider is honest and competitive.	0.815	0.033	24.397
E-service quality (ESQ) $\alpha=0.836$ CR=0.924 AVE=0.858			
ESQ1 Based on my previous online booking experience, I feel the online travel service quality is good.	0.919	0.013	73.449
ESQ2 The online service quality is better than I expected.	0.935	0.008	115.965

Table 3. Psychometric properties of measures

Discriminant validity can be verified with the square root of the average variance extracted for each construct higher than any correlation between this construct and any other construct (Fornell and Larcker 1981). As shown in Table 4, each construct shares a greater variance with its own measures than with any other construct. This reveals that each construct is more closely related to its own measures than to those of other constructs, and discriminant validity is supported in this study (Fornell and Larcker 1981).

	EOU	WD	REL	SA	PRI	RES	EMP	EXP	TRU	ESQ
EOU	0.832									
WD	-0.094	0.841								
REL	0.201	0.093	0.820							
SA	0.156	0.029	0.557	0.798						
PRI	0.318	0.092	0.467	0.398	0.784					
RES	0.229	0.002	0.243	0.367	0.115	0.740				
EMP	0.397	0.119	0.495	0.553	0.491	0.400	0.950			
EXP	0.438	-0.169	0.060	0.221	0.195	0.277	0.299	0.788		
TRU	0.303	0.002	0.114	0.317	0.209	0.129	0.415	0.323	0.854	
ESQ	0.518	-0.020	0.283	0.364	0.274	0.267	0.414	0.369	0.514	0.927

Table 4. Correlations between constructs

Note: The bold items on the diagonal represent the square roots of the AVE, and off-diagonal elements are the correlation estimates.

4.3 Hypothesis Testing

In this study we use a bootstrapping procedure to test the effects and the statistical significance of the parameters in the structural model. The findings in this study provide significant support for some of the hypotheses proposed in this study. Ease of use, reliability, system availability, responsiveness and trust are supported to be positively related to customer's perception of e-service quality, while website design, privacy, empathy and experience are not supported to be related to it. Ease of use is the most important factor in e-service quality evaluation ($\beta=0.345$, $p<0.001$). Trust is the second important variable ($\beta=0.342$, $p<0.001$). In addition, reliability, system availability and responsiveness significantly affect customer's perception of e-service quality while website design, privacy, empathy and experience have no significant impacts on customer's perception of e-service quality. The proposed research model explains 45.7% of e-service quality. The results are shown in Figure 2.

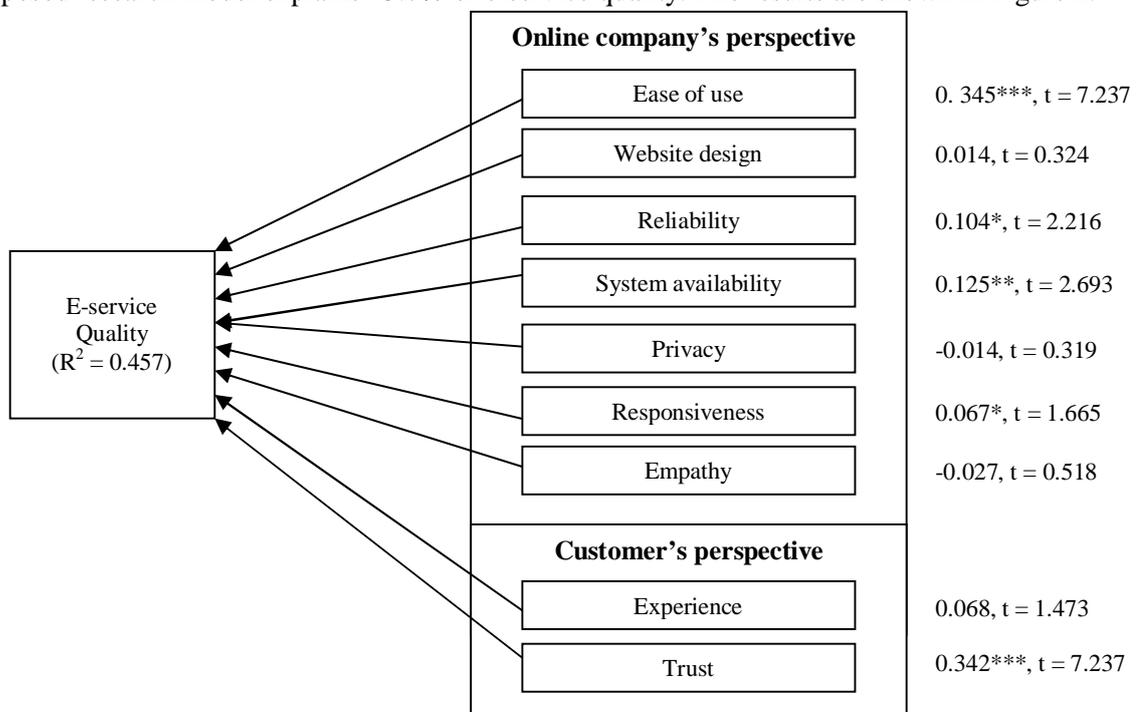


Figure 2. Structural analysis of the e-service quality model

Note: ***: p -value < 0.001 , **: P -value < 0.01 , and *: p -value < 0.05

5 DISCUSSION

Customer perceived e-service quality is one of the critical determinants of the success of online business (Yang et al. 2004). Accordingly, there is a rise of research on the construct of e-service quality. Currently, most of the research is conceptual in nature or based on a few case studies. Though there are survey-based empirical studies examining the construct of e-service, most of them focus on the dimensions from the perspective of online companies, and few studies have been conducted to investigate the dimensions from the perspective of customers, for example customers' attribute.

In order to fill the research gap, this study empirically examines the construct of e-service quality from the perspectives of both the online companies and customers in the context of online travel service. This study develops a comprehensive instrument to evaluate e-service quality. The results in this study indicate that there are five key dimensions of e-service quality, including ease of use, reliability, system availability and responsiveness from the perspective of online companies, and trust from the perspective of customers. The results of reliability and validity test of the scale demonstrate good psychometric properties of the scale.

The five dimensions have different influence on customers' perception of e-service quality. Ease of use and trust are ranked as the most critical and important facets of e-service quality, and have the strongest influence on customer's perception of e-service quality. In this regard, it is noteworthy that ease of use attribute relates to how easy it is for customers to use the website and trust is involved in the confidence among customers by providing prompt and information rich service. Thus, the results of the study suggest that there is a need for online travel companies to place extra emphasis on their website attribute and their service process pertaining to these two dimensions of ease of use and trust.

For online travel companies, providing e-service with good quality involves much more than creating an excellent website for customers. Online travel companies should design its websites to be as easy as possible for customers to use. Online travel companies still need to pay attention on the building of trust in customers, which can help to improve their e-service quality, which prompts the managers to develop right strategies to build trust in customers. Of course, offering true and accurate information on the website might be the first strategy to help online travel companies to build up good image in customers' mind, and the accurate service delivery might help to improve the confidence of customers. The two strategies can be the most basic strategies to build trust in customers, and some other strategies are needed as well.

Though reliability, system availability and responsiveness have significant influence on customers' perception of e-service quality, the influence is not so strong compared to the influence of ease of use and trust. The reason might lie in the fact that the service on the three dimensions in online travel industry in China has been developed into a mature period.

Surprisingly, the study results indicate that privacy does not have significant influence on customer's perception of e-service quality. However, for online companies it is still necessary to assure customers through website design cues and communications to signal customers the privacy of their websites.

In summary, the results in this study support the following conclusions. First, in general comparing the influence to customer's perception of e-service quality, the dimensions from perspective of the online companies is stronger than that from the perspective of customers. Secondly, trust and ease of use are the most critical and important facets in customers perception of e-service quality. Third, though reliability, system availability and responsiveness are not as important as ease of use and trust, they are still important facets of e-service quality, and online companies should pay attention to them as well while focusing on the facets of ease of use and trust in order to improve online travel service quality. Forth, though privacy has not found to be a significant facet in customer's perception of online travel service quality, it is still necessary to for online travel companies to assure customers the privacy of their websites.

6 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has offered some valuable insight into studies on e-service quality, which involves a number of limitations that need to be acknowledged. First, the empirical study was conducted only in China. It is recommended to replicate the study in different nations to get international sample. Second, the study tests how the experience and trust of customers influence customers' perception of e-service quality, other aspects of customers, such as attitude to e-service, education, social presence, have not been considered. Thus, there is scope for further work on the other measurement of e-service quality from the perspective of customer.

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