



## Article Title

The impact of website quality on customer satisfaction and purchase intentions: Evidence from Chinese online visitors

## Citation

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## Abstract

With the increasing popularity of online shopping and being the most populated country in the world, China is one of the major online markets now and is likely to become the largest market in the future. In the academic literature, website quality has generally been recognized as a critical step to drive business online. As such, numerous studies have been devoted to website quality and evaluations. Research efforts are, however, in need of understanding the use of websites in regards to online customers' behavior, especially Chinese customers. This study developed and empirically tested a conceptual model of the impact of website quality on customer satisfaction and purchase intentions. Results indicated that website quality has a direct and positive impact on customer satisfaction, and that customer satisfaction has a direct and positive impact on purchase intentions. While the influence of website quality on purchase intentions exists, customer satisfaction does significantly mediate this effect. Drawing on the empirical findings, managerial implications and recommendations for future research are offered.

## Methods

The measurement on website quality was based on the studies conducted by [Au Yeung and Law \(2004\)](#), [Chung and Law \(2003\)](#), and [Law and Hsu \(2005\)](#), who empirically analyzed two major constructs in evaluating websites, namely functionality and usability. According to these studies, functionality refers to contents of a website, while usability relates to issues of design.

## Results

Results of the study found that website quality has a direct and positive impact on satisfaction. It is critical for online hospitality and tourism companies to continue to invest in their website quality because online customer behavior is greatly influenced by their virtual experience. Developing a website that is liked by customers can be challenging. While there have been an increasing number of approaches toward developing websites in various industries, there have been no reported uniform industrial standards in the area of evaluating the development of tourism websites ([Law and Bai, 2006](#)). This study utilized both usability and functionality dimensions to examine customer perceptions of travel website quality in China because these dimensions have been empirically tested. For hospitality and tourism online businesses, both

functionality and usability website features must be examined to enhance purchase intentions. It is important to monitor which aspects of website quality features are among those sought after by customers when travel products purchased online. As discussed by [Gefen \(2000\)](#), cultural difference may exist in defining website quality. Also, Results indicate that Chinese online customers seem to be more interested in contact and destination information, and the language used and specific layout and graphics on the travel websites they have visited.

### **Conclusion**

This study has developed and empirically tested a theoretical model of the impact of website quality on customer satisfaction and purchase intentions in the Chinese context. The examination of online customer behavior deserves continuous endeavor from both academic scholars and industry practitioners. Given the size of its population and economic prosperity, China is likely to become the world's largest online market. The demand for online travel products by this market may thus be phenomenal. Hospitality and tourism companies should seize this opportunity to lure this market to their websites. Website quality is clearly critical in driving traffic, making people stay, and eventually attracting people to purchase online products.