

How website quality influences hotel choice: A comparative study of leisure and business travelers

Tourism and Hospitality Research
2025, Vol. 0(0) 1–19
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DOI: 10.1177/14673584251376632

journals.sagepub.com/home/thr



Paulo Rita , **Celeste Vong**  and **Mafalda Santos**

NOVA Information Management School (NOVA IMS), Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Lisboa, Portugal

Abstract

This study examines how hotel website quality influences online booking intentions and explores differences in perception between leisure and business travelers to understand how different traveler segments evaluate website quality and optimize digital engagement and direct bookings. A survey-based questionnaire was administered to 235 respondents in Portugal who had stayed at a hotel for leisure or business purposes within the past 12 months. Data were collected through social media travel groups and analyzed using exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to identify underlying constructs and assess differences between traveler groups. The results indicate that both functionality and usability significantly influence online booking intention, with functionality showing a stronger and more practically meaningful effect across both traveler groups. While both leisure and business travelers value the quality of information, business travelers also emphasize the effectiveness and usefulness of the information. This study highlights the importance of segment-specific hotel website design by identifying how leisure and business travelers differ in their evaluation of website quality. These insights extend current theoretical models and provide actionable guidance for enhancing user experience and driving direct bookings more effectively.

Keywords

Hotel website, website quality, online booking intention, business travelers, leisure travelers

Introduction

With the advances in information and communication technology, the Internet has become an integral part of people's daily lives, and the tourism and hospitality industry is no exception because it represents an effective marketing tool that offers cost-effectiveness and easy accessibility (Amaro and Duarte, 2015; Ostovare and Shahraki, 2019). Undoubtedly, the Internet offers a strong sales channel for tourism products and services. Online distribution channels generated more than 65% of the worldwide revenue in the travel market (Statista, 2022). Also, the Internet has become a primary source for potential tourists to obtain travel information for trip planning and reservations (Kang et al., 2020). As online travel agencies (OTAs) become increasingly prevalent in the hotel booking landscape, a growing number of tourists are opting to use these third-party websites for booking their accommodations (Shaputra et al., 2023). Therefore, a high-quality and well-designed hotel website

constitutes a competitive advantage and, ultimately, booking intention (Zhao et al., 2022). In addition, the increased travel uncertainty induced by tourism crises has particularly made the importance of hotel websites even more significant (Deyá-Tortella et al., 2022; Foo et al., 2021). This is because the hotel website enables direct hotel reservations and direct communication with customers, translating into greater credibility and trust from customers in times of uncertainty (Lee et al., 2022; Serman and Sims, 2022). Recently, hotels have started concentrating on investment in digital and intelligence services to improve customer relationships and better understand customer behaviors and preferences (Hao et al., 2020). Thus, it is essential to

Corresponding author:

Celeste Vong, NOVA Information Management School (NOVA IMS), Campus de Campolide, Universidade NOVA de Lisboa, 1070-312 Lisboa, Portugal.

Email: d20200456@novaims.unl.pt

understand what attributes of a hotel website will affect tourists' perceived quality and purchase intention.

Apart from serving as a marketing tool for information dissemination, the hotel website also provides an online channel for generating sales (Chung and Law, 2003). Meanwhile, the ultimate success lies in the website's ability to convert website visitors to hotel customers (Baki, 2020). During the pre-purchase decision-making process, travelers typically visit multiple hotel websites to compare different options before booking a hotel room (Amin et al., 2021). Given the intense competition in the hotel industry, understanding how users perceive and interact with hotel websites is paramount. Several studies have examined the factors that contribute to the quality of hotel websites and their influence on booking intentions. Law (2019) traced the evolution of evaluation models for hotel websites since the late 1990s, when they began to attract academic attention. The study suggested that information quality, accuracy, comprehensiveness, and timeliness are essential in effective hotel website design. Baki (2020) employed an integrated fuzzy AHP-TOPSIS methodology to develop a comprehensive approach for evaluating hotel websites, highlighting that trust and information quality are the primary criteria. Similarly, Amin et al. (2021) and Lata and Kumar (2021) revealed that the information quality of hotel websites can improve consumer trust and, therefore, influence online booking intentions. Moreover, Leung et al. (2016) focused on functionality to evaluate the richness of website content and information, and Huang (2020) assessed website usability to identify design features that affect user satisfaction. Meanwhile, functionality and usability are two key constructs generally accepted in evaluating hotel websites (Law, 2019). Since website visitors do not necessarily make purchases on a hotel website (Law et al., 2008), it is crucial to understand the factors that affect customers' online booking intention when browsing a hotel website.

Despite previous efforts in developing various evaluation models of hotel websites, prior studies seem to have overlooked the different needs of the two core market segments of the hotel industry, namely leisure travelers and business travelers (Radojevic et al., 2018). Leisure and business travelers have different travel motivations; the former travels for pleasure or recreation, whereas the latter travels for work-related purposes (Kim et al., 2022). Such differences also manifest in their information search behaviors (Wang, 2019) and hotel selection behaviors (Wang et al., 2020; Yavas and Babakus, 2005). Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that both travelers will perceive hotel websites differently.

Overall, the present study rests on the premise that functionality and usability are the key factors affecting how travelers perceive hotel website quality, ultimately influencing their online booking intentions. While past research has examined website evaluation models and the role of website quality in consumer decision-making, there has been limited attention to how different traveler segments, specifically leisure and business travelers, perceive and interact with hotel websites, resulting in a gap in the literature. Therefore, this study examines how hotel website quality, as measured by functionality and usability, influences online booking intention among leisure and business travelers. By comparing these two segments, this research aims to provide a deeper understanding of how travelers evaluate hotel websites and the factors that drive their purchasing decisions. The findings will contribute to the academic literature on hotel website effectiveness and provide practical insights for hotel managers, enabling them to design more user-friendly and effective hotel websites that cater to the specific needs of their target markets, ultimately increasing direct online sales and customer engagement.

Literature review

Website quality

With the increasing dominance of OTAs in hotel bookings, many travelers rely on third-party platforms for reservations (Shaputra et al., 2023). However, a hotel's official website remains a key reference point in the decision-making process, as travelers frequently visit it to verify information, compare offers, and assess credibility before finalizing their bookings (De Vries and Poelhuis, 2024). Generally, a hotel's website is the first impression it conveys to potential customers when they search for hotel information (Kabassi et al., 2019). Therefore, website quality is vital in affecting users' perceptions of brand image and online booking intentions (Lata and Kumar, 2021). Recent studies highlight that high-quality websites, characterized by ease of use, accurate information, and visual appeal, significantly enhance user trust and engagement (Amin et al., 2021; Bufquin et al., 2020; Punnasuparom and Choibamroong, 2020). For instance, Le et al. (2020) identified seven key dimensions of hotel website service quality that positively impact customer purchase intention. Ongsakul et al. (2020) studied the effect of hotel website quality, telepresence, and utilitarian and hedonic performance on booking intentions. Visual elements, such as high-quality photographs and concise textual descriptions, play a crucial role in creating emotional appeal and driving behavioral intentions

Table 1. Key dimensions of hotel website quality.

Source	Key dimensions	Key findings
Punnasuparom and Choibamroong (2020)	Information content, website interactivity, website responsiveness, website design, ease of use, online processes	Grouped functionality and usability dimensions, confirming their significant influence on online purchasing intention, while innovation, visual appeal, and hotel image were not significant predictors
Bufquin et al. (2020)	Website photos, textual descriptions, visual and textual information processing	More photos enhance customer enjoyment and booking intentions, especially for visual processors, while lengthy textual descriptions induce stress without significantly impacting booking intentions
Ongsakul et al. (2020)	Website quality, telepresence, utilitarian performance, hedonic performance	Hotel website quality enhances telepresence, which in turn positively impacts utilitarian and hedonic performance, ultimately leading to positive behavioral intentions
Amin et al. (2021)	Website quality, social presence, affective commitment, e-trust	Hotel website quality fosters affective commitment and e-trust, which significantly influence online booking intentions. Social presence further enhances e-trust and booking motivation
Le et al. (2020)	Website functionality, website design, response time, ease of use, information quality, interactivity, security	Identified seven key dimensions of hotel website service quality, all of which positively impact customer purchase intention
Van Huy and Thai Thinh (2024)	Website design, website functionality, interactivity, information quality	Developed a website service quality ranking index using an integrated methodology, identifying four key factors that directly enhance hotel website quality and customer satisfaction

(Bufquin et al., 2020). Furthermore, Punnasuparom and Choibamroong (2020) found that website quality, particularly its functionality and usability, significantly influences the online purchasing intentions of high-quality tourists for luxury boutique hotels. Amin et al. (2021) examined how hotel website quality contributes to affective commitment, e-trust, and booking intentions. Van Huy and Thai Thinh (2024) proposed a hotel website service quality ranking index, identifying four critical factors that directly enhance customer satisfaction. Table 1 provides an overview of the key dimensions of hotel website quality identified in recent studies, along with their key findings.

Different authors have interpreted the concept of website quality in various ways. Website quality was first conceptualized by Jeong and Lambert (2001), who developed a framework to measure information quality from four major perspectives (perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, perceived accessibility, and attitude) based on customer information needs in the context of lodging websites. Later, Jeong et al. (2003) extended the framework of website quality (Jeong and Lambert, 2001) by introducing two additional constructs: information satisfaction and behavioral intentions, which are considered key consequences. In their study, Jeong et al. (2003) defined website quality as

“the overall excellence or effectiveness of a website in delivering intended messages to its audience and viewers” (p. 162), in which website quality was measured by information accuracy, clarity, completeness, ease of use, navigational quality, and color combination. This broad definition has also been generally accepted. Nevertheless, Wang and Law (2020) argued that given its multidimensional nature, website quality is often interpreted differently to fit a particular research context. For instance, Li et al. (2017) evaluated the website quality of economy hotels in China across four dimensions: usability, ease of use, entertainment, and complementarity, and investigated its influence on users’ trust and online booking intentions. Meanwhile, usability and functionality are generally considered by scholars as the two key aspects of assessing website performance (Camilleri et al., 2023; Wong et al., 2020). Accordingly, the present study focuses on these two dimensions of hotel website quality to investigate their influence on the online booking intentions of two types of travelers (leisure vs business).

Website functionality

Website functionality refers to the effectiveness of a hotel’s website in delivering valuable and sufficient

content that supports users in making room reservations online (Loiacono et al., 2002; Wong et al., 2020). With the participation of hotel managers, Chung and Law (2003) developed a measurement framework to quantitatively assess the functionality performance of hotel websites, which consists of five major aspects: information on facilities, customer contact, surrounding areas, room bookings, and website management. Subsequent studies by Law and Hsu (2005) and Ma et al. (2008) have verified the applicability of the four aspects and their associated attributes. Moreover, Ip et al.'s (2012) study adapted Chung and Law's (2003) framework to analyze the weights of hotel website functionality using a fuzzy analytic hierarchy process approach. The findings suggested that reservation information was the most important aspect of website functionality, meaning that hotel website users primarily look for basic yet key information such as room rates, reservation terms, and conditions. However, the framework proposed by Chung and Law (2003) has received some criticism for lacking input from relevant stakeholders. Accordingly, Leung et al. (2016) refined the framework by considering new website features, such as instant chat, and the perceptions of pertinent website stakeholders (i.e., users, hotel managers, and website designers). In addition to the four aspects in Chung and Law's (2003) framework, peripheral information such as language options, sitemap, terms, and conditions was added to the modified framework. Also, Leung et al.'s (2016) study concluded that hotel managers and consumers focus on different aspects of the website. Consumers look for more basic information, such as booking and availability information, while managers are more concerned with supply service attributes. Collectively, based on past studies, website functionality attributes may include information satisfaction, quality of information, customer support, system quality, comprehensiveness, and trust (Coelho, 2018; Hsu et al., 2012; Loiacono et al., 2002).

Website usability

Unlike functionality, website usability is primarily concerned with the design of the website. It refers to the website's ease of navigation, clarity of information, and interface efficiency (Law, 2019). One of the most widely used frameworks for evaluating website usability in the tourism and hospitality literature is the one developed by Sprengers (2004), which encompasses five major dimensions: language, layout and graphics, information architecture, user interface and navigation, and general. Yeung and Law (2006) suggested that usability attributes such as layout, navigation, and ease of use directly influence travelers' ability to interact with a website. Specifically, Bufquin

et al.'s (2020) examined the impact of website visuals on user emotions and booking intentions, finding that an overload of textual descriptions can create stress, while high-quality images enhance enjoyment and engagement. Accordingly, the current study considers layout, user interface, clarity, color, and information architecture as key attributes of website usability (Coelho, 2018; Hsu et al., 2012; Loiacono et al., 2002).

Leisure and business travelers

Leisure and business travelers have different preferences in hotel choice attributes due to their different travel purposes, needs, and expectations (Wang et al., 2020). Business travelers frequently stay at hotels for meetings, conferences, exhibitions, and training sessions. In contrast, leisure travelers book hotels primarily for enjoyment and entertainment (Yavas and Babakus, 2005). Before selecting a hotel, travelers often rely on information search to inform their decision-making (MacSween and Canziani, 2021). However, given their different travel purpose, leisure and business travelers exhibit information search behaviors differently, such as other information needs (Lo et al., 2002).

When making hotel choice decisions, both leisure and business travelers consider different attributes before purchase (Victorino et al., 2005). Specifically, some hotel attributes are considered more important for one group than for the other (Kim and Park, 2017). Kim et al.'s (2020) study revealed that, in general, both leisure and business segments considered room quality the most important attribute. However, leisure travelers emphasized entertainment, service, and food quality, and business travelers were more concerned with price. Given their distinctive needs and preferences, it is reasonable to posit that leisure and business travelers perceive the quality of hotel websites differently.

Online booking intention

According to the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991), consumers' purchase intention is a significant predictor of actual purchase behavior. In other words, a stronger purchase intention leads to a higher likelihood of making a purchase. Moreover, purchase intention is easier to collect and measure than actual purchase behavior (Chandon et al., 2005). Accordingly, purchase intention is a widely used proxy of purchase behavior in the consumer behavior literature (Poddar et al., 2009). Online purchase intention is defined as consumers' willingness to purchase over the Internet, which involves evaluating website quality and product information (Pavlou, 2003). Dedeke's (2016) study indicated that website quality is critical in influencing

perceived product quality and purchase intention. In the current research, online booking intention refers to travelers' willingness to book a hotel room on a website.

Theoretical framework and hypotheses development

Leisure travelers, who prioritize enjoyment and entertainment, may value functional aspects such as detailed descriptions of recreational facilities, activities, and dining options (Lu et al., 2024; Sreen et al., 2023). In contrast, business travelers, who focus on efficiency and purpose-driven travel, may rely on functionality to access pricing, availability, and meeting room details (Kreeger et al., 2023). Therefore, functionality is expected to have a positive influence on online booking intentions for both leisure and business travelers. Thus, we posit the following:

H1: Leisure travelers' perception of a hotel website's functionality positively affects online booking intention.

H2: The perception of a hotel website's functionality by business travelers positively affects their online booking intention.

Leisure travelers, who seek a more engaging online experience, are likely to favor websites with visually appealing layouts, simple navigation, and clear descriptions of offerings (Marder et al., 2021). Similarly, business travelers value usability features that offer ease of use and efficiency to streamline the booking process and meet their time-sensitive travel needs (Datta, 2021). Thus, usability will have a positive impact on online booking intention for both traveler segments, and we posit the following:

H3: The perception of a hotel website's usability by leisure travelers positively affects their online booking intention.

H4: Business Travelers' perception of a hotel website's usability positively affects online booking intention.

Accordingly, Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework.

Methodology

Data collection

The questionnaire was shared in open-access travel Facebook groups, such as "Travel lovers", "Dream trips and locations", and "Travelers". Data was collected between February and May 2021. The study targeted approximately 250 responses, and a total of

235 fully completed questionnaires were received for further analysis. The sample included individuals aged 18–65 who had traveled and stayed at a hotel for leisure or business purposes within the last 12 months. This age range was set to ensure the respondents had a solid understanding of the questions and had used a hotel's website to make reservations. Only 28% of the population between 65 and 74 years old were Internet users in Portugal (Fundação Francisco Manuel dos Santos, 2022). Analyses were also conducted individually, depending on the respondents' travel purposes, based on the premise that the factors affecting online booking intention may differ among groups. Demographic data, including gender, age, education, and annual household income, were also collected for this study.

Pilot test

A pilot test was conducted with 20 respondents to ensure that the wording was used appropriately and that the questions were clearly understood. Additionally, respondents were asked to access the survey using various electronic devices, including computers, smartphones, and tablets, and operating systems such as Android, iOS, and Windows, to minimize potential issues with opening, completing, and submitting the survey. The questionnaire was refined based on the feedback from respondents in the pilot study. Additionally, data obtained from the pilot test were used to create a small database in SPSS for statistical analysis. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was used to verify the questions' internal consistency. As shown in Table 2, the questionnaire indicated a good internal consistency reliability ($\alpha = 0.976$) (Hair, 2010).

Data analysis and results

Demographic characteristics of the respondents

A descriptive analysis was conducted to understand the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Of the 235 respondents, 68.1% were female, and 31.9% were male. Regarding age, most participants were between 25 and 34, representing 32.3% of the sample, followed by 35 to 44 years (21.7%) and 45 to 54 years (21.3%). Regarding the frequency of Internet usage, 46.0% of the respondents accessed the Internet between 4 and 8 hours per day, and 31.1% accessed it between 1 and 4 hours per day. Regarding the online shopping experience, 90.6% reported making online purchases, while the remaining 9.4% did not. Table 3 shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

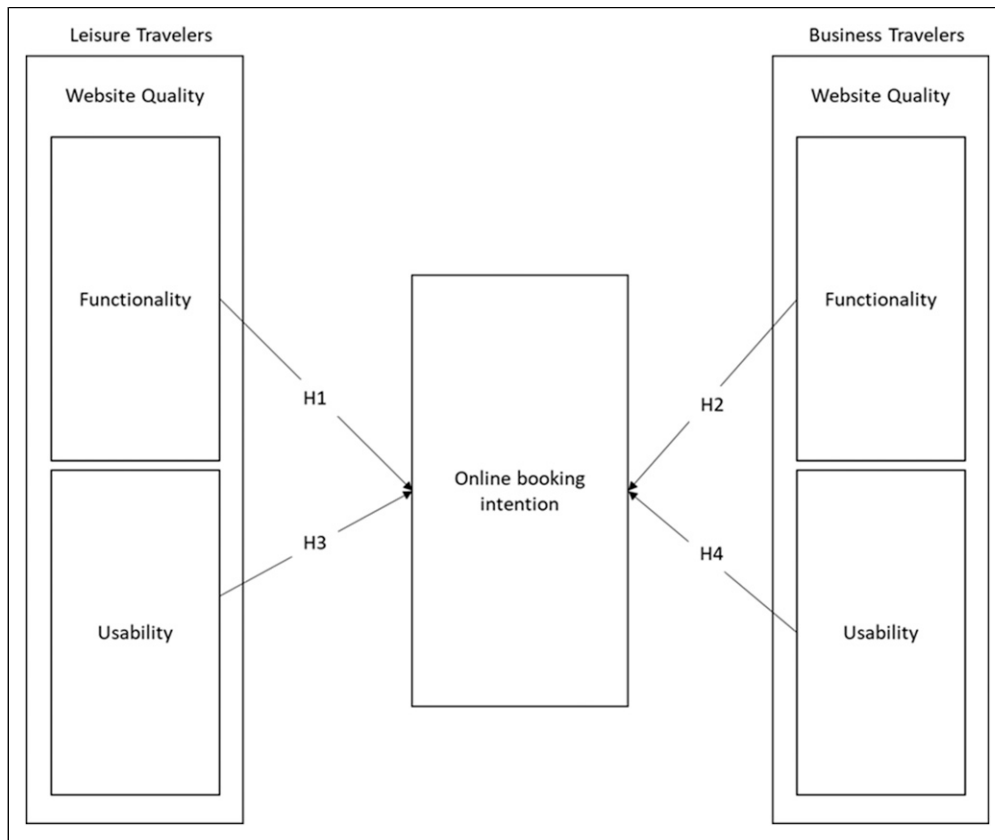


Figure 1. Conceptual model.

Table 2. Reliability statistics of the pilot test.

Reliability statistics	
Cronbach's alpha	No. of items
0.976	43

Variable measurement

The variable measurement items were adopted from previous studies to ensure the content validity of the constructs. Table 4 shows that website quality was measured in terms of two major constructs: functionality and usability. The attributes associated with functionality include information satisfaction, quality of information, customer support, system quality, comprehensiveness, and trust. The attributes associated with usability include layout, user interface, clarity, color, and information architecture.

All measurement items for functionality and usability were assessed on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), to express the degree of agreement. The online booking intention items were measured using a 5-point Likert-

type scale, ranging from 1 (very unlikely) to 5 (very likely), to reflect customers' behavioral intentions to make a hotel room booking online. As shown in Table 4, the functionality construct was measured using 18 items (FQ5 to FQ22), the usability construct was measured using 15 items (UQ23 to UQ37), and the online booking intentions construct was measured using four items (IQ38 to IQ41). Altogether, the measurement model comprised 37 items.

An exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was performed using SPSS to investigate the factor structure of the measurement items and to reduce the number of items for simplicity purposes (Lee, 2007), and inter-item reliability was examined using Cronbach's alpha. To determine whether the data is suitable for EFA, Kaiser Meyer Olkin (KMO; Kaiser, 1974) was measured to test the sampling adequacy, and Bartlett's test of sphericity (Bartlett, 1954) was calculated to test the strength of the relationships among variables. Table 5 shows a satisfactory KMO value of 0.90 and a significant value for Bartlett's test ($p < .001$). Thus, the sampling adequacy was met for the EFA. Accordingly, an EFA was performed to identify items strongly related to the three factors. According to Hair (2010), factor

Table 3. Demographic characteristics of the respondents.

		<i>n</i>	%
Age	18–24	33	14.0
	25–34	76	32.3
	35–44	51	21.7
	45–54	50	21.3
	55–64	25	10.6
Gender	Female	160	68.1
	Male	75	31.9
Education	High school degree	40	17.0
	Bachelor's degree	195	83.0
Annual household income	Below 9,999	19	8.1
	10,000 – 19,999	49	20.9
	20,000 – 39,999	92	39.1
	40,000 – 59,999	42	17.9
	60,000 – 79,999	25	10.6
	Above 80,000	8	3.4
Frequency of internet use	Less than 1 hour per day	1	0.4
	1–4 hours per day	73	31.1
	5–8 hours per day	108	46.0
	More than 8 hours per day	53	22.6
Do you shop online?	Yes	213	90.6
	No	22	9.4

Note: *N* = 235.

loadings greater than 0.30 are considered acceptable, while those greater than 0.7 are considered significant. To ensure reliability and validity, all items with loadings below 0.50 were removed from the analysis. Initially, the measurement model comprised 37 items; however, due to low factor loadings, 18 items were subsequently retained. As shown in Table 5, the factor loadings for the remaining 19 items ranged from 0.57 to 0.85, explaining 68.38% of the total variance. Appendix 1 presents full results of the EFA. Concerning reliability, Cronbach's Alpha values for functionality, usability, and online booking intention were 0.90, 0.91, and 0.88, respectively, indicating strong internal consistency.

Reliability and validity of measurement model

To ensure the reliability and validity of the measurement model, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was adopted to test the overall model fit and research hypotheses (Byrne, 2013). The results in Table 6 indicated that the scale was reliable. The composite reliability (CR) of the three constructs including functionality, usability, and online booking intention were 0.92, 0.91, and 0.90, indicating good construct reliability (CR > 0.70). The average variance extracted (AVE) revealed a strong convergent validity with a value higher than 0.50 (Hair et al., 2020). All standardized factor loadings were

statistically significant, ranging from 0.63 to 0.95. In addition, discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion (Fornell and Larcker, 1981) that compares the AVE with the squared inter-construct correlation between factors, in which the AVE for a given factor should be higher than the squared correlations. Table 7 demonstrates that discriminant validity has been established.

Total sample analysis

Given the high correlation ($r = 0.614$) between functionality and usability factors (see Table 7), a second-order hierarchical model was chosen. As shown in Figure 2, the model fit results indicated a good fit of the data to the model. The fit indices were as follows: $\chi^2(423) = 778.85$; $\chi^2/df = 1.84$ (less than 3 acceptable); $CFI = 0.947$ (acceptable above 0.9); $PCFI = 0.781$ (>0.50); $RMSEA = 0.043$ (<0.05); and $P[rmsea \leq 0.05] = 0.996$.

Multigroup analysis

A multigroup analysis was applied to determine whether the model in Figure 2 could be adjusted to the two sample groups: respondents who traveled for leisure or business purposes. Accordingly, Figures 3 and 4 display the structural model for respondents who traveled for leisure and business, respectively. The

Table 4. Measurement items.

Constructs	Attributes	Items	Source
Website quality – Functionality	Information satisfaction: The degree to which the website provides relevant and sufficient information to meet users' needs	FQ5 The information on the website is basically what I need to perform my tasks	Loiacono et al. (2002); Hsu et al. (2012)
		FQ6 The website has the right information for what I am looking for	
		FQ7 The information on the website is effective	
	Quality of information: The extent to which the website's information is comprehensive and relevant to the user's requirements	FQ8 The information provided on the website is comprehensive	Hsu et al. (2012); Coelho (2018)
		FQ9 The information provided on the website is quite enough	
		FQ10 The information provided on the website is exactly what I am looking for	
	Customer support: The availability of website features that assist users in resolving inquiries or performing tasks conveniently	FQ 11 It is easier to use the website to conduct my business with the company than to go there personally, call, or send an email	Loiacono et al. (2002)
		FQ 12 Accessing the website is easier than calling a hotel manager	
		FQ13 The website is an alternative to calling customer service	
	System quality: The website's ability to perform reliably and quickly while providing smooth navigation	FQ14 The site allows quick access	Hsu et al. (2012)
		FQ15 The site performs well	
		FQ16 It is easy to get to any desired part of the website	
	Comprehensiveness: The degree to which the website enables users to conduct their business needs online	FQ17 The website allows online transactions	Loiacono et al. (2002)
		FQ18 All my business with the hotel can be done through the website	
		FQ19 Most of my business with the hotel can be done through the website	
	Trust: The user's confidence in the website's security and reliability regarding transactions and personal information	FQ20 I feel safe with online transactions on the website	Loiacono et al. (2002)
		FQ21 I trust the website to provide my personal information	
		FQ22 I trust that website administrators will not misuse my personal information	

(continued)

Table 4. (continued)

Constructs	Attributes	Items	Source
Website quality – Usability	Layout: The arrangement and aesthetic design of the website	UQ23 The website is visually pleasing	Loiacono et al. (2002)
		UQ24 The website has a pleasant design	
		UQ25 The website is visually appealing	
	User interface: The ease with which users can interact with the website to perform tasks	UQ26 Learning how to use the website was easy	Loiacono et al. (2002)
		UQ27 It would be easy for me to become skilled in using the website	
		UQ28 I find the website easy to use	
	Clarity: The degree to which website content, including text and navigation, is easy to understand and read	UQ29 The website pages are easy to read	Loiacono et al. (2002)
		UQ30 The website texts are easy to read	
		UQ31 The information on the website is easy to understand	
	Color: The appeal and professionalism conveyed by the color schemes used on the website	UQ32 The colors of the website are pleasant	Coelho (2018)
		UQ33 I like the colors used on the website	
		UQ34 The colors used on the website make it look more professional	
Online booking intention	Information architecture: The logical organization and display of information and options on the website	UQ35 The information on the website is logically displayed	Coelho (2018)
		UQ36 The information on the website is well arranged	
		UQ37 All options, attributes, and product information are shown on the website	
		IQ38 I am willing to book hotel rooms through the website	Hsu et al. (2012)
		IQ39 I plan to book hotel rooms through the website	
		IQ40 It is possible to book hotel rooms through the website for the next 12 months	
		IQ41 I prefer using the website to make reservations	

factorial loads of the items were adjusted to the structural models in Figures 3 and 4. Notably, both models demonstrated significant weight on the online booking intention factor, as well as correlations between the latent variables ($p < .001$). The model in Figures 3 and 4 showed R^2 values of 0.46 and 0.48 ($R^2 > 0.25$), indicating appropriate individual reliability.

In addition, the results of the multigroup analysis in Table 8 indicated that the two models were well-fitted for both leisure and business travelers. The invariance of the measurement model was assessed in both groups by comparing the free model (with factor loadings and variances/covariances of the free factors) with a constrained model in which the factor loadings and variances/covariances of the two

groups were preset. The statistical significance of the difference between the two models was established using the Chi-Square test. Results showed that the constrained model with pre-set factorial weights and pre-set variances/ covariance in leisure and business travelers did not present an adjustment significantly different from the model with free parameters ($DX^2(32) = 25.504$; $p = .785 < \chi^2_{0.95}(32) = 46.194$), indicating the invariance of the structure model for the groups of leisure and business travelers.

Hypotheses testing

Figures 3 and 4 display the standardized path coefficient outputs of the hypothesis model for the

Table 5. Exploratory factor analysis.

		Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
	Item	Factor loadings	Factor loadings	Factor loadings
Functionality	FQ5		0.77	
	FQ6		0.78	
	FQ7		0.76	
	FQ8		0.83	
	FQ9		0.81	
	FQ10		0.80	
Usability	UQ25	0.67		
	UQ26	0.57		
	UQ28	0.59		
	UQ29	0.75		
	UQ30	0.74		
	UQ33	0.79		
	UQ34	0.78		
	UQ35	0.73		
	UQ36	0.71		
Online booking intention	IQ38			0.80
	IQ39			0.85
	IQ40			0.74
	IQ41			0.74
Cronbach's coefficient		0.91	0.90	0.88
Total variance		68.38%		

KMO = 0.90; Bartlett's test of sphericity ($p < 0.001$).

Table 6. Results of confirmatory factor analysis.

	Items	Standardized factor Loadings	CR	AVE	Cronbach Coefficient (α)
Functionality	FQ5	0.80	0.92	0.67	0.93
	FQ6	0.80			
	FQ7	0.85			
	FQ8	0.76			
	FQ9	0.82			
	FQ10	0.86			
Usability	UQ25	0.69	0.91	0.61	0.90
	UQ26	0.63			
	UQ28	0.73			
	UQ29	0.79			
	UQ30	0.78			
	UQ33	0.69			
	UQ34	0.63			
	UQ35	0.77			
	UQ36	0.75			
Online booking intention	IQ38	0.93	0.90	0.70	0.88
	IQ39	0.95			
	IQ40	0.68			
	IQ41	0.76			

Note: CR: Composite reliability; AVE: Average variance extracted.

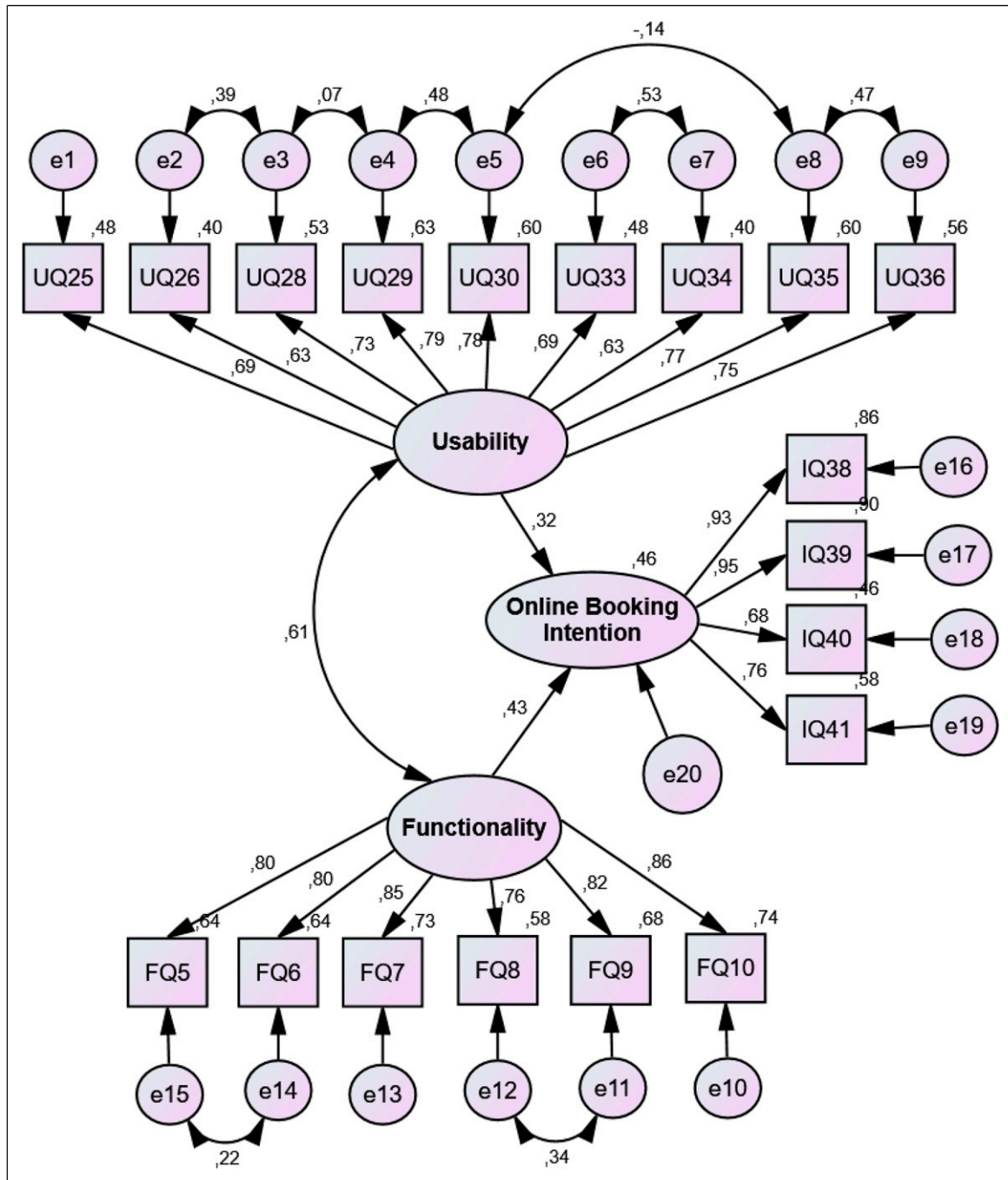
** $p < 0.01$.

Table 7. Inter-construct correlations.

	Usability
Functionality	0.614**

** $p < .001$.

sample groups of leisure and business travelers, respectively, with all hypotheses supported. The findings showed a standardized path coefficient of 0.44 ($t = 4.898$, $p < .01$, $f^2 = 0.19$) from functionality to online booking intention (H1: leisure

**Figure 2.** Structural model (total sample) with standardized coefficients.

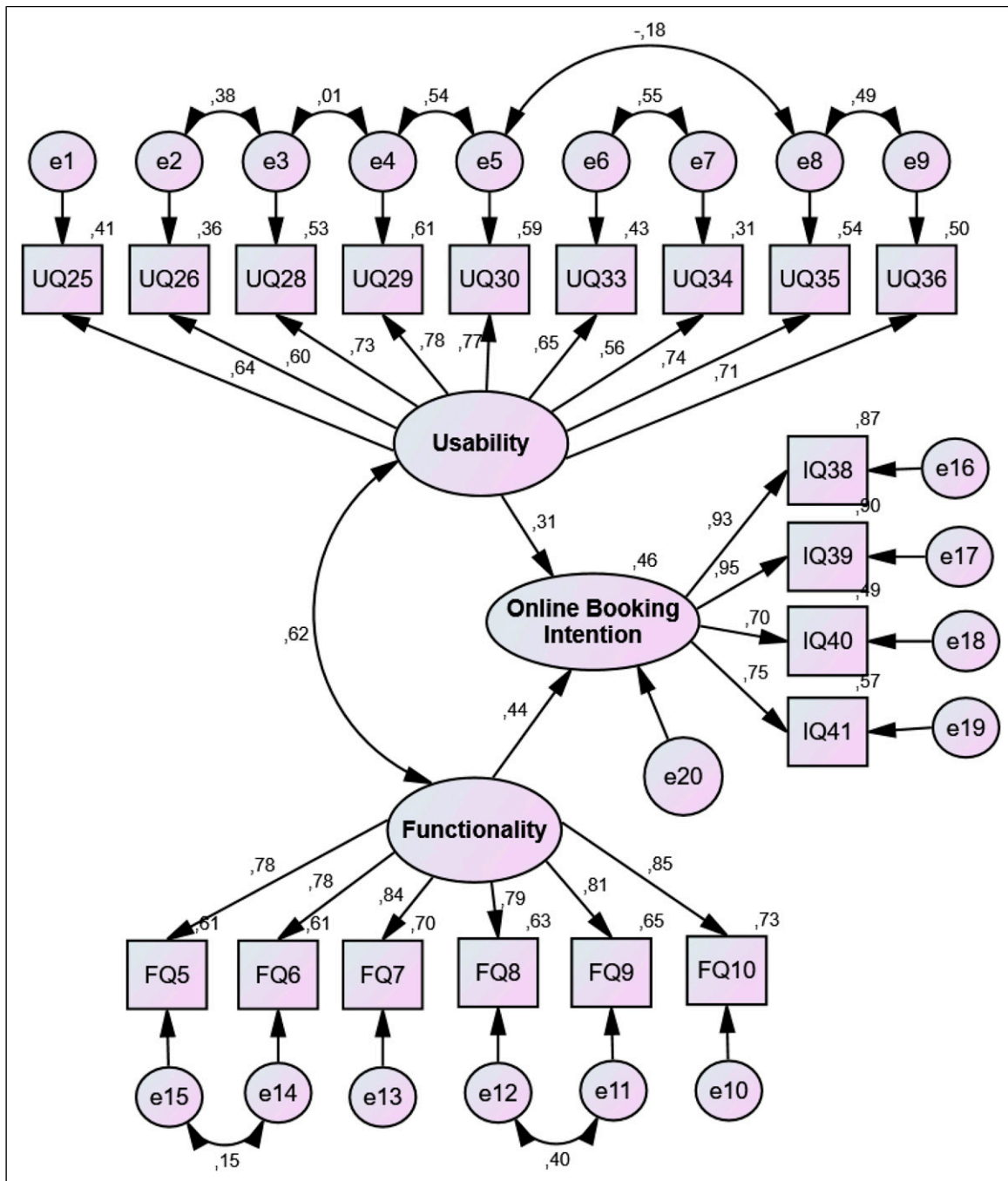


Figure 3. Structural model for respondents on leisure travel with standardized coefficients.

travelers), 0.31 ($t = 3.357$, $p < .01$, $f^2 = 0.10$) from usability to online booking intention (H2: leisure travelers), 0.45 ($t = 2.854$, $p < .01$, $f^2 = 0.20$) from functionality to online booking intention (H3: business travelers), and 0.32 ($t = 2.130$, $p < .01$, $f^2 = 0.11$) from usability to online booking intention (H4: business travelers). Thus, H1, H2, H3, and H4 were all supported. Accordingly, the results

revealed that functionality and usability have a positive influence on online booking intentions for both leisure and business travelers. However, although website quality dimensions significantly influence booking behavior, functionality demonstrated a stronger and more practically meaningful effect than usability. This suggests that improvements in functionality are likely to yield greater

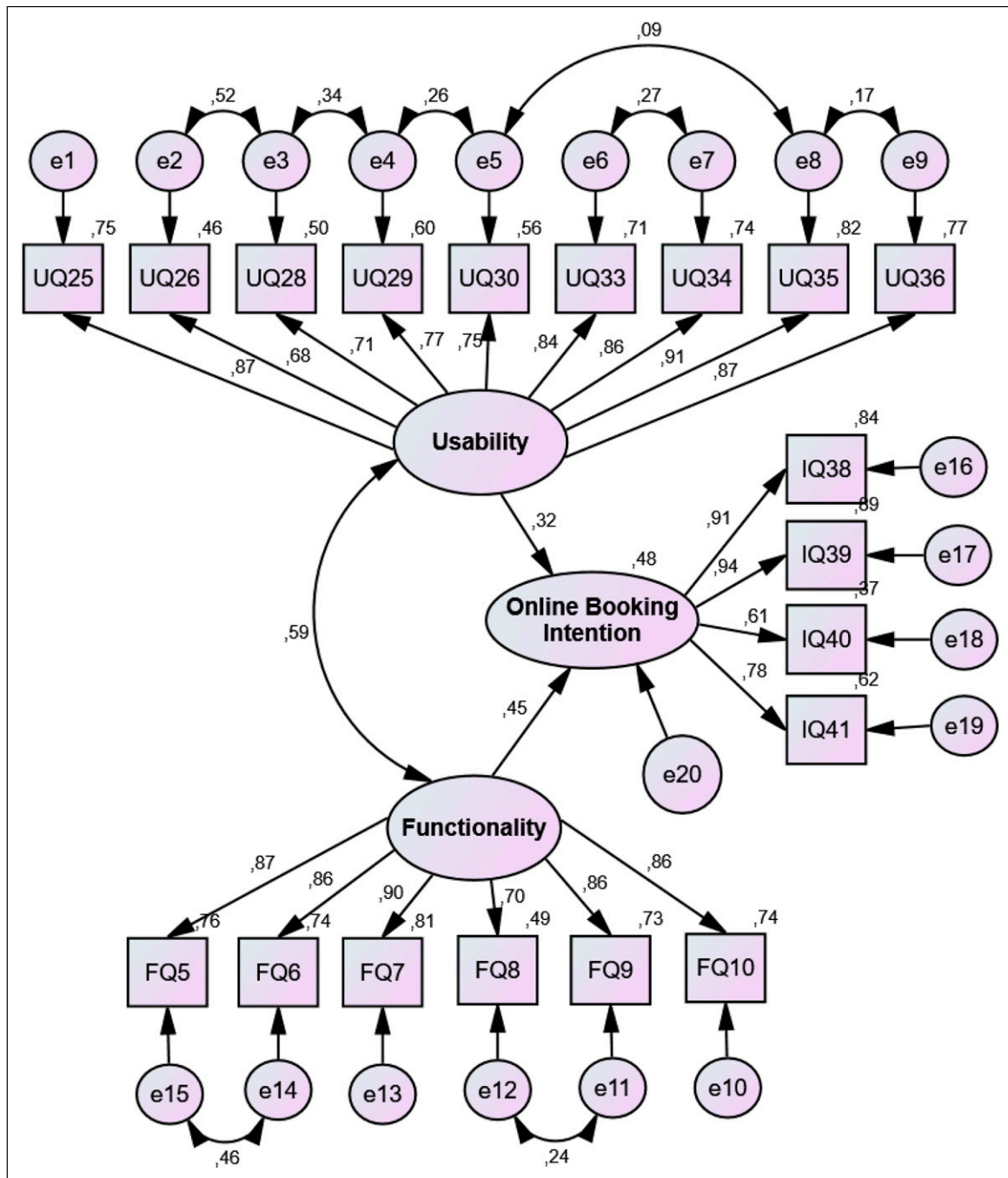


Figure 4. Structural model for respondents on business travel with standardized coefficients.

Table 8. Assessment of the Model Adjustment's quality according to the nature of travel: leisure or business.

	χ^2	χ^2/df	CFI	PCFI	RMSEA	p
Business travelers	732.37	1.731	0.928	0.765	0.051	0.369
Leisure travelers	693.11	1.639	0.954	0.786	0.039	0.990

Table 9. Hypothesis results.

Hypotheses	Standardized coefficient	Effect size	Decision
H1: (Leisure travelers) Functionality → Online booking intention	0.44**	0.19	Supported
H2: (Business travelers) Functionality → Online booking intention	0.45**	0.10	Supported
H3: (Leisure travelers) Usability → Online booking intention	0.31**	0.20	Supported
H4: (Business travelers) Usability → Online booking intention	0.32**	0.11	Supported

** $p < 0.001$.

gains in booking intention compared to enhancements in usability. Table 9 shows the hypothesis results.

Discussion

Theoretical contributions

This study extends prior research by empirically testing a theoretical model that links website quality dimensions namely functionality and usability to the online booking intentions of leisure and business travelers. By validating these two dimensions, this study strengthens the theoretical foundation of hotel website effectiveness and its impact on consumer decision-making in the digital travel landscape.

Consistent with findings from previous studies by Bai et al. (2008) and Wang et al. (2015), these results indicated that website quality's functionality and usability attributes positively affect travelers' online booking intention. Meanwhile, the functionality dimension, particularly the quality and effectiveness of information, has a greater influence on both groups' online booking intentions than usability. This result is in line with earlier work by Wang et al. (2015), who suggested that functionality is of higher importance than usability as travelers cannot physically inspect a hotel before booking. Providing accurate and detailed information is therefore crucial in shaping consumer decision-making. Regarding usability, leisure travelers considered information clarity an essential aspect, while business travelers valued information architecture, aligning with prior research suggesting that structured and well-organized content enhances website effectiveness (Jeong et al., 2003) because useful information will also become worthless if not presented clearly (Giannopoulos and Mavragani, 2011).

This study also advances the literature by identifying segment-specific differences in how leisure and business travelers perceive the quality of hotel websites.

While the overall effect of functionality and usability on online booking intention was similar for both groups, their perceptions of specific website attributes varied. Regarding functionality, the quality of information was rather important for both business and leisure travelers, particularly in terms of whether the website provided sufficient and precise information that met user needs. While information satisfaction, as in effectiveness and usefulness, was more relevant for business travelers. Concerning the usability dimension, leisure travelers pay more attention to the clarity of the information presented. In contrast, business travelers focused more on information architecture, such as the logical organization and categorization of information. This reinforces prior literature suggesting that user expectations vary based on travel purpose and booking behavior (Zhang et al., 2019).

Practical implications

The findings have several practical implications for hotel managers, suggesting ways to optimize their website design and digital presence to enhance direct bookings and customer engagement. As functionality has a stronger and more practically significant influence on booking intention than usability across both traveler segments, hotel websites should prioritize the provision of comprehensive, accurate, and clearly structured key booking information, including real-time room availability, amenities, transparent pricing, booking and cancellation policies, and customer testimonials to reduce uncertainty and facilitate decision-making. Both business and leisure travelers prioritize information richness and usefulness, while business travelers also emphasize concise, efficient, and well-organized information for quick decision-making. To meet these needs, hotels should provide simplified booking flows and smart search tools. To support leisure travelers' planning and booking, visual storytelling that highlights key features such as 360-degree room tours, property

Table 10. Website design strategies for leisure and business travelers.

Dimension	Both segments	Leisure travelers	Business travelers
Functionality	• Comprehensive booking information (availability, pricing, and policies) • Real-time updates and live chat for instant information support	• Use visual tools such as 360° room tours and property walkthroughs to create immersive experiences • Incorporate user-generated visuals (e.g., guest posts) for authentic, experience-based insights	• Emphasize concise and structured booking details • Prioritize quick access to business-relevant services (e.g., loyalty programs, meeting rooms)
Usability	• Provide intelligent search, clear menus, and personalized content layout to improve navigation and user experience	• Design visually appealing, exploratory layouts to support inspiration-driven browsing • Ensure intuitive interface with clear paths for exploring hotel features and offers	• Streamline booking flow with minimal clicks • Optimize interface for fast and easy transactions

walkthroughs, and user-generated visual content, not only builds trust but also showcases the hotel experience more engagingly and memorably than traditional textual descriptions (Kim et al., 2021; Kirillova and Chan, 2018; Pereira et al., 2017). Meanwhile, hotels should integrate AI-powered chatbots and real-time customer support systems, particularly for business travelers who demand efficiency, instant responses, and seamless service interactions. Furthermore, website usability and navigation are crucial to enhancing the user experience. While usability plays a complementary role, its primary function is to support and improve the accessibility of functional content. Apart from the clear presentation of content, intuitive navigation and a well-designed information architecture are particularly crucial for business travelers who require quick access to essential details. Hotel managers must ensure a streamlined user interface by implementing smart search functions, clear menu structures, and categorized content layouts. For example, leveraging artificial intelligence and behavioral analytics can provide valuable insights for improving the logical organization of website content and personalizing the user experience. Table 10 presents specific website design strategies for functionality and usability dimensions tailored to leisure and business travelers.

Conclusion, limitations, and future research

Conclusion

This study examined how website quality, specifically functionality and usability, affects online booking intentions among leisure and business travelers. The findings confirm that both dimensions significantly impact

booking intention, with functionality, particularly information quality, playing a stronger role than usability. While leisure and business travelers perceive website attributes differently, both segments emphasize the importance of clear, well-structured, and easily accessible information in their decision-making process.

Limitations and future research

Like many studies, this study has several limitations. First, the sample used in this study was respondents residing in Portugal. This geographical limitation may introduce cultural biases, as travel behaviors, website preferences, and trust in online booking platforms can vary significantly across countries and cultural contexts. Second, this study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic; the sample size was small due to the lack of actual travel behavior and room purchase responses over the last 12 months. These two limitations made it difficult to draw any generalizable conclusions. Therefore, a future study may increase the sample size and include participants from different geographic locations to produce a more representative sample. Moreover, recruiting participants through Facebook travel groups may introduce platform-specific bias, as users of these groups may differ demographically or behaviorally from the broader traveling population, particularly in terms of digital literacy, socioeconomic status, or travel engagement. Future research may consider using more diverse recruitment channels to reach a broader segment of travelers. Finally, this study was conducted based on respondents' online room booking experiences over the past 12 months; future research may yield different results by examining particular websites, such as considering different hotel categories or conducting similar studies in an experimental setting.

Declaration of conflicting interests

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

This work was supported by national funds through FCT (Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia), under the project - UIDB/04152 - Centro de Investigação em Gestão de Informação (MagIC)/NOVA IMS.

ORCID iDs

Paulo Rita  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6050-9958>

Celeste Vong  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6921-3026>

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Author biographies

Paulo Rita is a Full Professor of Marketing at NOVA Information Management School (NOVA IMS), Universidade NOVA de Lisboa, Campus de Campolide, 1070-312 Lisboa, Portugal. He holds a PhD in Marketing from Cardiff University (UK) and a Post-Doc in Digital Marketing from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (USA). Professor Rita is Director of the Master's in Data-driven Marketing at NOVA IMS. His research interests are focused on digital marketing and social media, marketing analytics, artificial intelligence, consumer behavior, consumer neurosciences, and tourism marketing.

Celeste Vong is a PhD candidate in Information Management at NOVA Information Management School (NOVA IMS), Universidade NOVA de Lisboa, Campus de Campolide, 1070-312 Lisboa, Portugal. Her research interests include data-driven marketing, tourism marketing, consumer behavior, risk communication, and social media.

Mafalda Santos holds a master's degree in Information Management, specialization in Marketing Intelligence from NOVA Information Management School (NOVA IMS), Universidade NOVA de

Lisboa. She has professional experience as a social media manager across several companies and currently works at the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Appendix

Appendix 1. Exploratory factor analysis (full results)

	Item	Factor 1 Factor loadings	Factor 2 Factor loadings	Factor 3 Factor loadings
Functionality	FQ5		0.77	
	FQ6		0.78	
	FQ7		0.76	
	FQ8		0.83	
	FQ9		0.81	
	FQ10		0.80	
	FQ11		0.36	
	FQ12		0.38	
	FQ13		0.37	
	FQ14		0.34	
	FQ15		0.17	
	FQ16		0.29	
	FQ17		0.11	
	FQ18		0.20	
	FQ19		0.26	
	FQ20		0.43	
Usability	FQ21		0.40	
	FQ22		0.38	
	UQ23	0.49		
	UQ24	0.23		
	UQ25	0.67		
	UQ26	0.57		
	UQ27	0.35		
	UQ28	0.59		
	UQ29	0.75		
	UQ30	0.74		
	UQ31	0.45		
	UQ32	0.48		
	UQ33	0.79		
	UQ34	0.78		
	UQ35	0.73		
	UQ36	0.71		
Online booking intention	UQ37	0.41		
	IQ38			0.80
	IQ39			0.85
	IQ40			0.74
	IQ41			0.74
Cronbach's coefficient		0.91	0.90	0.88
Total variance		68.38%		
KMO = 0.90; Bartlett's test of sphericity ($p < .001$)				

Note: Bolded items were removed due to low factor loadings below the 0.50 threshold.